

Volume IV, Number 4 May-June 2010

FIFTH DISTRICT PRO BONO PROJECT: TRAINING FOR “TALK TO A LAWYER” CLINICS

By Jim Williams

Fifth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator

A Fifth District pro bono project trains volunteers to provide guidance at free “Talk to a Lawyer” legal clinics. Over 45 people attended a 3.5-hour free CLE program for the volunteers at the various community based “Talk to a Lawyer” clinics in Onondaga County. Based at churches, schools, a hospital, and community organizations, the free clinics in Onondaga County provide community members with the opportunity to talk with a volunteer lawyer about a legal problem and get advice and appropriate referrals.

The training was organized by Fifth District ProBonoNY Committee staff Jim Williams and Michele Czornij, along with Deb O’Shea of the Onondaga County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project. They were assisted by longtime clinic volunteers Esther Weingarten, Legal

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NEWS FROM THE SEVENTH DISTRICT: CLE BROADCAST

By Linda Kostin

Seventh Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator

To facilitate the recruitment and training of pro bono attorneys to address as area of perennial need, two CLE programs were broadcast live from the Hall of Justice in Rochester to courthouses in the seven rural counties of the Seventh Judicial District on May 7, 2010. This program would not have been possible without the support of Hon. Thomas M. Van Strydonck, Seventh District Administrative Judge and Co-Chair of the Seventh District’s ProBonoNY Committee.

Billed as a doubleheader CLE, “Divorce 101” and “Additional Topics in Matrimonial Law” were broadcast back-to-back, enabling attorneys to attend one or both of the three-hour programs, either in person in Rochester or by live broadcast elsewhere. Presenters included Committee member Kevin M. Nasca, Esq., Principal Law Clerk to the Hon. John M. Owens,

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FIFTH DISTRICT CLINICS

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Services of Central New York Staff Attorney, and Edward McArdle, New York State Law Department Attorney.

The training program, which took place May 7 at the offices of Syracuse-based Bond Schoeneck & King, provided volunteers with an overview of landlord/tenant law, public benefits, and family law, as well as the opportunity to meet and learn from the Legal Services and Legal Aid lawyers in the community who represent clients in these areas and to learn about the services available to clients from these organizations. Trainers included Lewis Liebler and Maureen Kieffer, Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York attorneys; Mary John and Dan Petrone, Hiscock Legal Aid Society attorneys; and Jim Williams of Legal Services of Central New York and Fifth District ProBonoNY Coordinator.

The training program was intended both to provide participating volunteers with specific information they need to appropriately advise clients and to serve as a thank you for the many hours of volunteered time that the attorneys give to the clinics. This fall, training is planned in employment, estates, and consumer law topics.

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SEVENTH DISTRICT NEWS

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J.S.C., who is himself a member of the Committee. Mr. Nasca presented *Judgment Rolls and More* during the "Divorce 101" CLE program. Additional presenters were Paloma A. Capanna, Esq.; Lisa A. Sadinsky, Esq.; Catherine Cerulli, J.D., Ph.D.; Charles P. Inclima, Esq.; and Thomas N. Martin, Esq.

Forty attorneys attended "Divorce 101" in Rochester; nine attorneys viewed the broadcast at rural courthouses. "Additional Topics in Matrimonial Law" was attended by 34 attorneys in Rochester, and ten more viewed the program at rural courthouses. In exchange for attending each program, attorneys committed to rendering pro bono legal services in their communities through the Finger Lakes Volunteer Lawyer Service, Southern Tier Volunteer Lawyers Project, Legal Aid Society of Mid-NY, and Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County.

Western New York Law Center in Buffalo has produced DVDs of the CLE broadcasts. Eight attorneys in Livingston, Steuben and Monroe counties are registered to view the DVDs, which will also be used to train additional attorneys in the future.

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FIFTH DISTRICT CLINICS

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While each of the clinics has its own intake procedures, and some serve a particular group within the community—veterans or hospital patients or families of Syracuse City School District students, for example—all of the clinics provide people with guidance about how to handle a particular problem. The clinics help people figure out if they need a lawyer to help resolve a problem and whether they may be eligible for free assistance from Legal Services, Legal Aid, or law-school-based programs. Volunteers are also able to provide information about governmental agencies that may be able to assist and about relevant social service programs.

Depending on the clinic, lawyers volunteer once a month or so for two hours. Volunteers at the clinics not only find their time at the clinics to be personally satisfying, they also feel that they are helping to strengthen our community and enhance the reputation of lawyers. Long-time clinic volunteer Denny Baldwin said, “I enjoy the opportunity to help guide folks who often feel they have no one else to turn to.” He also believes that the clinics “reflect well

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AMANDA WARNER CONGRATULATIONS!

Amanda Warner is the Eighth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator, and we are delighted to report that she has recently been recognized for her excellent work with and for the Eighth District ProBonoNY Committee by the **Women’s Bar Association of the State of New York.**

At the Association’s annual convention in Ellenville, New York, on May 21, 2010, Amanda received the **Association’s Doris S. Hoffman Outstanding New Lawyer Award.** The Association describes the award as follows: “This award is given to a WBASNY member who, as of the December 31st prior to the convention at which the award will be presented, has been a member of the bar for not more than five years, and who has made outstanding achievements within the profession, outstanding contributions within the WBASNY member’s community, or both.”

Amanda’s ProBonoNY work, first in Buffalo and Erie County, and increasingly throughout the other counties of this large District amply displays the commitment and creativity which this award is intended to recognize and celebrate. Again, our congratulations!



FIFTH DISTRICT CLINICS

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on lawyers, who often are either misunderstood or seen as beyond the reach of the average person.”

If you would like more information about the clinics or the training, please contact Jim Williams as follows: <<mailto:jwilliams@lscny.org>> jwilliams@lscny.org.



NOTES AND COMMENTS

By John Ritchie

NATIONAL PRO BONO WEEK

This year, the second annual National Pro Bono Celebration is scheduled for the week of October 24 to 30, 2010. ProBonoNY Committees sponsored many very successful events during last year’s first National Pro Bono Week, and Judge Fisher hopes that all committees can again celebrate Pro Bono Week this year—if possible with events occurring within the actual designated week, but if necessary shortly before or soon after that week. **It is not too early to start planning now!** In fact, several of the Committees have already started to plan their Pro Bono Week events, and I’m

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

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sure others will soon be involved as well. For some committees, Pro Bono Week might involve a single major district-wide event; for others, more than one event, in counties throughout the district. Events can be co-sponsored with other entities.

