

# BRIEFINGS



## Legal Aid Partners to Revitalize a Neighborhood

The 2008 Housing Crisis affected many Cincinnati neighborhoods but Price Hill was particularly hard hit. Many homes were foreclosed on, then stood empty, and ultimately deteriorated, contributing to neighborhood blight. Legal Aid represents Price Hill Will (PHW) in acquiring and redeveloping blighted properties to reclaim the neighborhood, one house and one family at a time. To date, PHW has rehabbed over 60 vacant, single-family properties in Price Hill for occupancy by low-to-moderate-income homeowners.

Legal Aid, partnering with Price Hill Will, LISC, SC Ministry Foundation, Greater Cincinnati Development Authority/Land Bank, Santa Maria, Catholic Charities, and Working in Neighborhoods, created the Homestead concept four years ago and brought it to fruition.

Homesteading serves two purposes: restoring homes to the point where they add value to the neighborhood and providing a unique opportunity for families that might

not otherwise be able to purchase a home to do so. The LandBank provides the homes to Price Hill Will who takes the title to the vacant, blighted properties and restores them to meet health and safety codes. PHW then sells the home to a low-income family through a land contract. Under this contract, drafted by Legal Aid, the family provides work equity in finishing the home, plus pays a small amount per month. After the family completes the terms over the 5-year course of the contract, PHW conveys the deed to the property to them.

The Homestead Project started with 4 families initially. The first family to complete the contract terms received their deed of ownership in February! The 3 other families continue to work towards this goal. Mark Lawson, Legal Aid managing attorney commented, "Our Homestead Project is a wonderful collaboration with Price Hill Will and others that benefits the families purchasing the homes as well as the neighborhood. It really shows how strong partnerships can make a difference."

## Legal Aid's Medical Legal Partnerships Support Family Stability



*M-HeLP training session for case managers and nurses*



*Child HeLP mother with her two children*

Child HeLP and M-HeLP, our two medical legal partnerships, resolve social barriers to health arising from living in poverty. Though our M-HeLP partnership with Tri Health, Legal Aid resolved health-harming issues for 169 expectant mothers. M-HeLP is made possible by a grant from bi3. During M-HeLP's first year, over 1,400 pregnant women at Good Samaritan's Faculty Medical Center were screened and 300 were referred to Legal Aid. Housing insecurities, such as poor or unsafe housing conditions, threatened evictions, or lack of affordable housing options were the problems addressed most frequently for our M-HeLP clients. Legal assistance is particularly effective in achieving recourse for individuals and families with housing issues due to existing state and federal laws.

Now in its tenth year, Child HeLP has assisted over 15,000 children and their families improve their health and well-being. Our advocates have trained over 600 pediatric medical professionals to screen and refer for problems that have legal solutions. The Child HeLP team also introduced a new program component: a "smart" handoff for M-HeLP clients to Child HeLP when a baby is first seen at Children's. We've already helped seven families through this informed, expedited referral process.



*VLP firm coordinators in attendance*



*VLPF founder Harry Santen admires the 35th anniversary commemorative painting*

## The Volunteer Lawyers For the Poor Foundation Turns 35

Legal Aid and the VLPF celebrated a milestone anniversary on October 25, 2017, at a reception held at Graydon. U.S. District Court Judge Michael Barrett was the keynote speaker. We recognized the founders of the VLPF: Harry Santen, Robert Laufman, and Jerry Lawson. And we honored the *pro bono* coordinators from 23 firms, gifting them with framed, signed, and numbered prints of an original painting, titled "Equal Justice is the Unfinished Work of Many Hands", by noted artist and former VLPF President, Bruce I. Petrie, Jr.

The VLPF thanks our event sponsors for their support: The Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation, P&G and the Cincinnati Bar Foundation and our event hosts: Graydon, the Cincinnati Bar Association, and Legal Aid Society.

Special thanks to all the volunteer attorneys who have taken *pro bono* cases through the VLP, assisting thousands of clients who would not otherwise have access to the justice system.



*Homeless Coalition Executive Director, Josh Spring with Legal Aid Society Senior Attorney, Stephanie Moes at the awards dinner*

## Legal Aid Housing Team Receives Award from the Homeless Coalition

The Greater Cincinnati Homeless Coalition honored Legal Aid's Housing Team with the Julie Martin Service Provider of the Year award. We thank Kimetta Carter and the Alms Hill Residents' Council for nominating us for this award and thank the Greater Cincinnati Homeless Coalition board and executive director, Josh Spring, for this honor. Legal Aid is committed to preserving affordable housing in Greater Cincinnati and we look forward to future opportunities to collaborate with tenant organizers at the Coalition.



*Kimetta Carter of the Alms Hill Resident's Counsel prepares to present the award to Legal Aid Senior Attorney, Virginia Tallent*

## Adolfo Olivas Elected President of the Butler County Bar Association

Congratulations to Legal Aid Senior Attorney and Immigration Group Manager, Adolfo Olivas, who became president of the Butler County Bar Association at the organization's annual meeting on March 15. During his tenure, Adolfo will focus on increasing *pro bono* support by private bar attorneys in Butler County. Adolfo has been a significant civic presence in Butler County, dating from his years as Vice Mayor and Mayor of Hamilton.



*Adolfo addresses the attendees at the Butler County Bar Association annual dinner*



## Affordable Rental Housing Update: Good News for Alms Hill Residents

Last October, we told you that Legal Aid’s clients won in Federal Court, a Motion for a Preliminary Injunction to prevent HUD from ending the Section 8 housing assistance contract for Alms Hill Apartments. As a result, the low-income residents were able to remain in their affordable housing. HUD officially reversed its position on the rent subsidies, and negotiations are in progress to transfer ownership with the goal of preserving Alms Hill as a major affordable housing asset in our community.



Legal Aid managing attorneys Mark Lawson and Anne Lucas with Executive Director Mary Asbury and Judge Jeffery P. Hopkins

## Bankruptcy Event Recognizes Volunteer Lawyers’ Pro Bono efforts

Legal Aid and the Volunteer Lawyers Project co-hosted a “Bankruptcy Breakfast” to thank members of the bankruptcy bar for taking *pro bono* cases and to encourage their continued participation. Jeffery P. Hopkins, Chief Judge of the United States Bankruptcy Court-Southern District of Ohio, was the keynote speaker. Private attorney Nick Zingarelli and Legal Aid senior attorney Elizabeth Tull Laureano spoke about the impact Volunteer Attorneys make on the lives of the bankruptcy clients they assist. A grant from the American College of Bankruptcy Foundation underwrote the event.

## Happy Birthday to Legal Aid

Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati was incorporated on January 30, 1908. We are the seventh oldest Legal Aid in the United States. Legal Aid has helped people living in poverty achieve economic and family stability by resolving their serious legal issues for 110 years. This issue of *Briefings* illustrates recent Legal Aid initiatives that make a difference for low-income people in our communities.

Legal Aid’s first office was co-located in the Union Bethel Third Street Settlement House in Cincinnati

