

RCBA PREPARES TO LEND A “HELP-ING” HAND

The RCBA's Public Service Committee has taken on a new project to provide pro bono legal assistance to the homeless in the greater Columbia area in partnership with a growing national organization called Project H.E.L.P. (High Expectations Learning Program), and locally with St. Lawrence Place, the Midlands Interfaith Council, S.C. Cares, and the S.C. Applesed Legal Justice Center.

The official announcement took place on May 31, 2008, with a well-attended breakfast and kick-off presentation by Project H.E.L.P.'s national founder, the Honorable Jay Zainey, U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana. In the fall, the Columbia Project H.E.L.P. group will begin a once-monthly morning clinic offering pro bono legal services and providing basic information about access to government benefits, identification documentation, housing, child custody, and other common legal issues affecting the homeless. Area programs serving the homeless will encourage individuals with identified legal needs to participate in the clinic.

An initial training session, in which volunteers will earn CLE credit and receive an extensive notebook of relevant contact information and other resources to use with clinic participants, will take place Friday, October 3, 2008. With a handful of volunteers needed just once a month to make the clinic a success, firms or other groups who commit to sending a few people to staff the clinic can contribute important assistance without making a big time commitment. A small group of volunteers emerged from the kick-off meeting, but the Public Service Committee is working to identify specific groups who can commit to attending training and staffing the half-day clinic for a particular month in

the coming year.

Project H.E.L.P.'s host, St. Lawrence Place, is a transitional housing facility for working homeless families in Columbia. The facility's thirty units provide housing for homeless families referred to St. Lawrence Place by various shelters and other agencies in the city.



Each St. Lawrence Place family participates in programs developed by professional staff that emphasize family enrichment, educational instruction, job training, and interpersonal skills. There is also an after school program for children. Active participation in these programs is required for families living at St. Lawrence Place. Residents are also expected to find and keep employment, maintain their apartment properly, pay bills in a timely manner, and demonstrate growth and progress in their family's life plan.

Project H.E.L.P. was started in the New Orleans area by Judge Jay Zainey. It began as an effort by area judges, who were limited in the pro bono legal services they could provide, to notarize copies of identification and other legal documents for homeless members of the community. Judge Zainey realized that in order to use local shelters and other services provided to the homeless, people had to present valid identification, which was sometimes difficult for homeless people to maintain.

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WILLIAM HUBBARD BECOMES FIRST SOUTH CAROLINIAN TO LEAD ABA HOUSE OF DELEGATES

The American Bar Association's Nominating Committee has named Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough Partner William C. Hubbard to chair the 555-member House of Delegates beginning in August for a two-year term. The Chair of the House is the second highest elected position in the 413,000-member organization. Mr. Hubbard is the first South Carolinian to be elected to this position since the ABA was founded in 1878.



The House of Delegates makes policy for the association. The House also elects ABA officers and members of the Board of Governors, which oversees management of the association.

A native South Carolinian, Mr. Hubbard graduated from the University of South Carolina where he earned both his undergraduate degree (magna cum laude) and his Juris Doctor. After clerking for a year with U.S. District Court Judge Robert F. Chapman, he entered private practice where he has focused on business litigation. In 1986, he was named the South Carolina Bar's Young Lawyer of the Year.

Mr. Hubbard serves on the Board of Trustees for the University of South Carolina and was its chair from 1996 to 2000. He was also president of the region's Council of Boy Scouts; served on the board of Voices for South Carolina Children, which promotes early childhood education; and was a founding director for City Year-Columbia, a youth service organization.

What makes leadership is the ability to get people to do what they don't want to do and like it.
- Harry Truman

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When original documents get lost, weeks or even months to replace, can only happen after a person has taken the often complicated steps to get replaced. By creating a system where copies of those documents were on file with service providers, the project has helped give people continuity to shelters and services and has kept the cold.

Following Hurricane Katrina, the project dramatically to meet New Orleans' significant needs. Since then, Project Help has expanded to include more services in cities all across the country, with its own project here in Columbia, as well as New York, Chicago, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, and Savannah. New programmatic stages of development in Lubbock, Beach, and Bloomington; plans are to start H.E.L.P. programs in Birmingham, Memphis, Jackson, Hartford, and Charleston. Project H.E.L.P. is also in partnerships with existing programs in Philadelphia, San Francisco and Washington.

For more information about the Help project, upcoming training opportunities, or to join a firm, group, or yourself up to volunteer, contact Kristen Horne. She can be reached at 255-9530 or kristen.horne@nelsonn

The editors welcome your inquiries, and contributions: RCBA, P.O. Box 29202, Columbia 29202 or rcba@scbar.org.