How to celebrate is up to each committee, and there’s something for every individual committee member to do in planning and implementing these events and joining in the celebrations! We cannot now promise funding will be available from Judge Fisher’s office for food or other incidental expenses; but this may change if the court system’s budget is adopted by the Legislature. Stay tuned.

There are many event possibilities, such as award and recognition programs and receptions; CLE programs, including “Best Practices” programs as well as programs aimed at specific subjects or types of cases; social recruiting events—“Meet the Judges” or “Breakfast at the Courthouse” events. Not to be forgotten is the desirability of publicity in a variety of media: local newspapers and broadcast outlets, bar association news letters, etc.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

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For many creative ideas concerning National Pro Bono Week events, *see* the ABA's Pro Bono Week website at www.celebrateprobono.org. I look forward to participating in each committee's planning for Pro Bono Week, and Judge Fisher and I will attend as many committee events as possible.

ACCESS to JUSTICE>ProBonoNY STATISTICS

This spring, Chief Judge Lippman requested some statistics reflecting pro bono work through the court system's statewide Access to Justice Program, including the ProBonoNY committees, for the one-year period May 1, 2009 through April 2010. Specifically, we collected and reported to Judge Lippman two numerical items: how many volunteer lawyers were trained during that period and how many hours of pro bono service were provided.

We reported that programs of the ProBonoNY committees trained 1635 attorneys who served 19,181 pro bono hours in matters involving both limited scope representation as well as full representation. For the NYC court-operated volunteer programs: 1682 attorneys trained, 13,799 pro bono hours in NYC courts. Total statewide: 3317 attorneys, 32,980 hours of pro bono service. All the committees are to be congratulated on these excellent results!

NOTES AND COMMENTS

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NYSBA Partnership Conference

The conference was held June 14-16, 2010, in Albany, consisting primarily of intensive CLE programs of great interest to attorneys who are staff members of not-for-profit legal service providers and to pro bono attorneys. Subjects included foreclosure proceedings, landlord/tenant matters, public benefits issues, debtors' rights, matrimonial proceedings, and many others, too numerous to list here.

In conjunction with the Conference, a meeting of the Pro Bono Coordinators' Network was convened, at which ProBonoNY gave a panel presentation focused on the ProBonoNY Committees' many collaborative projects. The six ProBonoNY coordinators and my colleague on Judge Fisher's staff, Jackie Haberfeld, prepared written materials to hand out at the panel presentation, describing in outline form many of the collaborative programs sponsored by each of the ProBonoNY committees and, in New York City, directly sponsored by the court system through Judge Fisher's office.

The written materials present a really impressive range of pro bono activities—I know of no other state that has such an extensive court-sponsored pro bono program. Also impressive is the range of collaboration evident in these projects. For your interest, the written materials are attached to this issue of the Bulletin. Everyone should be proud to be participating in this creative and expanding volunteer program.

**PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE
ALBANY, NEW YORK
PRO BONO COORDINATORS' NETWORK MEETING
June 14, 2010**

Panel Presentation:

ProBonoNY Update: Innovative Bench and Bar Collaborations

Moderator:

Hon. Fern A. Fisher, Director, NYS Unified Court System Access to Justice Program and Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Courts within New York City.

Panelists:

Jacqueline Haberfeld, Esq., *Special Counsel* to Hon. Fern A. Fisher, NYS Unified Court System Access to Justice Program, 646-386-3294; jhaberfe@courts.state.ny.us.

Jim Williams, Esq., *Fifth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Legal Services of Central New York, Inc., 315-703-6533; jwilliams@lscny.org.

Suzanne S. Myette, Esq., *Sixth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Legal Aid Society of Mid-NY, Inc. (Binghamton), 607-231-5970; smyette@wnylc.com.

Linda Kostin, Esq., *Seventh Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County, Inc., 585-295-5703; lkostin@wnylc.com.

Amanda Warner, Esq., *Eighth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc., 716-847-0062, ext. 318; awarner@wnylc.com.

Carol Neiditch, Esq., *Ninth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, Inc., 914-949-1305, ext. 133; cneiditch@lshv.org.

Linda Raphan, Esq., *Tenth Judicial District/Suffolk County ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Nassau/Suffolk Law Services Committee, Inc., 631-232-2400, ext. 3333; lraphan@wnylc.com.

Printed materials edited by John Ritchie, Esq., *Special Counsel* to Hon. Fern A. Fisher, NYS Unified Court System Access to Justice Program, 646-386-4712; jritchie@courts.state.ny.us.

**PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE
ALBANY, NEW YORK
June 14-16, 2010**

Panel Presentation:

ProBonoNY Update: Innovative Bench and Bar Collaborations

“ProBonoNY” is the state-wide pro bono initiative sponsored by the New York State Unified Court System. It is a component of the court system’s Access to Justice Program, which is directed by Hon. Fern A. Fisher, who is also Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for all courts within New York City. Judge Fisher is a long-time advocate of programs aimed at increased access to the court system for low-income and moderate-income people who cannot afford an attorney. Her own programs in New York City Civil Court for unrepresented litigants and for limited-scope, “unbundled” pro bono legal services are widely known, have proven very effective, and are being extended throughout the court system.

ProBonoNY, originally envisioned by former Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye, is intended to encourage and support attorneys in volunteering to provide pro bono legal services to those New Yorkers who cannot afford to pay for lawyers. ProBonoNY volunteers provide these services both through programs administered by the court system and in a wide variety of programs run in partnership with various legal services providers across the State.

As has been reported at earlier Partnership Conferences and Pro Bono Coordinators’ Network meetings, ProBonoNY is organized through a growing network of committees, which are chaired by Judicial District Administrative Judges and, in most cases, co-chaired by local private attorneys, in one case by the Pro Bono Director of a local service provider, in another by a retired judge who is also an active pro bono practitioner. Members of the committees are judges and other court personnel, attorneys in private and governmental practice, attorneys with not-for-profit service providers, and law school faculty.

