

LAOC NEWSLETTER

Legal Assistance of Olmsted County

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Earn CLE Credits for Pro Bono Work

Did you know attorneys can earn Continuing Legal Education Credits for pro bono case work? The Minnesota Supreme Court recently approved granting 1 CLE credit for every 6 hours of legal representation on a pro bono client's file. Attorneys can earn a maximum of 6 credit hours per reporting period through



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

pro bono legal representation. If you would like to take advantage of this new way to earn CLE credits, please contact Angela Bostrom,

our Volunteer Attorney Program Coordinator, by phone at 507-287-2036, or by email: angela@laocmn.org. Angela currently has 45 cases waiting to be placed with volunteer attorneys.

To view the details of the Court Order approving the granting of CLE credits for pro bono casework, go to the Minnesota Judicial Branch website: www.mncourts.gov. Click on "Judge and Attorney Regulation" on the left side to access the Minnesota Board of Continuing Legal Education web page. Then, click on "Pro Bono Info." Legal Assistance of Olmsted County is listed in the organizations that are funded by LSAC. The form that must be turned in when claiming these credits is also available at the website and links listed above.

Please note that, if you intend to seek CLE credits for cases you have accepted through LAOC's Volunteer Attorney Program, you must report your hours to Angela Bostrom so that she can verify those hours if contacted by the Minnesota Board of Continuing Legal Education.

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Save the date:

- OCBA Fundraiser:
Wednesday,
March 11, 2009

Volunteer Thank You

We want to take the opportunity to extend our thanks to all of our volunteers. Without you, it would not be possible to serve as many people as we do.

Year-to-date, our landlord/tenant hotline volunteers have spent 104 hours answering questions for 419 callers. Through the Volunteer Attorney Program, attorneys have spent 487 hours providing pro bono legal representation

to clients.

Here in the office, we have also had much assistance from members of our Board of Directors, college students, and other professionals.

Thank you to everyone!





LAOC Staffing Changes



2008 was a year of transition for LAOC. In February and March, LAOC hired two staff attorneys. Erin Gustafson received her J.D. in 2007 from the University of Nebraska College of Law, and is a 2003 graduate of Creighton University. Zachary Marsh received his J.D. from the University of Iowa College of Law in 2007, and is a 2004 graduate of the University of Northern Iowa. We are very pleased to have Erin and Zach on board, and they have enjoyed getting to know other attorneys in the community.

In April, Kristy Arndt Turner joined our office as the part-time Office Administrator. Kristy was previously employed as a legal assistant for attorney Mary Alice Richardson (retired) for 16 years. Kristy has enjoyed returning to work part-time after "retiring" in 2002 to

for her four children. We are now the lucky recipients of Kristy's organizational skills.

Finally, in September, Debra Groehler began her job as the part-time Executive Director. No stranger to LAOC, Deb was previously employed here as a staff attorney (2002-2005). She is happy to be back, and has found her new role to be challenging and rewarding.

Through these transitions, LAOC has been fortunate to have Angela Bostrom, Volunteer Attorney Program Coordinator, and Nicole Sanborn, Legal Assistant, making sure things run smoothly. Angela has been employed at LAOC since 1998, and Nicole since 2004.

Non-profit funding in a bleak economy

It should come as no surprise that, in this economy, LAOC continues to see an increase in eligible applicants. In addition, we have seen an increase in the number of people who are applying for services, but earn too much to qualify under our eligibility guidelines. Despite increases in eligible applicants, our funding has generally remained static. For 2009 and beyond, we have been advised by more than one funder to expect cuts in funding. We are projecting a deficit for next year and are looking at expenses that can be reduced or eliminated. We are also applying for new grants, trying to find ways to partner with other agencies, and hoping to increase our clinics and outreach in order to continue providing services to our target population.

If you would like to make a monetary donation, we now have a donation button on our website: www.laocmn.org. Or, you can mail a check to: Legal Assistance of Olmsted County, 1136 7th St. N.W., Rochester, MN 55901.

We are also looking for attorneys or law firms to sponsor larger clinics that are open to the public, such as the free family law clinics offered in the past. The major cost for these clinics is newspaper advertising and room rental fees. If you are interested in sponsoring a clinic, please contact our office. We will also be looking for attorneys to volunteer their time at these clinics.

"All the great things are simple, and many are expressed in a single word: freedom, justice, honor, duty, mercy, hope."

- Winston Churchill