

Focus on *Access to Justice*

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State's legal services programs schedule activities for National Pro Bono Week in October

Planning is underway for Louisiana's participation in National Pro Bono Celebration Week, Oct. 19-25. Sponsored by the American Bar Association, National Pro Bono Celebration Week is part of a coordinated effort to showcase the legal community's commitment to public service and the positive impacts that pro bono lawyers make to the nation and the justice system.

The week offers opportunities both to make a difference for clients by providing special pro bono programming and to acknowledge the selfless acts of attorney volunteers from every part of Louisiana who, on a regular basis, make the lives of many much better. Whether it is the volunteer who helps represent the spouse and family in a drawn-out domestic violence case or whether it is the volunteer who takes five minutes to notarize a document to help keep a child in school, pro bono volunteers are making a difference in Louisiana. While helping others, many volunteers speak of the personal benefit they receive from volunteering.

Local bar foundations and pro bono programs in Louisiana are scheduling several recognition events and activities in conjunction with the event. For updates on all Pro Bono Week activities, go to: www.lsba.org/celebrateprobono. Members are encouraged to check back often as more events will be added. (See below for events as of presstime.)

The Baton Rouge Bar Association has scheduled:

► Financial Literacy Seminar, 10-11 a.m., Tuesday, Oct. 21, New St. John Church, Baton Rouge.

► Self-Help Resource Center at East Baton Rouge Family Court, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 21, and Thursday, Oct. 23. For details, go to: http://familycourt.org/main/inside.php?page=self-help_resources.



► Habitat for Humanity "Partners" Training on "The Importance of a Will," Tuesday, Oct. 21 (by invitation only).

► Thirst for Justice Walk-In Legal Advice Clinics, 3-5 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 22-23, offices of St. Vincent de Paul. Volunteers provide legal counseling and advice to low-income clients on matters of civil law only. Thirst for Justice is first-come, first-served. For details, go to: http://brba.org/Web/Public_Resources/Pro_Bono/Thirst_for_Justice/Web/Public_Resources/Thirst_for_justice.aspx?hkey=42c943ef-592c-49be-a739-f0890518e8de.

► Go Casual for Pro Bono, Friday, Oct. 24 (or any day your office designates), a dress-down jeans day fundraising event to benefit the Baton Rouge Bar Foundation Pro Bono Project. For details, go to: www.brba.org/Images/Forms%20and%20Applications/GoCasual2014.pdf.

The Central Louisiana Pro Bono Project has scheduled:

► Veterans Administration Legal Clinic on the grounds of the local VA Hospital, 1-4 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 2. Pro bono attorneys will give civil and criminal legal advice as well as brochures and resource information on civil legal matters.

► "Lawyers in Libraries" Legal Clinic, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 23, Rapides Parish Main Library. Attorney volunteers will be available to prepare simple wills, advance directives, or give free legal advice on general civil matters.

The **Lafayette Bar Association** has scheduled:

► Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers Champions of Justice Breakfast, 8-9 a.m., Wednesday, Oct. 22, Petroleum Club. This awards breakfast honors members of the legal community who have given their time and energy to provide legal assistance and counsel to victims of domestic violence, the homeless and the disadvantaged through the programs run by the foundation.

The Pro Bono Project in New Orleans has scheduled:

► Self-Help Resource Center (staffed by volunteers) at Orleans Parish Civil District Court, 10 a.m.-noon and 1-3 p.m., Monday, Oct. 20, and Wednesday, Oct. 22; and 10 a.m.-noon, Friday, Oct. 24.


► Legal clinic for seniors, 9-11 a.m., Monday, Oct. 20, Metairie Senior Center, 265 N. Causeway Blvd., Metairie.

► Clinic for the homeless at the New Orleans Mission, 1-2 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 21, 1130 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd., New Orleans.

► Family Law CLE, Tuesday, Oct. 21, Baker Donelson, 201 St. Charles Ave., 36th Floor, New Orleans; time to be determined.