There are presently ProBonoNY Committees in the Fifth Judicial District (headquartered in Syracuse), the Sixth District (Binghamton), the Seventh District (Rochester), the Eighth District (Buffalo), the Ninth District (White Plains), and the Tenth District (in both Suffolk and Nassau counties), as well as a Discussion Group in the Third District (Albany). Six of those committees are supported by attorney/pro bono coordinators (and one legal assistant) whose positions at local legal services providers are funded by the court system; court system employees directly support one committee and the discussion group, as well as providing general statewide support and assistance.

ProBonoNY is by its very nature a collaborative endeavor. The committees are themselves collaborative entities, intended to be broadly representative of their areas, and they regularly add members to enhance participation among their respective communities. Beyond that, each of the

committees is deeply committed to working with other individuals and agencies in pursuit of their mutual goal of increasing access to justice for all New Yorkers. This presentation is intended to highlight many of the committees' collaborative programs and provide sources of further information about them. The materials that follow amplify the panel presentation and provide contacts for those who may wish to seek further information. Also appended are some sample recruiting letters, event fliers, etc.; more are available from the indicated contact persons.

NEW YORK CITY

A. *Family Court Program*

1. **Summary:** Volunteer Lawyers provide legal advice on support, paternity, custody, visitation, family offense and guardianship matters to unrepresented litigants in NYC Family Court in New York, Kings and Queens Counties of NYC..
2. **Partners:** The Access to Justice Program's partners in this program are the private bar and legal services providers.
3. **Contact:** Rosina Taffuri, Deputy Chief Court Counsel, 646-386-5127; rtaffuri@courts.state.ny.us.

B. *Lawyer for a Day - Consumer Debt*

1. **Summary:** In response to the consumer debt crisis currently affecting so many New Yorkers, the Access to Justice Program has launched a project in which unrepresented litigants will be represented by volunteer attorneys who will assist them in vacating default judgments against them, both during settlement negotiations and in court. Representation begins and ends the same day. This program is offered in New York and Kings Counties of NYC.
2. **Partners:** The Access to Justice Program's partners in this program are NY Appleseed, Brooklyn Bar, NYLAG and the New York County Lawyers' Association.
3. **Contact:** Laurie Milder, Esq., Special Counsel to Hon. Fern A. Fisher, 646-386-5850; lmilder@courts.state.ny.us.

C. *Lawyer for a Day - Foreclosure*

1. **Summary:** The skyrocketing foreclosure rates in New York have called for a significant response by the Access to Justice Program. Volunteer attorneys in New York, Kings, Queens, and the Bronx have been assisting unrepresented litigants in explaining the foreclosure proceedings, helping them get their papers in order, and accompanying the borrowers to mandatory settlement conferences.

2. **Partners:** The Access to Justice Program's partners in this program are the private bar, area law schools, and bar associations.
3. **Contact:** Jacqueline Haberfeld, Esq., Special Counsel to Hon. Fern A. Fisher, 646-386-3294; jhaberfe@courts.state.ny.us.

D. *Lawyer for a Day - Housing*

1. **Summary:** Volunteer attorneys provide limited representation for unrepresented landlords or tenants in their nonpayment cases in the NYC Housing Court's Resolution Part. Representation begins and ends the same day.
2. **Partners:** The Access to Justice Program's partner in this project is CUNY Law School.
3. **Contact:** Yacine Barry, Esq., Special Counsel to Hon. Fern A. Fisher, 646-386-5400; ybarry@courts.state.ny.us.

E. *Resolution Assistance Program*

1. **Summary:** The Civil Court recruits, trains, and supervises law students and college students to accompany self-represented litigants to their court appearances at Housing Court.
2. **Partners:** The Access to Justice Program's partners in this program are area law schools and the private bar.
3. **Contact:** Yacine Barry, Esq., Special Counsel to Hon. Fern A. Fisher, 646-386-5400; ybarry@courts.state.ny.us.

F. *Small Landlord Program*

1. **Summary:** Volunteer attorneys are trained to offer information and advice to unrepresented owners of two and three-family homes in Kings County regarding non-payment and holdover proceedings. Without this assistance, many of these owners would themselves face foreclosure and eviction from their homes.
2. **Partners:** The Access to Justice Program's partner in this program is the private bar.
3. **Contact:** Phaedra Perry, Esq., Special Counsel to Hon. Fern A. Fisher, 646-386-5400; pfperry@courts.state.ny.us.

G. *Activities*

The Access to Justice Program initiates and participates in numerous activities in conjunction with our partners. These include:

- training programs associated with our volunteer service projects,
- National Pro Bono Celebration Week events,
- fellowship programs in which recent law school graduates volunteer in the courts' pro bono programs, and
- initiation of new programs on an as-needed basis.

FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

A. *Judiciary Law Section 35(8) Pro Bono Divorce Project*

1. **Summary:** Under Judiciary Law §35(8), the Supreme Court may assign counsel in a divorce action to represent a litigant on the issues with respect to which the litigant would be entitled to counsel under §262 of the Family Court Act, such as child custody and visitation and orders of protection. We recruit attorneys willing to accept such assignments who are also willing to handle the rest of the issues in the divorce on a pro bono basis.
2. **Partners:** Judges, court personnel, bar associations, the private bar, and legal services providers.
3. **Contact:** Jim Williams, *Fifth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Legal Services of Central New York, Inc., 315-703-6533, jwilliams@lscny.org.

B. *Bankruptcy*

1. **Summary:** Since January of 2008, many low-income people in Central New York have been able to obtain pro bono bankruptcy representation.
2. **Partners:** NDNY Bankruptcy Court (Syracuse), the Central New York Bankruptcy Bar Association (CNYBBA), volunteer lawyers, Legal Services of Central New York, Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, Syracuse University Law School Professor Gregory Germain and law student volunteers.
3. **Contact:** Jim Williams, *Fifth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Legal Services of Central New York, Inc., 315-703-6533; jwilliams@lscny.org.

C. *Community-Based Legal Advice and Referral Clinics*

1. **Hospital-Based Medical/Legal Program**

- a. **Summary:** Clinic for patients and their families for legal problems related to the patient's illness or injury, including insurance, advance planning, housing, consumer, employment, and other issues. Clinic does not assist with malpractice or guardianship matters.
- b. **Partners:** University and Crouse Hospitals in Syracuse, the University Hospital Rehabilitation Unit, the Onondaga County Bar Association, and volunteer lawyers.
- c. **Contact:** Jim Williams, *Fifth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Legal Services of Central New York, Inc., 315-703-6533; jwilliams@lscny.org.

