
ProBonoNY
AN ACCESS TO JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP FOR THE POOR

NEWSLETTER

For Local Action Committees

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EIGHTH DISTRICT PRO BONO PLANS

By Amanda Warner

The Eighth Judicial District Pro Bono Committee, co-chaired by Administrative Judge Sharon S. Townsend and Kenneth A. Manning, Esq., of Phillips Lytle, has developed an Action Now Plan designed to foster a working partnership among judges, court personnel, private attorneys, law school faculty, and legal services providers which is dedicated to increasing the amount of civil pro bono representation throughout the District. In order to facilitate this partnership and to implement the Committee's goals, Amanda Warner, an attorney from Erie County, has been hired as the Eighth District Pro Bono Coordinator pursuant to a service contract with the Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project.

Ms. Warner has been busy meeting with judges, bar association leaders, and legal services agencies throughout the District to better understand the nature of pro bono work in their communities, to identify the challenges attorneys throughout the District face in doing pro bono work, and to generate possible solutions and incentives to increase attorney participation in pro bono. Ms. Warner has also created a brochure with information about the Committee and volunteer opportunities which includes a registration form for attorneys of the Eighth Judicial District to register to take pro bono cases. This brochure will be distributed to judges, attorneys, and legal services agencies throughout the District this fall.

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PRO BONO EVENTS IN THE NINTH

By Nancy Barry

In the Ninth Judicial District, under the leadership of Administrative Judge Francis Nicolai, ProBonoNY is operating through a Westchester County Committee (active for more than a year) and a recently formed Orange County Committee. The co-chairs—Judge Nicolai, Westchester County Surrogate Anthony Scarpino, and Erin Guven, Esq., Director of Pro Bono Affairs at Legal Services of the Hudson Valley—are the same for both committees. Committees for other counties in the District are planned. Nancy Barry, principal court attorney to Judge Nicolai, provides the following account of current committee activities. (Ed.)

The newly formed Orange County Local Action Committee held a kick-off event on Tuesday, September 18, 2007, to introduce its cornerstone project, "**Partners in Pro Bono**," a collaboration between the Committee and local law firms committed to accepting regular pro bono referrals. The early morning courthouse meet-and-greet was a huge success.

The event brought in attorneys from the larger firms of Orange County to meet informally with the Orange County bench. Brief remarks by Judge Nicolai, Judge Scarpino, Erin Guven, Orange County Supreme Court Justice John McGuirk and Family Court Judge Lori Currier-Woods described the ProBonoNY initiative, summarized the activities of the Westchester and Orange County Committees, and thanked the local firms for their participation in "Partners in Pro Bono."

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Eighth District Plans

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Also planned for the fall is an Eighth Judicial District Pro Bono Committee reception and launching of the Committee's Large Firm Initiative, in which Buffalo's largest firms will be called upon to designate certain associates to take matrimonial cases pro bono with training and support from Ms. Warner and experienced local matrimonial practitioners. Anyone interested in more information concerning the activities of the Eighth Judicial District Pro Bono Committee can contact Ms. Warner at 716-847-0662, extension 18.

Annual Reports

Just a reminder: please bear in mind that each committee, as discussed in the September *ProBonoNY Newsletter*, should submit to Judge Newton an annual report on or about November 30, 2007. A suggested outline of contents of these reports accompanied the September Newsletter. The reports should cover activities and results to date (from inception, for those committees that have been operating for more than a year), as well as any new or modified plans for the coming year.

NOTES & COMMENTS

By John Ritchie

In addition to the annual reports discussed in last month's Newsletter, I would like to propose two additional items for inclusion on committees' agendas this fall. I hope to have a few minutes to discuss these at upcoming committee meetings.

Retired Lawyers and Pro Bono Work. Chief Judge Kaye is planning a Senior Lawyer initiative, to be announced in the near future. Judge Kaye would like ProBonoNY to support and participate through programs specifically aimed at increasing retired lawyers' participation in pro bono work. Legal clinics? Other special programs? To be discussed.

Kinship care givers. Agencies throughout the state that seek to provide services to kinship care givers—for example, grandparents who must act as parents of their own grandchildren—urgently [continued at right]

Ninth District Events

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Judge Currier-Woods is spearheading the Orange County project. Each of the larger firms in Orange County was asked to consider accepting at least one pro bono referral each year for each associate in the firm. The response from the firms was overwhelmingly positive, with eight firms, including Stern & Rindner; Burke, Miele & Golden, LLP; Drake, Loeb, Heller, Kennedy, Gogerty, Gaba & Rodd PLLC; Greenwald Law Offices; and Silver, Forrester, Schisano, Lesser & Dreyer already committing to the project by Newsletter press time, with additional firms' participation anticipated.

The next event hosted by the Orange County Pro Bono Local Action Committee will be held Thursday, October 18, 2007, when Judge Scarpino and his staff will be conducting a CLE seminar providing basic Guardian ad Litem training for attorneys. This four-credit CLE program qualifies attorneys for appointment as Guardian ad Litem.

The Westchester County Pro Bono Local Action Committee will be holding its second annual "Views from the Benches and the Trenches" CLE program and pro bono attorney recruitment event on Thursday, November 15, 2007. Over 100 attorneys attended this event last year and over 60 attorneys joined the Westchester County Volunteer Attorney Program. This year's two-credit CLE presentation will include panelists David Boies, Esq., Hon. Lewis Lubell, Hon. Alan Scheinkman, and Deborah Scalise, Esq. Following the CLE program, a reception will be held for attorneys to meet Westchester County judges and the panelists in an informal setting.

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need to help their low-income clients find legal services—to establish guardianship status, help with obtaining public benefits, medical care, education, and other matters. Some agencies may contact individual ProBonoNY committees to discuss their clients' legal needs. Perhaps we can develop special volunteer projects. There are substantial needs, and pro bono work in this area would be both satisfying and highly beneficial.