

## Enhancing Communities Through Neighborhood Revitalization

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION is core to Lawyers Alliance's mission of strengthening nonprofit organizations to improve low-income communities. New York City has the highest population density in the United States, with a population of more than 8,530,000, an almost 4.5 percent increase since 2010. To balance this density and growth, our clients create vibrant, livable communities by improving housing, schools, public spaces, and access to health and human social services. This holistic approach encompasses physical, social, and economic infrastructure improvements that stimulate community-based commercial activity and enhance quality of life for the residents. The cases below highlight some of the ways our nonprofit clients are impacting New York City communities with legal help from our volunteers.

### Encouraging Local Business Activity and Grassroots Participation

Lawyers Alliance helps nonprofit organizations that serve as catalysts for economic change in local communities. For example, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are associated with nonprofit organizations run by stakeholders for geographically limited neighborhoods with the goal of improving the economic environment of that neighborhood. Lawyers Alliance works with

more than 65 local development corporations and BIDs that stimulate economic opportunities for those who live and work in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

**Case Example: The Staten Island Economic Development Corporation (SIEDC)** promotes public and private investment and encourages responsible and sustainable business development to enhance Staten Island's economy. These efforts improve the quality of life and provide broad employment opportunities in the borough. Central to the group's work is its Neighborhood Development program,

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Credit: West Shore Industrial Business Improvement District

**The WSIBID encourages business development and neighborhood clean-up on Staten Island.**



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# 2017 Business Law & Leadership Gala Celebrates Innovation



**Honoree Bruce Campbell; Patricia Swann, who accepted on behalf of The New York Community Trust; and Darren M. Nashelsky, Morrison & Foerster LLP and Lawyers Alliance Board Chair**



**Christa D'Alimonte, who accepted on behalf of the Viacom Law Department, and Doreen E. Lilienfeld**



**Lauren E. Seeger, American Express Company and 2016 Business Law & Leadership Gala honoree, and Lawrence Young, Credit Suisse and Lawyers Alliance Board Member**

On May 2, more than 300 leaders from the legal, financial, and nonprofit sectors gathered at Gotham Hall in Manhattan for Lawyers Alliance's Business Law & Leadership Gala. This charitable event is the premier annual gathering of business and transactional lawyers committed to pro bono legal services for nonprofits that are strengthening New York City communities.

Lawyers Alliance Deputy Executive Director **Elizabeth Guggenheimer** introduced the event's theme – *Celebrating Innovative Lawyers, Nonprofits, and Communities*. Returning Master of Ceremonies **Aric Press**, Partner, Bernero & Press, proclaimed, "This is one of the great nights each year for the New York legal community. It's a celebration of pro bono service by law firms, corporations, and nonprofits, which together make our city a better and more decent place to live."

The recipients of the 2017 Business Law & Leadership Award are:

► **Bruce Campbell, Discovery Communications**

**Peter M. Labonski**, a partner at Latham & Watkins LLP and Lawyers Alliance Board member, presented the Award to **Bruce Campbell**, his law school classmate. Mr. Labonski shared anecdotes and concluded, "Bruce embodies the values of Lawyers Alliance and its commitment to serving its clients and the community."

As Chief Development, Distribution and Legal Officer for Discovery Communications, Bruce Campbell oversees all legal affairs; corporate development, including strategic planning and mergers and acquisitions; business affairs; and production management for the company's global portfolio of premium nonfiction, lifestyle, sports and kids programming brands. Mr. Campbell joined Discovery in 2007 and, in addition to his global portfolio of responsibilities, is an enthusiastic supporter of the company's purpose-driven mission. Discovery is committed to entertaining, educating, and inspiring audiences through real-world entertainment and, in line with so many Lawyers Alliance priorities, to leveraging the power of its brands, businesses, and employees to give back to the world. The company utilizes its global distribution platform, network, and corporate cause-related partnerships, as well as annual employee volunteer initiatives, to support a range of philanthropic causes, including education, environmental conservation, crime and violence prevention, veterans' affairs and services, and more. Upon accepting the Award, Mr. Campbell said, "Thank you to Lawyers Alliance. Your work ensures that lawyers from all practice areas can make real differences in their communities."