2. **School-Based Legal Clinics**

- a. **Summary:** Clinics for students and their families to assist with legal problems that interfere with family stability, including housing, consumer, employment, and other issues. Clinics do not assist with school disciplinary matters or divorces.
- b. **Partners:** Syracuse School District, Say Yes to Education Foundation, Syracuse University, law firms, Onondaga County Bar Association.
- c. **Contact:** Jim Williams, *Fifth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Legal Services of Central New York, Inc., 315-703-6533; jwilliams@lscny.org.

3. **Clinics in Churches, Veterans Center, Community Center, Courthouse**

- a. **Summary:** Clinics provide legal advice and referrals for any civil legal matter.
- b. **Partners:** Bar associations, volunteer lawyers, community organizations.
- c. **Contact:** Jim Williams, *Fifth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Legal Services of Central New York, Inc., 315-703-6533; jwilliams@lscny.org.

D. Food Stamp Assessment Project

- 1. **Summary:** Food stamp assessment clinic staffed by paralegals and law students.

Volunteers complete an interview and Excel spreadsheet to determine eligibility for and likely amount of benefits. Volunteers also explain the application process. This project has helped us fulfill our goal of providing more pro bono opportunities for paralegals.

2. **Partners:** Volunteer paralegals and law students, Legal Services of Central New York, Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York.
3. **Contact:** Jim Williams, *Fifth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Legal Services of Central New York, Inc., 315-703-6533; jwilliams@lscny.org.

SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

A. *Judges' Best Practices CLE Programs*

1. **Summary:** From its inception, the Sixth Judicial District ProBonoNY Committee intended to co-sponsor Judges' Best Practices CLE programs on the model of those co-sponsored by the Rural Law Center—since 2000, in 34 rural counties, drawing over 1900 attorneys. In the past year, the Committee has co-sponsored six separate Judges' Best Practices CLE programs. Two of the programs—the first in Chenango County and most recently in Madison County—were presented in direct partnership with Susan Patnode and the Rural Law Center; four similar programs were held in Broome, Delaware, and Tompkins Counties. In addition to RLC, the programs involve partnering with local judges and court personnel, bar associations, and service providers. Typically, a panel of four or five local judges representing Supreme, Family, Surrogate's, and City Courts present pertinent substantive information and provide local practice tips. Each attending attorney agrees to accept one or two pro bono referrals in exchange for free CLE credit for the half-day program.

The most recent program was held in Binghamton, where a three-member panel consisting of a Support Magistrate and two local practicing attorneys focused on child support issues, with the goal of establishing a volunteer Child Support panel.

2. **Partners:** Judges and other court personnel, Rural Law Center, bar associations, local attorneys, and legal service providers.

B. *Elder Law Clinics*

1. **Summary:** Partnering with the NYSBA Elder Law Section, local Offices for Aging, and local bar associations, the Committee co-hosted six Elder law Clinics throughout

the Sixth District in the past year, including Broome, Tioga, and Otsego counties. The 3½-hour clinics offer half-hour private pro bono consultations to local citizens aged 60 and over, on a number of elder law issues, such as estate planning and probate, Medicaid planning, POAs, HCPs, real estate, grandparents' rights, and debt collection/bankruptcy. Many of the volunteer attorneys provide extended pro bono services, including in some instances full representation to qualifying clinic attendees. These clinics were all held at local Office of Aging facilities and advertised through their newsletters.

2. **Partners:** NYSBA Elder Law Section and local bar associations, attorneys, Offices of the Aging, and service providers.

C. *Unemployment Insurance Hearings CLE Programs*

1. **Summary:** Last summer, the Committee partnered with the NYS Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board, which provided two Administrative Law Judges from Albany to present a three-credit CLE program in Binghamton. Attending attorneys agreed to accept one pro bono unemployment insurance appeal, and several volunteered for more than one. The results appeared to be far better with representation than they would have been pro se. The judges found the program very rewarding as well and agreed to a second CLE presentation to be held this coming July.
2. **Partners:** NYS Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board, Broome County Bar Association, local attorneys, and the local service provider, Legal Aid Society of Mid-NY.

D. *Landlord/Tenant Clinics*

1. **Summary:** The Binghamton City Court docket schedules Landlord/tenant hearings every Tuesday and Thursday morning. The majority of tenants appear pro se, and more and more landlords are appearing without attorneys as well. The local service provider, Legal Aid Society of Mid-NY, currently does not have any staff attorneys to represent tenants, but calls pour in to the telephone Helpline constantly for tenant relief. In response to the need, the Committee is partnering with Legal Aid Society and the local City Court judges: plans are underway to implement a Landlord/Tenant clinic, recruiting attorneys to represent tenants in court via a pro bono Attorney for the Day program—similar to programs that have been successful in New York City, Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo.
2. **Partners:** Binghamton City Court judges, local attorneys, Legal Aid Society of Mid-NY.

Contact for all Sixth Judicial District ProBonoNY programs: Suzanne S. Myette, *Sixth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Legal Aid Society of Mid-NY, Inc. (Binghamton), 607-231-5970; smyette@wnylc.com.

SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

A. *Pro Bono Idol*

1. **Summary:** In a spin on both American Idol and the traditional pro bono fair, volunteer attorneys took center stage in a week-long series of auditions to name Rochester's 2009 Pro Bono Idol, sponsored by the Seventh Judicial District ProBonoNY Committee. Pro bono volunteer recruitment was a key objective, as was raising awareness within the community of the wide range of pro bono opportunities available. Another objective was fostering and strengthening partnerships between participating agencies. Pro Bono Idol was held the week of October 26, 2009, in conjunction with the ABA's first annual National Celebration of Pro Bono.
2. **Partners:** The Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester, Catholic Charities of Wayne County, Farmworker Legal Services of New York, Flower City Habitat for Humanity, the La Casa Residence of Sodus, the Legal Aid Society of Rochester, Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County, and the Monroe County Bar Association.
3. **Contact:** Linda Kostin, *Seventh Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County, Inc., 585-295-5703, lkostin@wnylc.com.

