



Homeless Services Organizations Receive Legal Services at Critical Time

DURING 2015 more than 100,000 different homeless people, including more than 40,000 children, slept in New York City shelters, and thousands of unsheltered homeless people slept on the City's streets, in subways, and in other public spaces. As State and City officials debate policy solutions, nonprofit homeless services providers are making it a priority to care for this vulnerable population, providing temporary shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing, as well as health care and job training. Homeless services providers face a number of legal challenges in the provision of these services. Lawyers Alliance staff and pro bono attorneys are proud to support their efforts.

Securing and Developing Facilities

One of the biggest hurdles faced by homeless services providers is securing a proper facility. Temporary shelter is often provided in a traditional homeless shelter, while transitional or permanent housing can be offered in scattered site apartments or a housing development. Homeless services providers must search for property available for either rent or purchase, competing against other renters or purchasers and sometimes facing neighborhood opposition. There is intense competition for real estate in New York City and service providers can be at a significant disadvantage given the limitations on available funding.



Photo: Inwood House

Inwood House's services include housing for pregnant and parenting foster care teens and their babies.

Case Example: **Inwood House** is an internationally recognized leader and innovator in teen pregnancy prevention, youth development, and teen family services. Inwood House's programs promote the healthy development of more than 2,500 youth from the most vulnerable communities through residential and foster family care, ongoing Teen Family Support initiatives, and comprehensive school- and community-based Teen Pregnancy Prevention programs in New York City. A holistic model of care meets adolescent girls where they are and responds to their needs in a non-judgmental atmosphere. Pro bono counsel from **Arent Fox LLP** assisted Inwood House in drafting and negotiating a lease for space in Flushing, Queens. The property will house up to six pregnant and parenting foster care teens and their babies.

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Cornerstone Awards Honor Outstanding Pro Bono Achievements



Matthew W. Mamak, Mary Benton, Honoree Michael A. Calandra, Jr., and Cheryl Naja, all of Alston & Bird LLP



Michael D. Fricklas, Viacom and Rohan Weerasinghe, Citi



Honoree Edward Andrew Puerta and I-Hsing Sun, Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund

Lawyers Alliance for New York volunteers, nonprofit clients, and their colleagues, friends, and family gathered at Viacom on November 4, 2015 for the Cornerstone Awards. This annual volunteer recognition event pays tribute to those who provide outstanding pro bono legal services to nonprofits by highlighting specific honorees while celebrating all of Lawyers Alliance's 1,650 volunteers.

Michael D. Fricklas, Executive Vice President, General Counsel, and Secretary of **Viacom**, welcomed the guests. He expressed appreciation to the dedicated pro bono attorneys, nonprofit clients, and supporters of Lawyers Alliance who "change the equation" by helping the nonprofit sector improve the lives of low-income and disadvantaged New Yorkers.

Institutional Honorees

Lawyers Alliance Board Chair **Ariel J. Deckelbaum** joined Lawyers Alliance Executive Director **Sean Delany** in presenting 2015 Cornerstone Awards to two leading law firms. "We are gratified to present them with Institutional Cornerstone Awards, Lawyers Alliance's most significant honor, reflecting their extraordinary depth and breadth of business and transactional law pro bono," noted Mr. Delany.

Duane Morris LLP: This international law firm has demonstrated its strong community commitment through pro bono legal and educational services that strengthen the nonprofit sector. Since 1999, the firm has partnered with Lawyers Alliance to represent more than 40 nonprofit clients on more than 45 pro bono legal matters. Duane Morris attorneys have shared their expertise in the areas of corporate governance, contracts, mergers, real estate, intellectual property, employment, and health care. Moreover, Duane Morris is a steadfast contributor to Lawyers Alliance's educational programming, providing knowledge, resources, and technical support that allow Lawyers Alliance to deliver practical legal information to nonprofit managers and pro bono attorneys. Most recently, the firm provided invaluable word processing, formatting, and proofreading work to enable Lawyers Alliance to release new editions of its signature publications, *Advising Nonprofits* and *Getting Organized*. **Valentine A. Brown**, Pro Bono Counsel, and **Katharyn Christian McGee**, Associate Pro Bono Counsel, accepted the Award on behalf of Duane Morris.

Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP: Consistent with its decades long tradition of public service, this global law firm has been particularly active in recent years in complex and compelling business law and transactional pro bono projects. Since 2010, the firm has represented 42 nonprofit clients on 48 different legal matters through Lawyers Alliance, including 12 new matters during the past year. Volunteers have donated their time and expertise to help clients negotiate contracts, enhance corporate governance, improve regulatory compliance, and reduce risk. Thanks to this pro bono assistance from Fried Frank, dozens of nonprofit organizations are better prepared to serve children and youth, develop affordable housing, and improve health in low-income neighborhoods throughout New York City. **Jennifer L. Colyer**, Special Counsel, accepted the Award on behalf of Fried Frank.

Individual Honorees

Elizabeth M. Guggenheimer, Deputy Executive Director and Director of Institutional Advancement of Lawyers Alliance, spoke about each of the individual honorees. She noted, “Since the inaugural Cornerstone Awards in 1997, only 184 of our 6,000 volunteers have received an Individual Cornerstone Award. These are Lawyers Alliance’s strongest volunteers, and they exemplify the best of the legal profession.” Lawyers Alliance’s eight individual 2015 Cornerstone Awardees are:

Todd C. Arena, O’Melveny & Myers LLP: For championing community development credit unions and economic development through supportive pro bono corporate law assistance.

Michael A. Calandra, Jr., Alston & Bird LLP: For making a positive impact on his native city by helping multiple nonprofit organizations address corporate law issues at different stages in their development, from formation to dissolution and in between.

Allan H. Cohen, Nixon Peabody LLP: For preserving essential programs for children and families by negotiating a strategic alliance and joint venture agreement.

Kyla Henriksen, Citi: For mastering legal issues outside of her usual area of practice to provide high quality assistance to nonprofit organizations on governance and lobbying matters.

Elizabeth Hook, Citi: For strengthening the nonprofit workforce through expert client counseling and employee trainings on timely human resources issues.

Sharon Lippett, Shearman & Sterling LLP: For repeatedly dedicating time and attention to pro bono employment law assistance on behalf of nonprofit organizations serving New Yorkers in need.

Michael Campion Miller, Steptoe & Johnson LLP: For strong team leadership and personal commitment evidenced in quality guidance to a family services organization in a matter involving children in foster care.

Edward Andrew Puerta, Nixon Peabody LLP: For using his real estate skills in pro bono transactional matters to help housing, economic, social services, and cultural nonprofits grow and thrive.

Congratulations to all of the 2015 Cornerstone honorees!



Honoree Allan H. Cohen (center), with, left to right, Children’s Village’s Jeremy Kohomban, and Harlem Dowling’s Jean Patton, Karen Dixon, and Jaye Smith



Honoree Michael Campion Miller and Anstiss Agnew, Forestdale



(back row, left to right) Todd C. Arena, O’Melveny & Myers LLP; Edward Andrew Puerta, Nixon Peabody LLP; Evan Glassman, Steptoe & Johnson LLP (accepted on behalf of Steptoe’s Michael Campion Miller); Michael A. Calandra, Jr., Alston & Bird LLP; and Allan H. Cohen, Nixon Peabody LLP
(front row, left to right) Elizabeth Hook, Citi; Jennifer L. Colyer of Institutional Honoree Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP; Sharon Lippett, Shearman & Sterling LLP; Kyla Henriksen, Citi; and Valentine A. Brown of Institutional Honoree Duane Morris LLP

Homeless Services Organizations Receive Legal Services at Critical Time

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Some providers seek to address the real estate challenges by purchasing property and developing facilities rather than being subjected to the whims of the rental market. Securing site control, acquisition financing, and construction loans can be a long and complicated process. Organizations seeking to undertake these kinds of projects benefit from expert legal counsel.

Case Example: Ali Forney Center (AFC) is the nation's largest and most comprehensive organization dedicated to homeless LGBT youth, serving nearly 1,400 youth annually. AFC offers an innovative continuum of services that include emergency and transitional housing, counseling, education, and family outreach services. AFC worked for years with developer **Cooper Square Committee** to purchase and renovate a building on East 13th Street in Manhattan to be used as a transitional residence for their clients. In June 2015 the project had a construction loan closing with The City of New York Department of Housing Preservation and Development for the renovation of the building into a home for up to 18 youths. Pro bono attorneys from **Holland & Knight LLP** handled the incorpora-

tion and tax exemption of the newly formed owner, The Bea Arthur Residence Housing Development Fund Corporation. These volunteers also negotiated the terms of a predevelopment loan that enabled AFC to pay their architect and other upfront expenses. The construction closing was handled by Lawyers Alliance staff and a **Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP** extern. Construction is expected to take a year.