► **Viacom Law Department**

**Doreen E. Lilienfeld**, a partner at Shearman & Sterling LLP and Lawyers Alliance Board Secretary, introduced **Christa D'Alimonte**, Viacom's Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary, who accepted on behalf of the Viacom Law Department. Reminiscing that she and Ms. D'Alimonte worked together during their early days at Shearman & Sterling, Ms. Lilienfeld said, "I am pleased and proud that we are singling out an exceptional in-house legal team and its commitment to pro bono."

The Viacom Law Department is a leader in the corporate pro bono bar. Each year the department delivers pro bono legal assistance through direct representation and legal clinics aimed at low-income individuals and organizations working with communities in need. The larger Viacom community engages

in more than 75 initiatives addressing the issues its fans and employees care about, including building inclusive societies, promoting healthy living, inspiring future generations, pioneering social change, empowering its employees, and managing its business responsibly. Under Christa D’Alimonte’s leadership, Viacom Law Department makes pro bono legal services a priority. Viacom’s legal staff participates in Lawyers Alliance pro bono legal clinics for nonprofits, including on Viacommunity Days, the company’s annual global day of service. Through these clinics, nearly 30 nonprofit organizations received advice from Viacom attorneys regarding bylaws, governance changes prompted by the Nonprofit Revitalization Act, and waivers and releases. Viacom also generously hosted the 2015 and 2016 Cornerstone Awards, Lawyers Alliance’s volunteer recognition event. In her Gala remarks, Ms. D’Alimonte encouraged pro bono work, stating, “You know how important pro bono legal services are to nonprofits and to the advancement of initiatives that make an enormous difference in people’s lives.”

► **The New York Community Trust**

**Kevin Ryan**, Program Director of the New York Foundation, presented the Award to **Patricia Swann**, Senior Program Officer for Thriving Communities, Community Development and Technical Assistance at The New York Community Trust. He stated, “The Trust staff has always been great partners in supporting New York City’s diverse communities.”

For more than thirty years, Lawyers Alliance has benefited from the generous financial support of The New York Community Trust, one of the oldest and largest community foundations in the country. The Trust understands that New York City’s nonprofit sector is strengthened by the availability of quality technical assistance. Through the years, The Trust has funded Lawyers Alliance’s workforce development, disaster relief, and elder service initiatives. In recent years, the Trust has been at the forefront of supporting innovative projects to respond to economic change, including a technical assistance collaboration to sustain safety net organizations. The Trust is now supporting Lawyers Alliance’s work with organizations coping with legal, regulatory, and funding changes in an era of Medicaid Redesign. It also is supporting legal and educational assistance to advocacy and immigrant-serving nonprofits that seek to understand and respond to changing laws and public policies that affect their work. Upon accepting the Award on behalf of the Trust, Ms. Swann spoke of the importance of technical assistance for nonprofits, saying, “An organization can have an amazing program, a dedicated staff, and a charismatic leader, but without good management, including sound legal advice, the organization can hit a plateau or can even crash and burn.”

The program also featured Lawyers Alliance clients **Catherine Martinez** of Downtown Community Television Center and **Carl Siciliano** of Ali Forney Center illustrating the impact of Lawyers Alliance staff and volunteers’ efforts. Lawyers Alliance Executive Director **Sean Delany** concluded the evening by saying, “Our work would not be possible without the support that our sponsors provide through the Gala.” Sponsor greetings can be viewed at [www.lawyersalliance.org/gala.php](http://www.lawyersalliance.org/gala.php). We especially thank our Platinum Chairs: Discovery Communications; Shearman & Sterling LLP; and Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and our Gold Chairs: Arent Fox LLP; Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP; Latham & Watkins LLP; and Viacom Inc.



**Back row, left to right: Peter M. Labonski, Beverly O’Toole, Kent Walker, Bruce Campbell, Cannon Campbell. Front row, left to right: Maureen Fontana, Gaby Walker, Thomas O’Toole**



**Christa D’Alimonte and Richard B. Kendall, Kendall Brill & Kelly LLP**

2017  
**BUSINESS LAW &  
 LEADERSHIP**  
 — G A L A —



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# Neighborhood Revitalization

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which includes the creation of Business Improvement Districts. Working with the New York City Department of Small Business Services, SIEDC created the **West Shore Industrial Business Improvement District** (WSIBID). After WSIBID was approved by the New York City Planning Commission and the New York City Council, pro bono attorneys from **Lowenstein Sandler LLP** assisted the WSIBID Steering Committee with drafting a fiscal sponsorship agreement with SIEDC, incorporating the associated charitable corporation under New York law, and obtaining tax exempt status. Since its inception in 2015, WSIBID has provided much-needed services, including private maintenance, private security, and signage and wayfinding to more than 50 businesses, and additional infrastructure improvements to help transform the West Shore into a premier industrial corridor. In addition, 18 new businesses have moved to the West Shore BID, creating hundreds of new jobs.