The Northshore Pro Bono Project of Southeast Louisiana Legal Services is conducting two free Ask-a-Lawyer Clinics:

► Thursday, Oct. 2, 9-11:30 a.m., Slidell branch of the St. Tammany Parish Public Library, 555 Robert Blvd., Slidell; and

► Friday, Oct. 10, 9-11:30 a.m., Covington branch of the St. Tammany Parish Public Library, 310 W. 21st Ave., Covington. 

LIFT Incubator Program creates jobs that serve community needs

The Louisiana Civil Justice Center (LCJC), in partnership with the Louisiana State Bar Association, has launched the LIFT (Legal Innovators for Tomorrow) Legal Incubator Program, the first legal incubator program of its kind in Louisiana. The program is designed to address two startling issues in Louisiana — the lack of job opportunities for recent law graduates, and an underprivileged population in need of legal representation. To address these issues, LIFT matches newly admitted attorneys passionate about social justice and serving the basic legal needs of vulnerable populations with those most in need of affordable legal services.

Since launching the program in April 2014, the participating attorneys have provided legal assistance to more than 50 low- and moderate-income people in Louisiana.

The LIFT Legal Incubator is a two-year pilot program that provides new attorneys with the resources necessary to develop innovative, public interest-oriented solo practices.

After a competitive application process, four attorneys were chosen to participate in

the program — James A. Graham, Robyn R. Griffin, Nicholas J. Hite and Betty A. Maury. Each attorney has his/her own innovative practice covering a broad range of legal issues affecting children with disabilities, the LGBTQ community, the elderly, and those unable to afford high-priced legal services.

“For me, being a LIFT Fellow has meant going from zero to 60 in a matter of months. As a Fellow, I’ve had the support, encouragement and resources to hang my shingle, acquire clients, and become known as a valuable resource within my community,” said Hite, a New Orleans attorney who provides legal representation to the LGBTQ community and people of low or moderate income.

“I’ve expanded my network and met other like-minded attorneys — all newly admitted, all going solo from scratch, and all seeing the benefit of public interest work. I can ask them for help or offer them help,” said Maury who runs a general practice offering affordable legal services to clients of modest means.

In addition to the LIFT program, the LCJC implemented the LIFT Practice Network (LPN), which connects aspiring public

interest attorneys with the resources, collaboration and training they need to build their solo practices. Currently, the program has eight participating attorneys.

“LPN has given me the basic skills and resources that law school didn’t necessarily provide, such as business strategies and the steps needed to form my LLC,” said Eric J. Santana, a New Orleans attorney who formed his law practice, the Law Office of Eric J. Santana, L.L.C., in June with the help of LCJC and LPN.

Jonathan M. Rhodes, LCJC executive director, said “the LIFT program and practice network are not only about helping young attorneys gain the resources and experience they need to build a sustainable solo practice, it is also about innovating and collaborating to better serve the needs of our community.” Although the legal incubator program is currently based in New Orleans, Rhodes said the plan is to expand the program statewide.

For more information, visit www.laciviljustice.org or contact Amy Duncan at (504)355-0980 or email amy.duncan@laciviljustice.org



LAWYERS IN LIBRARIES October 23, 2014



Louisiana lawyers are proud to partner with Louisiana libraries to help address the legal needs of our communities.

On October 23, 2014, the Louisiana Library Association and the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) will sponsor “Lawyers in Libraries” events across the state in support of the National Pro Bono Celebration. Attorney volunteers will provide “Ask-a-Lawyer” sessions, or educational presentations, free of charge to library patrons.

WE NEED YOUR HELP to be the Lawyer in your local Library.

To participate in a “Lawyers in Libraries” event, contact the LSBA Access to Justice Department at (504)619-0106 or (800)421-5722, ext. 106, or email Nicole.Louque@lsba.org. More info on the project can be found at:

www.LouisianaLawyersinLibraries.org

Special thanks to all the participating attorneys helping to make this project a success.