Operating and Sustaining an Active Nonprofit Organization

In addition to overcoming the hurdles posed by the real estate market, homeless services providers must successfully operate and manage a not-for-profit corporation to thrive and grow. The Board of Directors needs to provide proper oversight and governance, the staff needs to be properly managed, and the organization needs to raise and administer sufficient funds. Experienced lawyers can support Board leadership and staff as they work to sustain their organization and accomplish these critical tasks.

Case Example: Project EPIC works with volunteers to assemble and distribute backpacks containing Essentials, Provisions, Information, and Care (E.P.I.C.) to the homeless population. Project EPIC enlists the help of high school students to coordinate donations and distribute backpacks in an effort to foster altruism in young people while keeping costs manageable. Pro bono counsel from **Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP** assisted Project EPIC in reviewing all of their governance documents and obtaining federal and state tax exemption, allowing the nonprofit organization to focus on expanding its operations.

The legal support and guidance provided by Lawyers Alliance and pro bono counsel to homeless services providers enables them to preserve resources for essential services for homeless and at-risk individuals, families, and children. Without these vital legal services, homeless services providers would not have the ability to have the impact that they have today.

For more information on Lawyers Alliance's work with homeless and affordable housing organizations, please contact Senior Staff Attorney **Hedwig O'Hara** at (212) 219-1800 ext. 226 or hohara@lawyersalliance.org.

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Photo: Ali Forney Center

Ali Forney Center broke ground for the Bea Arthur Residence, which will house homeless LGBT youth.

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Nonprofits Should Embrace and Evaluate Risk Management

Nonprofit leaders are responsible for ensuring that their organization achieves its charitable mission while at the same time protecting its assets. Risk management is a framework that balances the need to provide programming against the capacity to fund and deliver that programming. Risk management also informs business and operational decisions to reduce the risk of harm or legal liability. Below are some concrete steps that a nonprofit can take to assess and mitigate risk factors, along with examples of how Lawyers Alliance and its pro bono attorneys can help.

Review Organizational Documents

An organization's certificate of incorporation and bylaws should be periodically reviewed to ensure that they reflect current mission and operations. Dynamic organizations evolve over time and should amend these documents to reflect changing realities. If an organization's certificate of incorporation does not encompass current programs, then the limited liability protection offered by the corporate shell could be lost. Similarly, New York State law establishes parameters for the operation of the Board of Directors, usually reflected in the bylaws. Updating and using sound bylaws will help directors, officers, and staff to comply with changes in the law and ensure that key actions are duly authorized.

Case Example: Chinatown Manpower Project

(CMP) promotes economic self-sufficiency by providing vocational training, employment services, educational programs, and economic development programs to low-income immigrants and refugees in New York City. Over the years, CMP's programs have expanded, including the addition of fee-for-service programs, and its corporate purpose needed to be amended to reflect these changes. Pro bono counsel from **Kirkland & Ellis LLP** assisted CMP in analyzing its programs and filing a certificate of amendment.

Tighten Internal Fiscal Controls

The Board has an obligation to ensure that charitable funds are used for the purpose for which they were raised and are not diverted for other purposes or for an individual's benefit. Regulators and funders increasingly are concerned about, and monitoring, a not-for-profit corporation's internal controls, policies, and procedures related to accounting, reporting, financial management,

and conflict of interest policies. Strong financial stewardship protects the organization's assets from misuse and mismanagement.

Case Example: Heights and Hills is one of the largest providers of supportive services for community-dwelling older adults in Brooklyn and their families. It provides compassionate and professionally delivered services that address older adults' physical and emotional challenges, allowing elders to age on their terms, independently and with dignity. Lawyers Alliance and pro bono counsel from **White & Case LLP** assisted Heights and Hills in reviewing and revising its conflict of interest policy, whistleblower policy, and audit committee responsibilities pursuant to the Nonprofit Revitalization Act.

Exercise Proper Personnel Management

Sound personnel policies should, among other things, address harassment prevention, non-discrimination, and safety in the workplace. It is important that policies are understandable and accessible, and cover both employee-employee harassment and employee-client harassment. Having a harassment policy in place can provide protection if a harassment claim is raised. However, if the policies are not followed or are not tailored to your employees, this protection may be ineffective.

Case Example: Sunnyside Community Services

(SCS) is a not-for-profit social service agency in Western Queens serving more than 13,500 residents ranging in age from five to 95, with activities including social, recreational, and educational programs for youth, the elderly, and immigrants. Pro bono counsel from **DLA Piper LLP (US)** provided sexual harassment trainings to SCS staff to ensure that employees are aware of relevant policies and best practices.