## Improving the Built Environment in Low-Income Neighborhoods

The physical attributes of a neighborhood affect the local economy and the well-being of the neighborhood's residents. For example, neighborhoods with more walkability have lower rates of obesity and increased physical activity among residents, and local businesses thrive when located in a neighborhood that attracts pedestrians. From creating pedestrian plazas through licenses with city agencies, to contributing private support to maintain city parks, to offering space for community-based programming, our nonprofit clients tackle necessary projects to improve life in neighborhoods in all five boroughs.

**Case Example: Jamaica Center Improvement Association (JCIA)** is working to make the Jamaica Center business district a thriving business hub and an enjoyable destination to shop, work, live, and visit. JCIA serves roughly 260,000 people in the area between Sutphin Boulevard and 169th Street on Jamaica Avenue in Queens. Pro bono counsel at **Blank Rome LLP** assisted JCIA by reviewing and commenting on its contract with a vendor to provide ongoing maintenance of sidewalk pavement within its region. As a result of the work performed under this contract, JCIA reports cleaner sidewalks and measurable improvements to the quality of life along Jamaica Avenue.

## Supporting Long-Term Solutions to New York City's Housing Challenges

Recognizing that housing plays a foundational role in a community's well-being, this year our staff and volunteers have been working on more than 140 legal matters that strengthen the programs, finances, and operations of organizations that develop and create low-income and/or special-needs housing, conduct advocacy for low-income housing, and/or provide housing support programs for low-income housing tenants. Our nonprofit clients find solutions to the financial and regulatory challenges facing those that build and rehabilitate affordable and supportive housing for low-income New Yorkers, and Lawyers Alliance provides the legal expertise needed to help implement these solutions.

**Case Example: New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS)** is a federation of faith-based disaster human services providers and charitable organizations that work in partnership to provide disaster readiness, response, and recovery services in New York City, in an environment of social justice for all. NYDIS requested legal assistance in setting up a master lease program for homeowners in need of temporary housing so they could repair or make changes to their homes to sustain future weather disasters. Pro bono counsel from **Paul Hastings LLP** assisted NYDIS with preparing a form master lease agreement to sign with landlords. These volunteers also helped prepare a form sublease or occupancy agreement for tenants who stay in landlord units, and another one for those who stay in hotels for emergency placement services. Since the program began, NYDIS has found housing for 22 vulnerable families.

For more information on Lawyers Alliance's work on neighborhood revitalization, please contact Senior Staff Attorney **Neil Stevenson** at (212) 219-1800 ext. 273 or [nstevenson@lawyersalliance.org](mailto:nstevenson@lawyersalliance.org).



Credit: West Shore Industrial Business Improvement District

**Eighteen new businesses have moved to the  
West Shore BID.**

# Pro Bono Attorneys Help Nonprofits Manage Risk with Waivers and Disclosures

Most nonprofit organizations must engage in activities that expose the organization to financial, legal, operational, or reputational risk in order to effectively accomplish their mission. Even the most thoughtful nonprofit organizations face the reality of accidents or injuries that occur in the natural course of providing services to others. From mentoring disconnected youth to helping elderly or disabled New Yorkers in their homes, helping vulnerable populations involves opportunities and risks.

Lawyers Alliance for New York's risk management initiative is helping organizations to identify their challenges and prepare, update, and understand waivers, releases, disclosures, and procedures. Many states recognize a well-written, properly administered waiver as an effective protection against liability if the waiver was voluntarily signed by the injured party who assumed the risk. Through legal representation and legal education, Lawyers Alliance connects nonprofit leaders to the expertise of our staff attorneys and our network of more than 1,700 pro bono attorneys from corporate legal departments and law firms.

## Offering On- and Offsite Services and Events

Legal review is particularly important for nonprofit organizations that offer high risk programs involving facilities usage, children, travel, or media. Lawyers Alliance staff and pro bono attorneys understand the need to balance comprehensive language against readability and a thoughtful review of a nonprofit client's program model and goals.