B. *Ethics in the Afternoon CLE*

1. **Summary:** Featuring an all-star panel of presenters and a reception with live music, this four-credit ethics CLE program drew over 100 attorneys from all eight counties of the Seventh Judicial District. Attendees agreed to render pro bono service in their communities. The program, held April 16, 2009, consisted of brief presentations on informative and entertaining topics, including "Things You Never Say in Court and Why" and "Lawyers Behaving Badly—Dealing with Uncooperative Adversaries." Several judges helped plan the CLE program, others served as presenters, and many more attended the program and reception.
2. **Partners:** Judges, the private bar, and Volunteer Legal Services Project.
3. **Contact:** Linda Kostin, *Seventh Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County, Inc., 585-295-5703; lkostin@wnylc.com.

C. *Pro Bono Art Workshop*

1. **Summary:** A social event held in August 2009 for new and veteran pro bono volunteers at an art studio in Rochester's Neighborhood of the Arts. Two long-time pro bono attorneys did informal presentations regarding the personal and professional rewards of pro bono work. Objectives included volunteer recruitment and strengthening volunteers' commitment to pro bono work by building *esprit de corps* among volunteers. Donated studio space, materials, and food kept costs to a minimum. All art produced was sold at a silent auction which afforded additional opportunities for volunteer recruitment.
2. **Partners:** The private bar, Volunteer Legal Services Project, Studio 34 Creative Arts Center, the Gate House Café.
3. **Contact:** Linda Kostin, *Seventh Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County, Inc., 585-295-5703; lkostin@wnylc.com.

D. *Tax Clinic for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing*

1. **Summary:** Rochester has one of the largest per-capita Deaf populations in the country and is a thriving home of Deaf culture and education. During the 2010 tax season, a collaborative initiative was launched to provide tax information and answer questions from low- and moderate-income members of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing community. Clinics were held in several locations.
2. **Partners:** The private bar, Rochester Deaf Rotary, Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf, Advocacy Services for Abused Deaf Victims, National Technical Institute for the Deaf's Colorfest Committee, Empire Justice Center, Volunteer Legal Services Project.
3. **Contact:** Linda Kostin, *Seventh Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County, Inc., 585-295-5703; lkostin@wnylc.com.

E. *Live Broadcasts of CLE Programs throughout the Seventh Judicial District*

1. **Summary:** To facilitate the recruitment and training of pro bono attorneys to address an area of perennial client need, two CLE programs were broadcast live from the Hall of Justice in Rochester to courthouses in the seven rural counties of the Seventh Judicial District on May 7, 2010. Billed as a double-header CLE, "Divorce 101" and "Additional Topics in Matrimonial Law" were broadcast back-to-back, enabling attorneys to attend one or both of the three-hour programs. Forty attended "Divorce 101" in Rochester; nine attorneys viewed the broadcast at rural courthouses. "Additional Topics in Matrimonial Law" was attended by 34 attorneys in Rochester,

and ten more viewed the program at rural courthouses. Eight attorneys in Livingston, Steuben, and Monroe counties are registered to view DVDs of the CLE programs, which also will be used to train additional attorneys in the future. In exchange for receiving CLE credit, attorneys have agreed to render pro bono service in their communities.

2. **Partners:** Hon. Thomas M. Van Strydonck, Administrative Judge for the Seventh Judicial District, court system employees, the private bar, Western New York Law Center (Buffalo), Finger Lakes Volunteer Lawyer Service, Southern Tier Volunteer Lawyers Project, Legal Aid Society of Mid-NY, Volunteer Legal Services Project.
3. **Contact:** Linda Kostin, *Seventh Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County, Inc., 585-295-5703; lkostin@wnylc.com.

EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

A. *Building Pro Bono Resources in Rural Counties*

1. **Chautauqua County ProBonoNY Subcommittee**
 - a. **Summary:** Regional subcommittee of the Eighth District Committee formed in 2008, devoted to recruiting and supporting private attorneys in Chautauqua County to accept pro bono referrals from, and participate in clinics run by, Southern Tier Legal Services (“STLS,” a division of Legal Assistance of Western New York) and Legal Aid of Chautauqua Region (“LACR”).
 - b. **Partners:** Private attorneys, local judges, bar association leaders, court personnel, legal services and pro bono providers (STLS and LACR).
 - c. **Activities:**
 - i. **“Providing Pro Bono Services in Chautauqua County: Needs, Challenges, and Current Practices”**—CLE program held June 23, 2008, Sponsored by the Committee, the Jamestown Bar Association (“JBA”), the Bar Association of Northern Chautauqua (“BANC”), LACR, and STLS in Mayville, New York. Topics included the importance of pro bono work to the courts and in improving access to justice, ethical considerations in pro bono practice, an update from the Grievance Committee, and areas of great need and opportunities for pro bono work in the region. About 45 attorneys attended the program and the lunch held afterward, each of whom received one free Ethics CLE credit.

- ii. **Judicial Letter**—As a follow-up to the CLE program, Hon. Paula L. Feroletto, then a Committee member, now Administrative Judge and judicial Co-Chair of the Eighth District Committee, prepared a letter that was signed by all Chautauqua County judges and sent to all Chautauqua County attorneys, expressing the need for participation in an organized pro bono effort in collaboration with STLS and LACR and enclosing a pro bono questionnaire/registration form returnable to representatives of the bar associations, BANC and JBA. Thirty-three attorneys returned the forms, expressing their willingness to participate in increased pro bono work, covering all six areas of unmet need and the two clinic projects listed on the registration form.
- iii. **“How to Handle a Matrimonial Case: A Nuts and Bolts Training”**—a four-credit CLE program held January 26 and February 2, 2009, sponsored by the Chautauqua County ProBonoNY Subcommittee in Mayville, free to attorneys who committed to handling at least one pro bono divorce (referred by STLS or LACR) within a year. Twenty lawyers attended.
- iv. **Chautauqua County’s “Pro Bono All-Stars”**—Lunchtime program and reception hosted by the Chautauqua County Subcommittee, BANC, JBA, STLS, and LACR, November 2, 2009, in Mayville. This reception recognized attorneys who played prominent roles in creation and implementation of an organized pro bono program in Chautauqua County; it was part was part of the Committee’s district-wide celebration of National Pro Bono Week.
- d. **Contact:** Amanda Warner, *Eighth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc., 716-847-0062, ext. 318; awarner@wnylc.com.

2. Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties ProBonoNY Subcommittee

- a. **Summary:** Regional subcommittee formed in late 2009, devoted to recruiting and supporting private attorneys in Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties to accept pro bono referrals and participate in clinic run by STLS, the active service provider in those counties.
- b. **Partners:** Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties court staff, local bar association representatives, legal services provider (STLS), private attorneys, and a representative from the Rural Justice Institute at Alfred University.
- c. **Activities:** The Subcommittee held its first meeting via telephone conference

December 18, 2009. The group discussed areas of greatest need in Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties, possible pro bono opportunities for lawyers, and initiating an organized pro bono effort in collaboration with STLS in early 2010 with a judicial letter inviting attorneys to participate, much like that which proved successful in Chautauqua County.

- d. **Contact:** Amanda Warner, *Eighth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc., 716-847-0062, ext. 318; awarner@wnylc.com.

B. *Enhancing Pro Bono in Buffalo and Erie County*—The Committee and ECBA Volunteer Lawyers Project (“VLP”) have recently collaborated to focus their pro bono recruiting efforts in Buffalo and Erie County on newly admitted lawyers and Buffalo’s large law firms.

1. Formation of the Large Firm Subcommittee

- a. **Summary:** the Large Firm Subcommittee was formed in 2009 as a way to more comprehensively answer firms’ questions about pro bono, assess firms’ interests, and effectively present “good fit” pro bono opportunities for their lawyers. The Subcommittee also provides a forum for Buffalo’s largest firms to compare pro bono policies, projects, and opportunities, as well as allowing the firms to take active roles in collaborative initiatives to increase pro bono involvement by their lawyers.
- b. **Partners:** pro bono coordinators and other representatives from Buffalo’s largest firms (any firm with 25 or more lawyers), legal services and pro bono provider (VLP), and volunteer lawyers.
- c. **Activities:** recruitment of large firm lawyers is focused on VLP’s Attorney of the Morning program (AOM), a limited-scope legal services program that assists low income tenants facing eviction in the City of Buffalo, and on Unemployment Benefits cases. Both volunteer opportunities offer lawyers excellent experience with a fairly limited time commitment, and also represent areas in which VLP has a need for greater pro bono participation. To encourage large firm lawyers’ participation in these two areas, the Committee and VLP co-sponsored two free CLE training programs in each of these subjects. Advertising for the programs was limited to the large firms and newly admitted attorneys. Large Firm Subcommittee members were asked to post fliers about the CLE programs in the common areas at their firms and to circulate an e-mail encouraging their lawyers to attend.
- d. **Contact:** Amanda Warner, *Eighth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc., 716-847-0062, ext. 318; awarner@wnylc.com.

2. **Recruiting Newly Admitted Attorneys**

- a. **Summary:** The Committee’s current efforts in recruiting newly admitted attorneys for pro bono work are focused on Buffalo and Erie County generally, and recruitment is aimed at the same Attorney of the Morning and Unemployment Benefit pro bono opportunities as described above. These programs are particularly well-suited for newly admitted attorneys because they offer substantial hands-on experience, with appropriate supervision and mentoring, and with relatively limited time requirements.
- b. **Partners:** VLP pro bono program, newly admitted attorneys, Bar Association of Erie County, the Large Firm Subcommittee.
- c. **Activities:** To recruit newly admitted attorneys to participate in AOM and Unemployment Benefits cases, the Committee and VLP advertised the two free CLE programs discussed above to newly admitted attorneys through information made available at the Character & Fitness interviews and individual letters sent to newly admitted attorneys.
- d. **Contact:** Amanda Warner, *Eighth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Erie County Bar Association Volunteer lawyers Project, Inc., 716-847-0062, ext. 318; awarner@wnylc.com.

3. **Family Law Training Series**

- a. **Summary:** A series of family law CLE programs to recruit more volunteer lawyers to handle matters of divorce, child support, and custody (where the client is a non-parent) via pro bono referrals from VLP. The series included the following programs, each of which was held at VLP’s offices in Buffalo:
 - i. *“How to Handle a Matrimonial Action: A Nuts and Bolts Training”*—Part 1, September 15, 2009, and Part 2, September 17, 2009. Twenty attorneys attended these programs, each of whom earned a total of four free CLE credits and committed to accepting a pro bono divorce within a year’s time.
 - ii. *“Representing Non-Parent Custody Petitioners”*—September 22, 2009. Eighteen attorneys attended the program, each of whom earned two free CLE credits and committed to accepting a pro bono non-parent custody case within a year’s time.
 - iii. *“Handling Child Support Matters”*—September 29, 2009. Twenty-six attorneys attended the program, each of whom earned two free CLE credits and committed to accepting a child support case pro bono within a year’s time.

- b. **Partners:** VLP pro bono program, private lawyers from the Matrimonial and Family Law Committees of the Bar Association of Erie County, and court personnel who presented and developed course materials.
- c. **Contact:** Amanda Warner, *Eighth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc., 716-847-0062, ext. 318; awarner@wnylc.com.

C. *Other Recruitment Strategies*—VLP gets approval from New York State CLE Board to grant CLE credit for self-study.

- 1. **Summary:** VLP was granted “Approval of Nontraditional Format” on December 4, 2009. This will allow recorded training programs and materials to be used for both group and individual CLE-accredited training throughout the District, most notably for attorneys who live in rural areas and often find it difficult to fulfill their CLE requirements due to the inconvenience of attending programs that are often hours away. Attorneys who make use of these “nontraditional” facilities will receive free CLE credit if they agree to take a pro bono matter referred by the pro bono program serving their respective counties.
- 2. **Partners:** Pro bono and legal services programs with potential partnerships with local bar associations, judges, and court personnel.
- 3. **Contact:** Amanda Warner, *Eighth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc., 716-847-0062, ext. 318; awarner@wnylc.com.

