



The Legal Project

Pro Bono Corner March 2013

Lisa A. Frisch, Executive Director

The Legal Project has Launched a New Website!

We have a new, more user friendly website, designed by **Shufelt Group-itsaboutyou. TM** Check it out at www.legalproject.org.

Albany Shows Leadership in the Fight Against Domestic Violence

In 2011, in a landmark case, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women identified a number of deficits in the response to domestic violence in the United States, including the need to implement more consistent responses to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence; the need to re-assess existing mechanisms for enhancing protection for victims and providing greater accountability for offenders at federal, state, and local levels; and the need for additional public education campaigns that condemn all forms of violence.

Albany County has stepped up to become one of the only communities in the nation in which all the highest levels of government have adopted a strong, formal stance against domestic violence, consistent with the United Nations' efforts. In October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, County Executive Dan McCoy issued an Executive Order, stating that County government bears moral responsibility to ensure this human right. In order to communicate this commitment to all municipalities and elected leaders within Albany County, all County agencies must establish this as part of their policies and practices. County Executive McCoy stated "From the day we are born, there are certain basic rights to which we are all entitled. I have issued Executive Order and Directive 12-05 to make sure domestic violence is recognized as a human rights

concern by Albany County and everyone should be free from domestic violence."

Importantly, the Albany City Council and County Legislature passed proclamations supporting this effort. In so-doing, these governments joined "world leaders and leaders within the United States in recognition of domestic violence as a human rights concern and declaring that the freedom from all domestic violence, regardless of whether inflicted by a current or former spouse, a current or former intimate partner, or a family member is a fundamental human right."

Albany Law School Professor Sarah Rogerson, the director of the Albany Law School's Family Violence Litigation Clinic & Immigration Project, along with many of her students, took the lead in this community effort, along with members of the Albany County Coalition Against Domestic Abuse. Community members wrote numerous letters of support and testified in support of these efforts. We applaud Albany for standing up and taking responsibility to do more to effectively respond to domestic violence, and to let all victims know that their human rights will be protected in Albany County.

Military Domestic Violence Training for New York City Family Court Judges

In early February, Counsel Ellen Schell presented a lunch-time training for NYC Family Court judges about issues they might see arising in the context of military-related Family Court cases, and particularly those involving domestic violence. The judges were provided with an overview of military cultural competency, the military disciplinary and justice system, the Service Members Civil Relief Act, and how these things interact with New York laws regarding custody, visitation, support, and divorce. There was an opportunity for discussion after the presentation, and follow up technical assistance is available for the judges regarding military-related cases. The training was attended by judges both at the location in Brooklyn and by video-conference from the other boroughs.

Thank you for volunteering in January!

Domestic Violence Legal Connection

Douglas Broda
Kathleen Copps DiPaola
Kate Howard
Jo Katz
Margaret Tabak
Neil Weiner
Lawrence Zimmerman

Bankruptcy Program

Anthony Arcodia
Paula Barbaruolo
Jerrold Bartman
Nancy DeLain
Christian Dribusch
Opal Hinds
Leigh Hoffman
Jason A. Little
Justin Meyer
David Price

Equinox

Will Berglund
Lori Bovee
Allegra Edelman
Charles Feldman
David Levy
Pat Vann – Coordinator

Mechanicville

Anne Reynolds Copps
Casey Copps DiPaola
Debra Sullivan - Coordinator

North Greenbush American Legion

Carolyn D'Agostino
Christy Lay-Mumin
Siobhan Blank – Coordinator

Stratton VA Hospital

Lee Kindlon
Stacy Metro
Michael O'Connor
Larry Signer - Coordinator

South End

Katherine Levitan

Meredith Savitt
Margaret Vella
Theresa Taylor– Coordinator

Uncontested Divorce:

Kathleen (“Casey”) Copps DiPaola

VETHELP Clinic (Ballston Spa)

Sarah Goldman
Opal Hinds
Karen Szubinski—Coordinator

Wills Program

Anne Reynolds Copps
Lynn Coles
Michele Miller
Lauren Palmer
Margaret Vella
Katherine Carpenter - Paralegal
Julianne Patterson - Paralegal
Donna Shappy – Paralegal

We Need You!

Those in need of our services continue to grow, and we greatly need more pro bono assistance to meet this growing need. Whether you are able to give a few hours a month to provide legal advice in your area of expertise at an evening legal clinic, or help with legal consultations for veterans, or if you would like to hone your skills representing victims of domestic violence or bankruptcy or if you can help with a Wills or Uncontested Divorce Clinic—all help is appreciated. Please contact Susan Pattenaude, Esq., Pro Bono Director at 518-435-1770 or at spattenaude@legalproject.org.

Save the Date!

**18th Annual Pro Bono
Reception**

The Egg, Albany, NY

Thursday, October 24, 2013