

Lewis F. Powell, Jr. Inn of Court Community Outreach Program

The Lewis F. Powell, Jr. Inn of Court's Outreach Program into the greater Richmond, Virginia community is designed to share the core values of the American Inns of Court with audiences that reach beyond our individual Inn membership.

Outreach efforts will be focused during the month of December: the giving season. The Lewis F. Powell, Jr. Inn of Court will partner with JusticeServer™ to provide awareness to our members of the need for pro bono services in our community and to provide legal services on a volunteer basis to the community at large. JusticeServer™ is a collaboration of the Greater Richmond Bar Foundation (GRBF), the Legal Aid Justice Center (LAJC) and Central Virginia Legal Aid Society (CVLAS) to provide pro bono legal services to low-income clients and non-profit organizations in Richmond, Petersburg, Charlottesville and surrounding cities and counties.

JusticeServer™ is a new on-line case management and referral system that expedites pro bono services by leveraging the latest technology to enable private attorneys to accept and work on pro bono cases directly from their computers. JusticeServer™ maximizes the volunteer time attorneys spend advising and representing pro bono clients and non-profit organizations by minimizing the transaction time of receiving cases and projects.

JusticeServer™ is an outgrowth of the inaugural Pro Bono Summit of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia to use technology to improve the efficiency of legal aid case administration and referral of pro bono cases. The Task Force which designed JusticeServer™ included participants from Capital One, the Virginia Bar Association's Pro Bono Committee, GRBF, LAJC, CVLAS and Firms in Service - Richmond.

JusticeServer™ offers volunteer attorneys the opportunity to partner with legal aid to provide much needed legal services to low-income clients and non-profit organizations in many areas, including consumer, education, elder, employment, family, and housing law. Opportunities exist to provide pro bono advice and representation in the following matters in five cities and 15 counties in central Virginia:

- **Bankruptcy:** Provide representation to debtors in Chapter 7 bankruptcy proceedings for low income clients for whom the filing would serve to protect income and/or property.
- **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (“DACA”):** Assist undocumented immigrants in applying for legal recognition by immigration authorities and protection from deportation.
- **Drivers' License Restoration:** Assist individuals who have lost their drivers' licenses due to outstanding criminal justice debt in reinstating their drivers' licenses.
- **Estate Planning:** Draft simple wills, Powers of Attorney, and advance directives (Living Wills and Medical Powers of Attorney) for low income clients 60 years of age or older, or who have other circumstances which make simple estate planning necessary.
- **Guardianship:** Represent the petitioner who is seeking guardianship over another person where the petitioner is 60 years of age or older, in good health, and there are no less restrictive alternatives.

- **Hotline:** Provide brief legal telephone advice in call backs to pre-screened clients in routine, non-emergency cases primarily involving consumer law, debt collections, employment law and family law.
- **Housing Law:** Represent tenants in unlawful detainer cases, terminations of federally subsidized housing assistance (vouchers), security deposits and disputes involving the condition of the leased premises.
- **Just Children:** Represent children and families in the education, juvenile justice and foster care systems, in special education, student discipline, enrollment of special populations, dispositional advocacy for court-involved youth, conditions of confinement, and post-conviction relief for serious youth offenders.
- **Protective Order Only:** Represent domestic violence victims in Preliminary Protective Order and Permanent Protective Order hearings – “quick hit” type cases where the pro bono attorney is in and out of the case in a short time.
- **Uncontested Adoption:** Provide representation to low income prospective adoptive parents in uncontested adoption cases if the child will receive financial benefits after the adoption.
- **Uncontested No-Fault Divorce:** Provide divorce representation for low income clients who have been separated from their spouse for at least two years, and in which there are no contested custody, support, or property issues.
- **Unemployment Compensation:** Provide administrative representation to unemployment compensation claimants in Appeals Examiner hearings and Special Examiner appellate reviews before the Virginia Employment Commission.
- **Voting Rights Restoration:** Assist convicted felons with a petition to the Governor to restore their right to vote.

These substantive areas have been chosen because they tend to be limited in scope and meet areas of high demand for clients in our community. Most of these cases take between 5-15 hours to complete. On-line training and resources are available in each of these substantive areas. LAJC and CVLAS are available to provide technical assistance in all topics.

Our December meeting will also include a toy drive to benefit the Toys for Tots Program. The mission of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program is to collect new, unwrapped toys during October, November and December each year, and distribute those toys as holiday gifts to needy children in the community in which the campaign is conducted. The objectives of Toys for Tots are to help needy children throughout the United States experience the joy of Christmas; to play an active role in the development of one of our nation's most valuable natural resources - our children; to unite all members of local communities in a common cause for three months each year during the annual toy collection and distribution campaign; and to contribute to better communities in the future. Monetary contributions will be accepted and toys will be purchased to donate.

Teams are encouraged to strategize during their program meetings regarding community outreach. Each team will be awarded 10 points per Toys for Tots donation, 1 point per dollar donated, 10 points per member who signs up for JusticeServer™ and 25 points for each case a team member takes down from the JusticeServer™ site. Please report your JusticeServer™ work to your team leader who will submit a summary report to the Executive Committee at the April meeting. The winning team will select an organization to benefit from a donation drive during our next Inn year and will be announced at our annual banquet in May.