

Examples of How We're Helping Our Clients

Since May 2003, LawWorks has referred approximately 60 cases for pro bono services. About one-third of our clients have been community groups/nonprofit organizations that provide education services or work in some other capacity with youth (tutoring, charter schools, youth sports leagues, etc.). Another quarter of our clients are social services providers, including medical, employment, and emergency food/clothing/shelter services. The balance of our clients have been community development groups, immigrant support groups, faith-based organizations (typically providing social services) and small businesses.

While the majority of our clients have received assistance in forming corporate entities and/or obtaining tax-exempt status, LawWorks also has assisted clients with real estate (zoning/property ownership/landlord-tenant), contract and employment problems. Finally, we have coordinated referrals for four nonprofit organizations that sought ongoing general counsel services.

The following three cases are examples of LawWorks at work:

The Community Health Collaborative

Dr. Barbara Schneider has been leading an initiative to greatly augment the quality and quantity of care for North Philadelphia residents who have, or risk developing, diabetes. Diabetes rates are disproportionately high in low-income communities, so the CHC's services will prove invaluable both in preventing and treating the disease. CHC had limited



funding as it was getting out of the gates. It applied to LawWorks seeking an array of legal services, and LawWorks coordinated a referral to Dechert LLP. Dr. Schneider offers this about the value of pro bono transactional services: "Without LawWorks, The Community Health Collaborative would not exist. LawWorks assigned us a multi-specialty firm that has assisted us with incorporation, nonprofit and, because we are a medical business, HIPAA issues. We couldn't receive more professional and enthusiastic assistance if we were the biggest corporation in Pennsylvania."

The Philip Jaisohn Academy

The Philadelphia-based Philip Jaisohn Academy charter school will serve language minority and immigrant children by helping them to cultivate the skills needed to succeed in a multicultural society. The school has very limited start-up capital, and will be able to augment its funding only after becoming a tax-exempt organization and beginning classes. LawWorks secured pro bono counsel at Duane Morris to assist the school in obtaining tax-exempt status. "LawWorks fills an important pro bono need in our community - helping organizations that are making a difference and the volunteer boards that lead them," says Karen C. Buck, executive director of the Senior Law Center, who

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A Letter from the Chair

Greetings. I am very pleased to report that this has been an eventful and exciting year for LawWorks, pro bono and the Philadelphia community. The primary purpose of LawWorks is to match pro bono private attorneys with nonprofit organizations and small businesses serving low-income communities, with the overall goal of fostering community economic development.

The LawWorks Steering Committee has had and continues to have among its principal responsibilities the establishment of a strong vision and foundation for the operations and processes necessary to ensure the longevity of LawWorks. With the invaluable assistance of the staff of Philadelphia VIP and the business lawyers of Philadelphia, we have made substantial progress in this endeavor.

The LawWorks project has picked up a tremendous amount of steam over the past 15 months and is developing rapidly. This is evident in the increasing number of applications, and in the enthusiasm LawWorks has generated in the legal community and among its client constituencies.

We also are happy to report that LawWorks is now staffed by two full-time attorneys working under the auspices of the Equal Justice Works/Americorps Pro Bono Legal Corps program. Steve Grumm, a 2003 graduate of Temple

University's Beasley School of Law, is beginning his second year with LawWorks. In addition, we are delighted to welcome Allison Altman, a 2004 graduate of the George Washington School of Law, to the program. Steve and Allison have experience in the public interest law arena, and look forward to cultivating close relationships with attorneys and firms in the private sector on LawWorks matters.

We continue to work in collaboration with numerous local legal aid agencies, firms and the Business Law Section of the Philadelphia Bar Association. Through these joint efforts, we have facilitated pro bono referrals and organized community education seminars in various areas of business law.

This year, with the assistance of a number of talented private attorneys, LawWorks will sponsor CLE events to assist new volunteers in getting involved in our pro bono program. This series will include a nonprofit formation CLE in October. In addition, in September, LawWorks will sponsor, along with Washington D.C.-based Corporate Pro Bono.org, a pro bono event for local in-house counsel. This event will include a CLE program and attendees working at a nonprofit legal clinic in the afternoon. The attorneys will meet with established nonprofit groups and assist them with a variety of legal services.

Finally, LawWorks has very recently added a new dimension to its services. It now includes the Tangled Title



project, which aims to prevent abandonment of residential homes in order to preserve healthy neighborhoods and to encourage economic development in other neighborhoods desperately in need of revitalization.

Nonprofit organizations and small businesses are vital members of our local communities because they do so much to keep them vibrant and strong. We at LawWorks encourage all interested attorneys to inquire about how they can contribute, either monetarily or through their expertise, to community economic development by getting involved in this project. Our sincere thanks to all who have donated their time and resources to LawWorks.

