

# THE DAILY RECORD

WESTERN NEW YORK'S SOURCE FOR LAW, REAL ESTATE, FINANCE AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE SINCE 1908

## Pro Bono SPOTLIGHT

### Make a new commitment to 'pro bono' in the new year

This year, make a resolution worth keeping. Resolve to increase the time that you donate to Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County Inc.

In an effort to make it easier than ever for volunteers to embrace *pro bono*, VLSP is using a variety of technology including a YouTube channel, redesigned website, Facebook page and Twitter account.

At VLSP, we know that it's often hard to follow through on New Year's resolutions. If you need some motivation to volunteer, please take a minute to scan the QR code appearing in this column with your smart phone. You'll be directed to VLSP's YouTube channel, where you can hear stories about how clients' lives were changed — even saved — by the legal assistance they received from *pro bono* attorneys. As always, the names of VLSP's clients have been changed.

VLSP makes it easy for you to help clients in need of *pro bono* assistance. Our monthly Third Tuesday list of *pro bono* cases awaiting placement can be readily accessed from our recently redesigned website. Simply visit [vlsprochester.org](http://vlsprochester.org), go to the volunteer log in page and create a user account. Once your account is activated by VLSP, you'll be able to access the current case list at your convenience. Sheila A. Gaddis, VLSP's executive director, will continue to email the Third Tuesday list to those wishing to receive it.

This month's Third Tuesday list will feature an extensive array of *pro bono* cases to choose from, including the following cases with particularly compelling facts.

VLSP seeks an attorney to accept an immigration case involving Zaria, a 44-year-old U.S. citizen with five children who would like to apply for permanent residence status for her husband, who lives in Sierra Leone.

Zaria married her husband after he rescued her and her children during the civil war in 1996. At that time, Zaria was seven months pregnant and fleeing for her life after witnessing her former husband being killed in front of her.

Zaria's husband was captured during fighting in 1999 and forced to go to Guinea. Zaria came to the U.S. in 2004 with her

children. Shortly thereafter, her husband returned from Guinea to Sierra Leone and has been in contact with Zaria since then.

VLSP also hopes to find an attorney to assist Jenna, who seeks representation in a proceeding filed by her children's father to reduce his child support obligation. There was ongoing domestic violence throughout the marriage. The children's father also physically abused the family dog.

After the parties separated, the father was physically abusive to the children during his supervised visitation.

The children would return from visitation with marks on their bodies. Ultimately the father's supervised visitation was suspended.

The parties were divorced in 2007, and the father was ordered to pay child and spousal support, followed by a subsequent Family Court Order of child support in 2008.

Additional petitions have been filed by the father, along with appeals, and the father is once again seeking a reduction. Children are 13, 11 and 10 and have always resided with Jenna.

A hearing is scheduled for Jan. 17, 2012, but likely can be adjourned if a volunteer is willing to handle Jenna's case.

According to Jenna, there are child support arrears in excess of \$80,000 and the father has shielded his income by transferring his business into his girlfriend's name. Jenna would like to pursue this issue as well, if possible.

Attorneys interested in Zaria's or Jenna's cases are welcome to contact me.

Many other cases also are awaiting placement. Available next week, the January Third Tuesday case list will describe all avail-

*Continued ...*



By **LINDA KOSTIN**  
Daily Record  
Columnist



Scan this QR code with your smart phone to see VLSP's YouTube channel.

# THE DAILY RECORD

WESTERN NEW YORK'S SOURCE FOR LAW, REAL ESTATE, FINANCE AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE SINCE 1908

## Continued ...

able VLSP cases.

Remember, VLSP cases offer attorneys — both newly admitted and experienced — an opportunity to develop expertise in unfamiliar areas of law. VLSP staff attorneys are happy to mentor new volunteers. Experienced volunteers often agree to mentor new volunteers, as well. VLSP has forms available, professional liability insurance coverage for volunteers, and offers CLEs on a regular basis.