Assess Insurance Coverage

Accidents may happen, despite strong management, Board oversight, and program compliance. Adequate insurance coverage protects organizational assets in the event a claim is made. Nonprofit managers should undertake periodic analysis of insurance coverage with the assistance of appropriate insurance professionals. When examining insurance coverage, pay particular attention to exclusions, which identify the items and persons that are not covered by the policy, and the amount of the deductible.

Lawyers Alliance's Legal Work: *High Volume, High Impact*

Lawyers Alliance is handling more business and transactional law cases for more nonprofits than at any time in our history. With our staff attorneys and a greater number of volunteers working on more projects, we are making a bigger difference throughout New York City.

In fiscal year 2015, 1,650 volunteer attorneys assisted 709 nonprofit clients with 1,222 legal matters. We leveraged our budget of close to 3 million dollars to deliver services valued at more than 9 million dollars.

High
Volume

HIGH
IMPACT

Our new campaign – *High Volume, High Impact* – reflects this growth and the resulting outcomes. With a greater volume of work, Lawyers Alliance multiplies our impact on more nonprofits, which in turn assist more people in their communities, save money needed for vital programming, and improve Board governance and human resource management. Look for the *High Volume, High Impact* logo and content in the newsletter, Volunteer Accomplishments, and client and volunteer outreach materials.

Case Example – Volunteer Impact: More cases mean more options, interesting and challenging legal issues, and rewarding pro bono experiences for Lawyers Alliance volunteers. All Lawyers Alliance pro bono attorneys have a positive impact on nonprofit clients, but some legal work proves crucial to a nonprofit's stability. 2015 Cornerstone Award honoree Allan H. Cohen of **Nixon Peabody LLP** represented **Harlem Dowling Westside Center for Children and Family Services** as it entered a strategic alliance with The Children's Village at a pivotal moment in Harlem Dowling's 175-year history, allowing both organizations to continue and expand their work for children, youth, and families. Harlem Dowling had site control to develop a parcel of land in West Harlem. This valuable asset enabled it to attract a joint venture development partner, Alembic Community Development. Mr. Cohen negotiated the agreement with The Children's Village, the joint venture agreement with Alembic, and the terms of a revolving line of credit for Harlem Dowling. The joint venture worked out the terms for an affordable housing development project, which includes 60 apartments, 12 of which are set aside for youth aging out of foster care.

Case Example – Client Impact: As more nonprofits turn to Lawyers Alliance, they find we offer the experienced legal help needed for even the most complex business or transactional law challenge. The legal work performed by Lawyers Alliance and our volunteer attorneys strengthens our nonprofit clients' ability to have a positive impact on the individuals and communities they serve. **Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund** helps mayors and other municipal authorities create, fund, and implement pilots and programs that help low- to moderate-income individuals and families in 30 cities across the country develop financial capacity. A volunteer attorney from **Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP** advised CFE Fund to develop an agreement with a credit bureau and contracts with cities, nonprofits, and financial institutions involved in its Financial Empowerment Center Replication Initiative. As a result, CFE Fund was able to award grants to launch Financial Empowerment Centers in five cities across the country and, more recently, expand to eight additional cities. These Centers assist those in need with money management, budgeting, debt reduction, the establishment of credit, and access to safe and affordable banking services.

Case Example – Funder Impact: Funders, including foundations, individuals, law firms, and corporations, are integral to Lawyers Alliance's impact. Financial support means we can deliver more business and transactional law pro bono services to more nonprofits. **The Frances L. and Edwin L. Cummings Memorial Fund** generously supports Lawyers Alliance's legal and educational services for nonprofits that are improving educational, economic, and housing outcomes for New York City's disconnected and disadvantaged older youth. In 2015 Lawyers Alliance staff and volunteers worked with approximately 120 such nonprofits on more than 175 legal matters. Lawyers Alliance staff and volunteers from **Shearman & Sterling LLP** assisted **Manhattan Youth Recreation and Resources**, a provider of afterschool programs in public schools, camps, and sports programs for youth. The attorneys reviewed and revised the organization's employee handbook for its 45 full-time and 350 part-time employees, who provide services to thousands of children and youth each year, to reflect the organization's growth and programmatic expansion.

Please join us to continue the *High Volume, High Impact* momentum! We welcome more clients, cases, volunteers, and resources so we can do even more.