Sincerely,

*Barbara Sicalides, Chair
LawWorks Steering Committee*

LawWorks and Dechert LLP: Forming a Transactional Pro Bono Practice Group

Dechert has formed pro bono practice groups in several areas of law, including a transactional practice group. We anticipate that the practice groups model will greatly enhance the delivery of pro bono services because it will allow volunteers to efficiently and effectively pool their expertise in handling pro bono matters. LawWorks looks forward to forging close ties with Dechert's transactional group, including co-sponsoring an upcoming nonprofit formation CLE (*see Upcoming Events on Page 4*). LawWorks encourages other firms interested in establishing a transactional pro bono practice group to contact us.

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sits on the Jaisohn School's board of directors. "I was delighted to connect our board with LawWorks to address our school's legal needs in setting up our nonprofit status. Our LawWorks volunteer attorney, John Bryck, was excellent: diligent, personable and excited about our mission. His pro bono efforts were multiplied by our project's participation in the Lawyering Together program at Villanova Law School by involving law students to assist in the pro bono representation."

The Ayual Community Development Association

The Ayual Community Development Association was founded in 2000 by members of a Sudanese tribe that has been devastated physically, socially, and economically by years of civil war in the Sudan. Now living in the

United States, this group of young men is acting on its desire to help Sudanese refugees living in the area and to lend what support it can to those still in the Sudan. LawWorks coordinated a referral to Blank Rome LLP for pro bono services. Kara Dougherty is among the attorneys at Blank who are working with ACDA. "Prior to the creation of Philadelphia LawWorks, it was difficult to get a pro bono project that would allow me to use my skills as a corporate attorney," Ms. Dougherty said. "Providing legal advice to the ACDA allows me to use my legal skills to make a difference. Working with these young men, who suffered so much before they were permitted to come to the U.S., and who continue to work so hard to put themselves through school now that they are here, has been incredibly rewarding."

Aside from our referral program, volunteer attorneys from several firms, including Ballard Spahr, Blank Rome, Morgan Lewis and Wolf Block, have participated in community outreach programs to educate nonprofit groups and micro-entrepreneurs about the various legal challenges they may encounter in their organizations' day to day activities. For instance, Noel Fleming of Ballard Spahr volunteered to participate in VIP's 2004 Martin Luther King Day of Service. Noel joined VIP's staff and other volunteers at the Shiloh Baptist Church in South Philadelphia, where he delivered a presentation on the nonprofit formation process. Noel, who also volunteers on LawWorks pro bono cases, reports: "LawWorks serves an important need in the legal services community by involving the private bar in providing free legal services to community groups and micro-enterprises that may otherwise not be able to access these resources. I was happy to spend some time helping out this worthy organization and hope that I can continue to work with it throughout my career."

Upcoming Events

Now that summer has wound down, LawWorks has an ambitious agenda planned for the fall:

- We will pair interested volunteer attorneys with law students to work jointly on LawWorks cases. This is a wonderful opportunity for the students to learn — substantively and in terms of the value of pro bono work — and for attorneys to develop a mentor relationship with a future lawyer while receiving assistance on their cases. We look forward to working with our partners at the local law schools, and in facilitating relationships between law students and attorneys who contact us directly.
- LawWorks is planning a corporate counsel CLE event and legal clinic with CorporateProBono.org, a national project co-sponsored by the Association of Corporate Counsel and the Pro Bono Institute. In collaboration with DELVACCA and CPBO, Exelon will host the event on Thursday, September 30, 2004.
- LawWorks and Dechert LLP will cosponsor a nonprofit formation CLE. The event is open for all attorneys to learn about the legal mechanics of forming a nonprofit corporation in Pennsylvania and applying for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status with the IRS. Stay tuned for more details.



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**LawWorks thanks
Pepper Hamilton LLP for its
generous assistance in
publishing this newsletter.**

LawWorks Appreciates the Contributions of Our Recent Volunteer Attorneys

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LawWorks and Law Students

LawWorks is eager to engage tomorrow's attorneys today so that they gain exposure to the value of pro bono service. We wish to communicate the importance of our profession's time-honored tradition of aiding the many vulnerable individuals and families who live on the margins of society.

LawWorks conducted a training session at VIP's Summer Associates Day on June

7, 2004 at the Pennsylvania Bar Institute. Twenty-three summer associates attended the training on the nonprofit formation process, which was conducted by Tom Wyatt and David Shapiro of Dechert. Following the training, on June 22, the summer associates participated in a nonprofit formation clinic that LawWorks hosted at the Free Library. They worked with individuals who were planning to form nonprofit organiza-

tions. The associates conducted interviews with the participants, which resulted in LawWorks accepting several applications for further pro bono assistance.

As is discussed in our *Upcoming Events* section, LawWorks is rolling out a program to match law students with our pro bono attorneys on LawWorks cases.