Coming up on Jan. 20, VLSP will present two CLEs, enabling volunteers to earn up to 6 hours of free CLE credit in one day.

“Non-parent Family Law,” with Margaret Burt, Gregory Franklin and Thomas Martin as speakers, will be held from 9 a.m. to noon. “Child Support,” featuring Suzanne Brunsting, Charles Inclima and Thomas Martin as speakers, will run from 1 to 4 p.m.

Both CLEs will be held at the MCBA's Rubin Center for Education, Telesca Center for Justice, 1 West Main St., fifth floor. Each CLE offers 1.5 hours of professional practice CLE credit, and 1.5 hours of skills CLE credit.

A complimentary lunch provided by Avalon Document Services will be served.

The CLEs are offered free of charge in exchange for accepting one VLSP case referral for each CLE attended. Please contact me to register. Those unable to attend the live program will be welcome to view a DVD of the CLEs.

VLSP has a library of CLEs available on DVD, including the following: Basic Wills, Health Care Proxies and Powers of Attorney and Standby Guardianship Pro-

ceedings in Surrogate's Court; Unemployment Insurance Hearings; Ethics Redux; Divorce 101 and Additional Topics in Matrimonial Law.

By viewing CLE programs on DVDs, attorneys admitted more than two years can earn free CLE credit in exchange for agreeing to accept a VLSP case referral.

In addition to attorneys, VLSP welcomes paralegals, legal secretaries, students, interpreters and volunteers who do not have prior law office experience.

Many volunteers assist attorneys and clients participating in VLSP's clinics. Information about our clinics is available on VLSP's website.

Other volunteers assist with client interviews, reception area duties, IT maintenance and upgrades, CLE administration and social media.

Through social media, VLSP is reaching — and engaging — more volunteers by offering regular updates and a behind the scenes peek at our volunteers, board members and staff.

A recent Facebook post featured Mark Stein of Lacy Katzen LLP presenting a check to VLSP in the amount of \$5,121 in honor of the retirement of Mike Schnittman, a partner at Lacy Katzen, VLSP board member and past president of VLSP's board.

Why such an unusual amount? Visit VLSP's Facebook page to find out. While you're there, remember to “like” us.

VLSP also has a Twitter account now, too. Follow us at @VLSP\_Rochester.

VLSP thanks the members of the legal community who stepped up last month to help low-income clients struggling with a wide range of issues. Particularly during

the holiday season, your help easing our clients' burdens is very much appreciated.

## December 2011 Honor Roll

**Retired Judge:** The Hon. Gerard Alonzo.

**Solo Practitioners:** Matthew Austin; Anne Blaise; Kelly Duff; Charles Genese; Victor Mui; Lucrecia Ponce; Michael Reifenstein; John Wieser.

**Attorneys at firms:** Timothy Ingersoll (Fero & Ingersoll); Steven Levitsky (Handelman, Witkowitz & Levitsky); Ellen Coyne (Harris Chesworth); Diana Clarkson Holl (Harter Secrest); Kathleen Carter, John Garrett, Jean McCreary, Richard Rochford (Nixon Peabody); Jeffrey Wilkens (Osborn Reed); Robert O'Connell (Petralia Webb & O'Connell); George Schell (Schell & Schell); Robert Brennan (Trevett Cristo); Meghan DiPasquale (Ward Greenberg); Seth Weinstein (Woods Oviatt).

**Government attorneys:** Katherine Breitenbach, Sanjeev Devabhakthuni (Appellate Division, Fourth Department).

**Mediator:** Robert Hauser (Center for Dispute Settlement).

**Web Developer:** Robert Kostin.

**Law school graduates:** Chika Anyichie; Cory Steckler.

**College graduate intern:** Marla Woodarek (University of Delaware).

**Paralegal students:** Kerry Egerton, Daniela Papatelli, Elyse Truax, Lora Tryon (Monroe Community College).

*Linda Kostin is the Pro Bono Coordinator at Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County Inc. Contact her at lkostin@wnylc.com or (585) 295-5703.*