Staff Profile: Nicole Cuttino

Staff Attorney **Nicole Cuttino** leads Lawyers Alliance's Children and Youth services program area, representing child care providers, after-school programs, charter schools, and organizations serving older or at-risk youth. Last year, Ms. Cuttino, along with Lawyers Alliance colleagues and volunteers, represented more than 300 youth-serving clients on more than 500 matters. Recently Ms. Cuttino was recognized as one of New York Nonprofit Media's inaugural 40 Under 40 Rising Stars.

Among those joining her at the awards presentation were enthusiastic representatives of **Chinatown Head Start**, a Lawyers Alliance client she has served since 2011. Ms. Cuttino and pro bono attorneys from **Winston & Strawn LLP** negotiated and executed a license agreement between Chinatown Head Start and the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS), allowing the Head Start program to continue to serve 84 children at its location in Chinatown. Says Sook Ling Lai, Director of Chinatown Head Start,

"I was very impressed with Nicole's efficiency in following up on issues, her professional knowledge, and her relationship with her clients. She even made a visit to our facilities to ensure the License Agreement reflects the accuracy of the space."

Other appreciative clients include **New York Harbor Foundation**, assisted by Ms. Cuttino and volunteers with a range of legal matters, including a license agreement and memorandum of understanding, and **Riverdale Neighborhood House**, which received assistance on multiple legal matters, including contracts and a governance review.

Says Ms. Cuttino, "I am pleased to be part of an extremely dedicated and talented staff, who, with amazing nonprofit clients and pro bono attorneys, makes life better for children and families."

Ms. Cuttino is also the co-editor of Lawyers Alliance's Sixth Edition of *Getting Organized*. Prior to joining Lawyers Alliance in 2011, Ms. Cuttino was an associate at Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP.



Nicole Cuttino

New Board Members

Lawyers Alliance is pleased to announce the election of two new members to the Board of Directors.

Armand A. Della Monica is a partner in the M&A/Private Equity Practice Group at Kirkland & Ellis LLP. His practice focuses on domestic and cross-border buyouts, mergers and acquisitions, and growth equity investing. He has experience counseling clients in a variety of industries, including health care, business services, software, telecom, cable, broadcast, media, insurance, and consumer products. Mr. Della Monica also serves on various firmwide committees, including the Pro Bono Management Committee.

Eileen Torres, Executive Director of BronxWorks, joined the organization in 1995, when it was known as Citizens Advice Bureau, and was named General Counsel in 2003, Interim Executive Director in 2013, and Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer in 2014. Over the years, she has helped the organization grow from 120 to 750 employees and 10 to 34 sites, which today feed, shelter, teach, and support more than 35,000 people in the South Bronx each year. Ms. Torres received a Business Law & Leadership Award in 2015 from Lawyers Alliance.

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2015-16 Law Firm Appeal Supports Legal Services for Nonprofits



Michael W. Blair

Lawyers Alliance's 2015-2016 Law Firm Appeal is co-chaired by **Michael W. Blair** and **Craig A. Bowman** of Debevoise & Plimpton LLP. The funds raised through this Appeal help Lawyers Alliance to provide legal services and educational resources to nonprofit organizations serving low-income neighborhoods throughout New York City.

Mr. Blair is the Presiding Partner of Debevoise & Plimpton. He has served as lead counsel in a host of major mergers and acquisitions transactions, advised senior executives and boards of directors on governance matters, and handled securities transactions for clients across a range of industries.

Mr. Blair remarks, "Debevoise & Plimpton is pleased to spearhead this year's Law Firm Appeal. It is important that major law firms that have a strong New York City presence support the Appeal. The generosity of the legal community, through the provision of its expertise and financial resources, ensures that nonprofit organizations get the legal help they need to improve quality of life in New York City."



Craig A. Bowman

Mr. Bowman is a Partner at Debevoise & Plimpton. He is Co-Chair of the firm's Pro Bono Committee and a member of Lawyers Alliance's Board of Directors. He has experience across a broad range of secured financing transactions, including fund financing, structured finance, leveraged acquisition finance, and infrastructure finance transactions.

Mr. Bowman notes, "Corporate and other transactional attorneys seek high caliber business law pro bono legal projects that make a noticeable positive impact on low-income communities. Pro bono legal service has been deeply rooted in Debevoise & Plimpton's culture since its founding. We are delighted to lead this appeal that helps Lawyers Alliance to continue making meaningful pro bono opportunities available that are vital to a nonprofit organization's future."

To donate to the 2015-2016 Law Firm Appeal, please contact Associate Director of Development **Marisol Read Essner** at (212) 219-1800 ext. 230 or messner@lawyersalliance.org.
