



Thursday July 7, 2011

2nd Annual Triad Associates Drive Takes Off!

Who?

Legal Aid of North Carolina (LANC) and your fellow associates in the Triad invite you and every other associate in your firm to participate!

What?

Legal Aid provides civil legal services to the folks who need it most and cannot afford it. LANC's clients receive legal assistance with mortgage foreclosure prevention, elder law, domestic violence, housing and consumer rights, human trafficking and disability- and benefits-related issues. Our attorneys help indigent people navigate our increasingly complex judicial system. Many of you know and understand the work LANC does because you have done pro bono work with them. Your pro bono support is a huge help in meeting the needs of our community.

However, LANC needs both financial *and* pro bono support. Less than 1% of LANC's budget comes from individual attorney donations. In order to continue to grow a healthy and sustainable organization, LANC needs individual donors like you. Almost every year, the funding LANC counts on from the state and federal government decreases. In 2011, they received a full 30% cut in state and federal funding, which may lead to a closing of some LANC offices. The Access to Justice Campaign is LANC's annual effort to raise operating funds from their natural counterparts -- private attorneys. These funds help sustain their current level of service. Serving all 100 counties in North Carolina with 125 attorneys is a tremendous undertaking. LANC handled more than 25,000 cases statewide in 2010 but still had to turn away thousands of eligible clients.

Across the country, successful Legal Aid programs have continued to diversify their funding sources. The Triad-Area Associates Drive is Legal Aid's effort to reach out to younger attorneys who may not have had the opportunity to learn about their work. The associates who already provide support to LANC want to bring more of their peers—like you—into the fold, to join in supporting this worthy cause.

Why?

Although there are more than 21,000 attorneys in North Carolina who could provide financial support to LANC, only about 550 individual attorneys and 70 organizations and law firms provide direct financial support to the ATJ campaign each year. This number is far too low, and associates across the Triad can join together to make a big difference for years to come. In fact, if each Triad associate gave at any level, Legal Aid would increase its entire donor base by more than 25%.

"This campaign is about cultivating a culture of giving to legal services agencies by the younger generation of attorneys. Our focus is on donors, not dollars. While we greatly appreciate every dollar received this year, a lifetime of giving from new donors will mean much more to the community. After all, LANC is our legal counterpart, serving low-income clients in our area. Their work makes our Triad communities better places to live and work."

~Steve Russell, Jr., Drive Chair, Smith Moore Leatherwood LLP

When?

Now! The campaign runs from July 7th through August 18th, 2011. This is the final push in LANC's 2011 Access to Justice Campaign. Donors and participating firms will be acknowledged publically after the drive ends.

How?

It's easy! You can donate directly from your desk:

Click here http://www.legalaidnc.org/public/give/Donations/donate_online.aspx or visit www.legalaidnc.org . Please let your firm coordinator know once you have donated. Or, you can simply give your firm coordinator a check to send directly to LANC. You do not have to share the amount.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

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A Client Story: Who do we serve?

An 84-year-old widow in an assisted living facility was approached by two of her family members who promised to find her a house and pay for it by getting her a reverse mortgage, which would allow her to live on her own again. These family members owned a home that they knew was headed towards foreclosure. They exaggerated the value of their own home and took the widow to a housing counselor to apply for a reverse mortgage. They had her sign a one-paragraph contract that stated they were getting her the reverse mortgage based on the value of their home, and in return she was giving them a car valued at \$16,500 as a non-refundable down payment.

Once living in the house, the client was brought to Legal Aid by the director of the local Office of Aging because someone had reported that she was living there without a stove and refrigerator, with no money to buy food. Our attorney was able to take her to a bank for a legitimate reverse mortgage, negotiating with the owner for a lower price on the home. This process allowed her to get enough money to buy the home in full, without monthly payments. The family member refused to return the car, for which LANC then took her to Superior Court. A settlement was reached and the widow is now safely in her home with food and appliances.

In these times of intense financial strain, LANC prevents homelessness for many of our clients. Please make a donation to the Access to Justice campaign today.

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