**Case example:** In the Bronx, **The Riverdale YM-YWHA** (The Riverdale Y) provides educational, recreational, cultural, and wellness programming for children and adults of all ages and backgrounds. At a recent pro bono clinic, pro bono attorneys from **American Express** assisted The Riverdale Y in reviewing its waiver of liability forms and clauses related to facility rules and photograph release forms. The Riverdale Y staff thanked the pro bono attorneys "so much for their time, thoughtfulness, and expertise!"

## Screening Eligible Program Participants

Nonprofit organizations can seek to reduce risk by requiring program applicants to provide certain information about themselves and review and sign documents containing disclosures about fees, payments, assumption of risk, and release of liability.

**Case Example:** Pro bono attorneys from **Thomson Reuters** provided a consultation to **Center for NYC Neighborhoods** (the Center) regarding disclosure and other language in certain of its program application forms. Launched in 2008, the Center for NYC Neighborhoods' mission is to promote and protect affordable homeownership in New York so that middle- and working-class families are able to build strong, thriving communities. Since the start of the mortgage crisis, the Center has helped tens of thousands of New Yorkers navigate the challenges of keeping their homes. A representative from the Center stated, "We are grateful to the pro bono lawyers who helped us. They provided suggestions to strengthen several forms that we regularly use. Pro bono work like this is very helpful to us in our mission."

## Working with Volunteers

Volunteer waivers and agreements contribute to a positive volunteer experience by clarifying expectations. They also can help mitigate risk by adding some control over unfortunate situations, such as those involving illness or injury.

**Case Example:** **Natural Areas Conservancy (NAC)** protects, manages, and restores 20,000 acres of forests, wetlands, and grasslands within New York City. NAC works in partnership with City Parks to expand capacity to conserve New York City's vital natural areas. Each year, the work of its staff of 12 is amplified by the involvement of more than 300 volunteers. Pro bono counsel at **Latham & Watkins LLP** assisted NAC in drafting a general liability waiver and release for use in connection with volunteer events and tours.

If you are interested in volunteering to help nonprofit clients with releases, disclosures, and other risk management documents and procedures, contact Pro Bono Counsel **Stacey Fahey** at (212) 219-1800 ext. 242 or [sfahey@lawyersalliance.org](mailto:sfahey@lawyersalliance.org).

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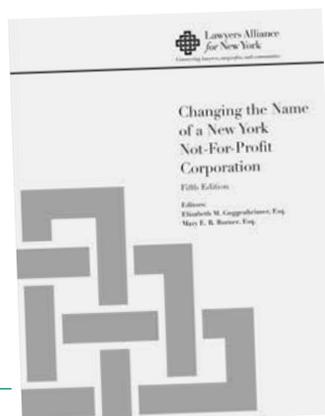
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## Changing the Name of a New York Not-for-Profit Corporation

Updated edition available at [www.lawyersalliance.org/publications.php](http://www.lawyersalliance.org/publications.php)



# Lawyers Alliance *for* New York

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## Firms Recognized for Pro Bono Excellence



Lawyers Alliance congratulates Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP for receiving the 2017 New York State Bar Association President's Pro Bono Service Award. The firm has made a significant commitment to pro bono. During this past year, 76 Fried Frank New York lawyers provided 25,943 total pro bono hours on behalf of deserving clients. Fried Frank's nomination was sponsored by Lawyers Alliance, The Legal Aid Society, and New York Lawyers for the Public Interest. Jennifer L. Colyer of Fried Frank (right) accepted the NYSBA award from Sharon Stern Gerstman, President-Elect of NYSBA (left) and Claire Gutekunst, President of NYSBA (middle).



Lawyers Alliance also congratulates Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP, recipients of the 2017 American Bar Association Business Law Section National Public Service Award. The firm was recognized for the range and complexity of its business law pro bono services. Morgan Lewis' nomination was sponsored by the National Network of Business Law Pro Bono Providers, a collaboration of fifteen providers that serve different geographic regions throughout the United States and share a goal of making nonprofits more effective. Andrea Fitanides of Morgan Lewis (right) accepted the National Public Service Award from William Johnston, Chair of the ABA's Business Law Section (left) and Kimberly Lowe, Chair of the Pro Bono Committee of the ABA's Business Law Section (middle).

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