

Welcome to the fourth Pro Bono newsletter of 2010.



Attorney Advertising



PRO BONO At a Glance

Greenwood Counseling Referrals Receives Assistance from R&C and Aetna Partnership



Robinson & Cole recently partnered with Aetna, Inc. to provide pro bono legal services to Greenwood Counseling Referrals, Inc. (Greenwoods). Greenwood is a non-profit mental health and community resource referral organization located in Litchfield, Connecticut. Greenwood's mission is to provide citizens of Litchfield County with access to appropriate and affordable mental health counseling and related community services. Through the Pro Bono Partnership, a team of three R&C lawyers (Ted Tucci, Mike Kolosky, and Moses Vargas) and in-house counsel at Aetna (Siddharth Khanijou) advised Greenwood regarding possible steps and strategies to manage the liability exposure risks associated with its operation as a referral service organization. The legal team worked closely with Greenwood executives and board members to analyze the potential liability risks faced by Greenwood, to recommend strategies for managing such liability exposure, and to revise key documents used in Greenwood's operations.

Attorney Susan E. Roberts Receives

IN THIS ISSUE

- Message from the Pro Bono Partner
- Letter of Appreciation to Britt-Marie Cole-Johnson from the Riverfront Children's Center. Click [HERE](#) to read.
- R&C Teams Up with Aetna to Provide Services for Greenwood Counseling Referrals, Inc.
- Agency Profile: The Center for Children's Advocacy
- CBA Young Lawyers Section Hosts Pro Bono Fair
- R&C Pro Bono Road Show
- St. Andrew's Church Honors Ted O'Hanlan and Frank Baker. Click [HERE](#) to see event details.

Message from Ed Heath, Pro Bono Partner

My three years as the chair of Robinson & Cole's Pro Bono Committee have impressed upon me a deep respect for my colleagues' dedication to the public good. In a profession that has become so heavily focused on profits, it is refreshing to see so many give so much, with little expectation of a return. For yet another year, our firm is on track to have donated nearly \$3 million worth of pro bono hours in 2010.



I've learned that our lawyers perform this work for a broad array of reasons. I'll use a recent matter to illustrate some of those reasons. The client is an Iraq War veteran who recently lost his job. He has sole custody of his young son, and they are about to be evicted from their apartment because the roughly \$90 a week he receives in unemployment benefits won't cover the rent.

Recognition from Connecticut Family Support Network

Attorney Susan E. Roberts provided pro bono assistance to the Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN) during their filing for 501c3 status. CTFSN is a group of families who have children with disabilities and are interested in helping other parents find the support systems they need. Jennifer Carroll, Statewide Coordinator for CTFSN, stated the following:



"I cannot tell you how amazing Susan Roberts was with all of the steps of filing for 501(c)(3) status. I learned an enormous amount and developed a tremendous respect for the legal process associated with the effort!"

Connecticut Bar Association Young Lawyers Section Hosts ProBono Fair



National Pro Bono Week is a coordinated effort to meet the ever-growing needs of this country's most vulnerable citizens by encouraging and supporting local efforts to expand the delivery of pro bono legal services, and by showcasing the great difference that pro bono lawyers make to the nation, its system of justice, its communities and most of all, to the clients they serve.

As part of National Pro Bono week, the CBA Young Lawyers Section hosted its annual Pro Bono Fair in October at the Quinnipiac University School of Law. The fair provided pro bono organizations from around the state with an opportunity to educate attendees about their programs and pro bono opportunities. Representatives from Connecticut Appleseed, the Connecticut Veterans Legal Center, Hartford HELP, the Pro Bono Partnership, Lawyers Without Borders, Connecticut Legal Services, New Haven Legal Aid, Greater Hartford Legal Aid,

By the time most of you reach the end of that last sentence, an emotional response to the facts probably caused you to want to volunteer for this case. If so, you're in the camp of people who take on pro bono matters for purely altruistic reasons. Someone is in need, and you want to make the time to help that person. Pro bono work can be personally rewarding in ways that paying work is not. Surveys routinely conclude that lawyers who regularly perform pro bono work report higher levels of professional satisfaction.

Similar, but not the same, is the ethical reason. Although the various bars to which our lawyers belong do not require lawyers to perform pro bono work, many of us nonetheless see it as an ethical obligation that is willingly fulfilled.

Some lawyers at the start of their careers might also see the facts summarized above as a golden early opportunity to work directly with a client, to negotiate with an opposing counsel, and to appear in court to argue motions or conduct a trial. Done with appropriate supervision, pro bono work routinely provides young associates with an enriching skill-development experience.

Pro bono work often has business development benefits. It may be reputation-enhancing and open the door to, or solidify, good contacts. In a court matter, for example, the volunteer lawyer earns some goodwill with the judge or judges presiding over various aspects of the case. Another example is pro bono work performed for a nonprofit. These organizations commonly draw board members from the executive ranks of the corporate world (i.e., the paying clients) who take a deep personal interest in the organization's success and thus remember fondly the dedication of the private practice lawyer who gave up twenty hours at what normally would be a \$350 hourly rate that in the name of the public good (or good client relations - I know a few lawyers who began a new pro bono matter with a call from the general counsel of a client).

I'm guessing that the veteran facing the eviction notice does not care which of these reasons motivated his new lawyers' decision to take his case on a pro bono basis. I didn't ask what motivated them to accept, but the circumstances give me a strong clue: They responded within minutes to my initial Friday evening e-mail request and immediately began discussing the next steps. I'm proud to call them colleagues.

R&C Pro Bono Road Shows Enjoy Success!

Statewide Legal Services, Lawyers for Children America and Center for Children's Advocacy were all present to share their programs. Over 75 people attended and the event was deemed a great success.

Attending on behalf of Robinson & Cole were attorneys Jeffrey J. White, Scott E. Sebastian and Kori Termine Wisneski.

Agency Highlight: Center for Children's Advocacy



The Center for Children's Advocacy, Inc. (CCA) is a nonprofit organization affiliated with the University of Connecticut School of Law in Hartford. The mission of CCA is to promote and protect the legal rights of and interests of poor children who are dependent upon the judicial, child welfare, health and mental health, education and juvenile justice systems for their care.

The Immigration Practice group at Robinson & Cole has been working with CCA for nearly ten years. Attorneys Josh S. Mirer, Megan R. Naughton and Natasha A. Sharubina routinely provide counseling to the lawyers at CCA with regard to immigration issues faced by the juvenile population that is served by CCA. In November 2010, Attorney Naughton represented an abused child in seeking United States permanent resident status through a special immigration juvenile petition at the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services in Hartford. The decision is pending.



The Boston, Hartford and Stamford offices each hosted a successful pro bono road show during the month of September. Each office had representatives from various legal aid agencies speak about their organization and the pro bono opportunities offered to attorneys. Attorneys and staff also had a chance to learn the basics about bringing in a pro bono matter and covering intake standards and procedures. The following individuals represented their organizations at the regional roadshows:

Boston: Anita Sharma from the Political Asylum/Immigration Representation (PAIR) and Sheri Mason from Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts

Hartford: Priscilla Pappadia from Lawyers for Children America, Priya Morganstern from the Pro Bono Partnership and Margaret Middleton from the Connecticut Veterans Legal Center

Stamford: Cheryl Jansen from Lawyers for Children America and Courtney Darts from the Pro Bono Partnership

2010 PRO BONO COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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