D. *Improving Access to Justice in Eviction Proceedings in the Eighth Judicial District’s City, Town, and Village Courts*

- 1. **Summary:** In an effort to develop a plan for pro bono eviction defense outside of the City of Buffalo, the Committee distributed an Eviction Proceedings Survey to every town, village, justice, and city court judge in the District during 2008. The data collected from the surveys included the volume of cases per year in each town, village, and city court; how eviction proceedings are scheduled on the courts’ calendars; and how many landlords and tenants appear in such proceedings unrepresented. With 14 courts reporting over 200 eviction proceedings per year (and 4 others estimating over 100 per year), the Committee plans to strategize further steps to increase pro bono work in such cases, in collaboration with local courts and bar associations, and through the existing ProBonoNY Subcommittees.
- 2. **Partners:** Town, Village, and City Court Judges presiding over eviction proceedings, bar associations, and legal services and pro bono providers.
- 3. **Contact:** Amanda Warner, *Eighth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Erie

NINTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Overview: The Ninth Judicial District is composed of five counties, which differ substantially in population density, demographics, geography, and attorney distribution. Our original ProBonoNY Committee, was based in Westchester County; early on, it was decided that the most effective structure for addressing ProBonoNY goals throughout the Ninth District would be to establish committees in each county in the District. Currently, in addition to the Westchester County ProBonoNY Committee, there are active ProBonoNY Committees in Orange, Dutchess, and Rockland Counties. The Westchester Committee's co-chairs are members of all committees, and the District's ProBonoNY Coordinator works with all committees.

A. WESTCHESTER COUNTY

1. Activities—

- a. ***Unemployment Insurance Benefits Project:*** Currently in its third year, this program is co-sponsored by the Committee and Legal Services of the Hudson Valley. Following an annual two-hour free CLE training program presented by a LSHV staff attorney, attorneys sign up to represent clients at hearings. This program was implemented in partnership with the New York State Department of Labor, Chief Administrative judge in White Plains, and the Hearings and Appeals Board.
- b. ***Mandatory Settlement Conferences in Foreclosure Proceedings:*** A two-day CLE program was held in June 2009 on the topic of foreclosure proceedings and mandatory settlement conferences, sponsored by the Committee and LSHV, presented by the Empire Justice Center. The on-going pro bono program is carried out in cooperation with the court system. Clients in need of representation at settlement conferences are referred by a court attorney/referee to LSHV; LSHV then matches the clients with pro bono attorneys who have attended the CLE program.
- c. ***Lunch and Learn:*** Taking advantage of the presence of Pace Law School and of the fact that many recent law school graduates and newly-admitted attorneys are eager to learn more about specific practice areas, the Committee is sponsoring a series of monthly brown-bag lunchtime “nuts-and-bolts” CLE programs in various areas of law identified by the courts as areas where unrepresented litigants are most in need of help. Topics being covered include vacating default judgments against alleged debtors, step/grandparent adoptions, uncontested divorces, child support proceedings, and probating a

will. These “bite-sized” training programs are especially useful to new attorneys, and they have also attracted people returning to the practice of law after a hiatus, such as staying at home to care for children. These programs are equally useful to those looking to re-tool their careers or areas of practice due to the economic downturn. Training programs are conducted by experienced private attorneys, as well as court and county attorneys. The series is being sponsored by the Committee, LSHV, and the New Lawyers’ Committee of the Westchester Women’s Bar Association. Contacts at the Pace Law School Alumni affairs and Placement Office help publicize the programs to their constituencies.

2. **Partners:** The Westchester Committee is comprised of judges and other court system employees, as well as representatives of the county attorney’s office, the private bar, local bar associations and collegial groups, law firm pro bono coordinators, and community organizations such as Hope’s Door, a local women’s shelter; Pace Law School Women’s Justice Center; and the County Commission on Human Rights. In addition, the Committee is collaborating with a number of partners on the specific programs discussed above.

B. ORANGE COUNTY

1. Activities—

- a. ***Partners in Justice:*** Orange County has several mid-sized cities which are home to a number of mid-sized law firms. At the outset, the Orange County Committee decided to partner with those firms. Members of the firms were invited to a reception, where the pro bono initiative was discussed, and interested firms were asked to designate pro bono coordinators to act as liaison between the attorneys in each firm and the Ninth District ProBonoNY Coordinator (working at LSHV), who administers case placement. Twelve law firms are now participating in this program.
- b. ***Children’s Justice Project:*** In 2008-2009, LSHV had been receiving many requests for help in various aspects of the special education arena. In December 2008 and again in 2009, the Committee sponsored a two-hour CLE program to train local volunteer attorneys on the subject. The training was free, in exchange for attendees’ promises to accept pro bono referrals; presenters were LSHV staff attorneys and experienced private attorneys. The program is on-going and has resulted in a substantial number of pro bono case placements.
- c. ***Veterans’ Project:*** Orange County is home to both the United States Military Academy at West Point and Stewart Air National Guard Base. Several local reserve units have been activated over the past few years. A committee member, himself a veteran, often meets with local veterans’ groups on an

informal basis. He has learned of legal needs on the part of both veterans and active personnel, especially matters of debt, foreclosure, and related issues that may go untended while service people are away. To help meet these needs, the Committee has planned a three-hour CLE program scheduled June 10, 2010. Presenters will include noted local attorneys with specialties in the areas of Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, rights to re-employment, vacating default judgments, and VA benefits. The Committee is currently working on the post-CLE client referral process.

d. *Programs under development:*

- i. *Attorney Emeritus Program:* The Committee is planning to send a letter signed by the Committee’s judicial chair and other Orange County judges to local attorneys who report themselves as “retired” on their biennial registration forms. The attorneys will be invited to a brunch meeting in September to discuss pro bono opportunities and explore ways in which retired attorneys may participate.
- ii. *Mediation Project:* The Committee has designated a sub-committee to meet with members of the Dispute Resolution Center in Orange County to explore mutually beneficial collaborative activities.

2. **Partners:** The Committee’s membership includes judges and court attorneys as well as representatives of local bar associations, community groups, and legal services providers; in addition, as indicated above the committee is collaborating with private attorneys and law firms as well as community services providers.

C. DUTCHESS COUNTY

1. Activities—

- a. *Debtors’ Rights and Default Judgments:* CLE program co-sponsored by the Committee, LSHV, and the Dutchess County Bar Association. The CLE program was held immediately following the Bar Association’s luncheon, at which the speaker was Michael Getnick, NYSBA President, whose remarks emphasized the importance of pro bono work. Having the events in tandem increased attendance for both of them, and the Committee plans to partner again with the Bar Association in the fall. The CLE presenter is a Westchester County attorney, very active in handling pro bono consumer debt cases, particularly those involving default judgments. He has volunteered to lead CLE programs on this area of law not only in Westchester but also other counties in the District.
- b. *Ethics CLE program:* In collaboration with the Court, the Committee sponsored a CLE program providing ethics credit: a one-hour breakfast

presentation on disciplinary rules and ethical considerations for judges and lawyers in dealing with unrepresented litigants.

