

LAOC NEWSLETTER

Legal Assistance of Olmsted County

December 1, 2006

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Free Family Law Clinic Success

On November 15, 2006 LAOC and VAP sponsored the Free Family Law Clinic. The Clinic was attended by area residents who were seeking to expand their knowledge of various family law related options

Many of our family law attorneys attended



Scales of Justice: The imbalance and inadequacies of providing meaningful access to justice to indigent clients.

and some presented the various options available to participants going through the legal process. Presentations included

information on mediation, collaborative law, parenting time expeditors and the upcoming changes regarding child support issues.

Representatives from various agencies attended to provide information to the public. Representatives included: Brian D'Agnolo from Family Services Rochester, Denise Quindt, from Southeastern Minnesota Mediation Services, and Tom Kelly, from Olmsted County Child Support and Recovery Unit.

The volunteer attorneys were such an integral part of ensuring the successful outcome. A Special Thanks to: Ronelle Anderson, Gail Baker, Kris Dicke, Arens Dilaveri, Steve Dittrich, Mary Dunlap, Fran Kornblum, JoMarie Morris, Jeff Mintz, Steve Murakami, Suzanne Peterson, Tammy Shefelbine, Christina Stevens, Terry Swihart, Terri Wintering, and Steve Youngquist.

VAP Seeks Advisory Board Members

In the recent efforts at seeking and obtaining meaningful access to justice through the Volunteer Attorney Program, Legal Assistance of Olmsted County decided to implement a new VAP Advisory Board.

We are seeking interested persons to participate in providing guidance in the process of case placement, as well as recruitment and retention of private bar members.

Currently we are seeking a

location to sponsor regular meetings and attempting to determine how often we should meet. If you have either the space available or the time to commit, please contact Angela Bostrom at 507-287-2036 to discuss further details.

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Special points of interest:

- February 21, 2007 next scheduled Free Family Law Clinic.
- Need attorneys to volunteer on cases, if you are interested please call us at (507) 287-2036.
- Need advocates to answer landlord and tenant hotline, if you are interested, please call us at (507) 287-2036.



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Legal Assistance of
Olmsted County is a non-
profit organization

designed to assist indigent clients in
obtaining meaningful access to justice.

We're on the Web!
www.laocmn.org

“Only a life lived for Others is a life Worthwhile.” Albert Einstein

LAOC Hires New Executive Director

I'd like to introduce myself to those attorneys I have not yet met. My name is Deja Weber, and I was appointed as the Executive Director of LAOC this August. Patrick Kelly, the current president of the MSBA has been advocating for increases in attorney pro bono services. Currently, there are approximately 9,500 people in Olmsted County who are living below the federal poverty guidelines and thousands more who are classified as the working poor, struggling paycheck to paycheck to make ends meet.

LAOC is here to serve the working poor and the indigent here in our community. As is the usual case with legal services to low income persons, there are limited resources available to serve them. Federal and state funding for legal services have been slowly eroding since 1995, while the number of persons needing the services has sharply increased over that same time period.

Many local attorneys volunteer to handle pro bono cases through our Volunteer Attorney Program. Thank you to those who have been regularly volunteering; we cannot

express the extent of our gratitude to you.

However, more volunteers are needed. Both the ABA and the MSBA ask all attorneys to contribute at least ten hours of pro bono time a year. Not all of our cases require expertise or experience in a particular area of law. Our applicants have a wide variety of legal needs. Many of the large firms in the Cities have partners who volunteer for legal assistance or at the Pro Se Self-Help Center in Hennepin County and they are assisting individuals with legal problems that are outside of their usual area of law.

If you are unable to volunteer to take a pro bono case, perhaps you would be willing to donate some other items to LAOC. We are always willing to take donations. Some of the items that we would appreciate are: sturdy file folders, office supplies, office equipment, current publications, sponsor attendance of a LAOC attorney at a CLE, or many others. Let us know if you are able to participate in our VAP or would like to provide a donation.