

NEWSLETTER

ProBonoNY

AN ACCESS TO JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP FOR THE POOR

For Local Action Committees

SPONSORED BY THE NEW YORK STATE UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM, OFFICE OF THE HONORABLE JUANITA BING NEWTON, DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE FOR JUSTICE INITIATIVES
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ProBonoNY at the May 2008 EQUAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE By Elwyn Hutter

We are pleased to announce that ProBonoNY will be strongly represented at the Equal Justice Conference to be held May 7-9, 2008, in Minneapolis. The Conference is sponsored jointly by the American Bar Association and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association.

At this year's Conference, Lewis G. Creekmore and Elwyn Hutter, both members of the Ninth Judicial District Pro Bono Committee (and Elwyn is the committee's pro bono coordinator), will be presenting a program entitled Power of Partnership: Collaboration with Judiciary and Private Bar to Recruit Volunteers and Develop Programs.

This program will explore creative collaborations between legal service providers, the judiciary, and the private bar to help fill gaps in services for poor people by identifying needs and opportunities to develop service delivery models that best use available private bar resources.

Mr. Creekmore and Mr. Hutter will draw on the experience of the Ninth District Committee's recruitment and placement activities in Westchester and Orange Counties. The Committee has developed collaborative programs such as "Partners in Pro Bono" in Orange County, which recruited over 50 attorneys from local firms to accept pro bono case referrals, as well as projects in Westchester County that trained volunteer attorneys in areas of law where under-served, low-income clients particularly need help. Projects that will be discussed include those aimed at providing pro bono attorneys for tenants in need of eviction prevention assistance, claimants seeking unemployment benefits, and persons needing assistance in child support matters.

FIFTH DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON LINE By John Ritchie

Congratulations are due the Fifth District Committee for the first-ever ProBonoNY website. Please take a look at the site, which is now up and running at www.nycourts.gov/courts/5jd/probono. If you do a Google search using "ProBonoNY," you will be led to this site.

Among other things, the site has a concise description of the ProBonoNY initiative and a portrait of the Fifth District Committee and its goals, as well as specific programs and activities. And of course it tells attorneys how they can sign up to participate. Also please note the prominent Committee and ProBonoNY logos, in forms which I hope we will consistently use (though different colors are possible) and which I hope will become widely recognized among those interested in promoting and supporting pro bono work.

In a future Newsletter, I hope to have an article from a Fifth District Committee member describing the development process and crediting specifically the committee members, including the former pro bono coordinator, Esther Weingarten, who contributed to creating the new website. Also to thank are members of the court system's IT staff, including Andrew Mitchell and Timothy Fitzgerald in Syracuse and Phillip Yow in New York City.

The Eighth District Committee is well along in the process of developing its similar website, and we hope it will be up and running in the near future. Other committees are sure to be interested in doing something similar, and there will soon be a "central" ProBonoNY site that will make available, among other things, the committee's annual reports. I hope we will be able to place links to our committees' web sites on other relevant sites, such as probono.net and others.

NOTES & COMMENTS

By John Ritchie

*A further note on the ABA/NLADA **Equal Justice Conference**, which this year will be held in Minneapolis, May 7-9, 2008, at the Hilton Minneapolis Hotel. You may want to think about attending—a fair number of members of the ProBonoNY Committees are regular attendees at this annual conference. It certainly would be of great interest to anyone interested in promoting equal access to justice for poor and low-income persons and anyone focused on enhancing pro bono services.*

The Equal Justice Conference includes a multitude of workshop/panel presentations on a wide variety of pro bono subjects: innovative service programs addressing specific types of legal needs, law firm pro bono development, legal service providers in partnership with other community organizations, and other topics. For a full description, please see www.equaljusticeconference.org.



A number of conflicting matters interfered with timely publication of the Newsletter's January and February issues. I hope to be back on track soon, with a March issue in the middle of the month, and then back to early in the month for April and thereafter.

Contributions are invited. Of course, we would like articles describing particular committee events and programs; but articles in any way related to our work would be very welcome. The pro bono coordinators have often penned articles for the Newsletter, and they will continue to do so. But it would be great to have contributions from other committee members—the more, the merrier. Also, short and simple.