2. **Partners:** In addition to the partnership mentioned above with the Dutchess County Bar Association, the Committee includes judges and court attorneys, as well as representatives of both the county and women’s bar associations, LSHV, and the Dutchess County women’s shelter.

D. ROCKLAND COUNTY

1. Activities—

- a. Newest ProBonoNY Committee in the Ninth District; kick-off reception featured a collaborative presentation of judges and local bar, with lunch sponsored by a local restaurant, and participation of the District Administrative Judge.
- b. *Guardian Ad Litem Training:* a three-hour CLE program given by the Westchester County Surrogate and his court attorney, attended by over 75 attorneys, with 40 recruited for the Committee’s volunteer panel; co-sponsored by the Committee, LSHV, and the Rockland County Bar Association.
- c. Planned for the fall: a limited-scope legal services pro bono project in Family Court.

Contact for all Ninth Judicial District ProBonoNY programs: Carol Neiditch, *Ninth Judicial District ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, Inc., 914-949-1305, ext. 133; cneiditch@lshv.org.

TENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT: SUFFOLK COUNTY

A. **Partners:** The Suffolk County ProBonoNY Committee is actively partnering with the Suffolk County Foundation Board Committee of the Suffolk County Bar Association; the Suffolk Academy of Law, a branch of the Suffolk County Bar Association; Nassau/Suffolk Law Services; and Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center, and with local judges and other court personnel and private attorneys. The various different collaborative pro bono programs developed by the partnership are collectively referred to as the “Suffolk County Pro Bono Project.”

B. Matrimonial Matters

A CLE program recently sponsored by the Suffolk County Bar Association, entitled “*Matrimonial Law Boot Camp Training CLE Seminar*,” included topics such as the client interview and intake, the filing of pleadings, handling the preliminary conference, drafting

documents such as the client's net worth statement, the separation agreement, the stipulation of settlement, and proposed judgment of divorce. The instruction included introductory concepts regarding custody/visitation and equitable distribution. The seminar was offered to registrants without cost in exchange for their participation in the pro bono matrimonial program of the Suffolk County Pro Bono Project. On that day, 34 registrants received a matrimonial file to represent a pro bono client from Nassau/Suffolk Law Services. Each file included the name and contact information of an experienced matrimonial practitioner to act as the pro bono attorney's mentor and a certificate of attendance awarding 9 CLE credits.

Another matrimonial CLE seminar given recently by the Suffolk Academy of Law, "*Uncontested Matrimonial Matters*," for which tuition was charged, provided an additional pro bono recruitment opportunity. For a seminar that is given on a cost-free basis, the primary recruitment opportunity occurs weeks *prior* to the date of the seminar. Recruitment may include an active telephone and e-mail campaign. Providing each registrant with a pro bono client file at the seminar serves to confirm counsel's commitment to handling the pro bono matter. Assignment of a mentor boosts the confidence level of pro bono counsel as he or she enters a new area of the law. On the other hand, seminars which are paid for by attorneys provide a wonderful recruitment opportunity at the actual seminar. Brief introductory remarks can highlight all pro bono programs in the Project, with their benefits and incentives.

Matrimonial Mentorship Program—Suffolk County CLE programs addressing complex matrimonial law issues for experienced practitioners provide ideal opportunities to recruit mentor services for the program. Currently, the Suffolk County Pro Bono Project has 19 experienced matrimonial mentors.

C. Foreclosure Proceedings

The *Pro Bono Foreclosure Settlement Conference Project* is the result of the joint efforts of the separate entities of the Suffolk County Pro Bono Project. Created in April 2009, the Project addresses the rapidly increasing number of Suffolk County foreclosure filings in recent months. The initial attorney/client consultation takes place at the local law school, Touro Law Center in Central Islip. Law students observe and assist at the consultation. Possible affirmative defenses are discussed. In the absence of defenses, viable loan modification terms are discussed which can be presented to the lender's representative at the future settlement conference. At the conference, pro bono attorneys and clients meet with lenders' representatives to attempt to resolve the foreclosure issues. Hundreds of pro bono attorneys have volunteered for the program and thousands of unrepresented homeowners have been represented in these matters.

A recent five-credit CLE seminar, "*Representing Defendants in Foreclosure Settlement Conferences*," was tuition-free to all participating and new registrants in the Suffolk County Pro Bono Foreclosure Settlement Conference Project. The training course predominantly

addressed the art of negotiating modification terms of an existing loan on behalf of the pro bono client/homeowner. All pro bono registrants committed to represent homeowner/clients at four conferences: 140 attorneys registered for the seminar and 130 attorneys have volunteered to participate in the Project.

D. Guardianship Matters

The *Pro Bono Guardianship Program* focuses on recruiting new pro bono volunteers by providing periodic CLE seminars at the courthouse and at the Suffolk County Bar Association. In October 2009, the Suffolk County Action Committee presented “*Article 81 Guardianship Training*.” Over 30 attorneys volunteered to participate in the program. Eleven experienced attorneys agreed to act as guardianship mentors. An upcoming seminar at the Suffolk County Bar Association, “*How To Be a Guardian*,” is being offered to attorneys and lay persons. This is another tuition-free course given to those who agree to volunteer in the program. The Hon. H. Patrick Leis, Suffolk County Administrative Judge, will be a presenter. At this juncture, over 60 attorneys have registered for the June 24th CLE program.

E. Bankruptcy

Nassau/Suffolk Law Services holds a pro bono bankruptcy advisory clinic program in its Suffolk County office located in Islandia, New York. This clinic is scheduled one afternoon every two months. Generally, 60 to 80 pro bono bankruptcy clients appear. Several pro bono attorneys provide attorney/client consultations. During the course of the consultation, the pro bono bankruptcy consulting attorney determines whether the client would qualify to commence a Chapter 7 Bankruptcy Proceeding. In the event the client qualifies, he or she is referred to an experienced pro bono bankruptcy practitioner.

Contact for all Suffolk County ProBonoNY projects: Linda Raphan, *Suffolk County ProBonoNY Coordinator*, Nassau/Suffolk Law Services Committee, Inc., 631-232-2400, ext. 3333; lraphan@wnylc.com.