

Lawyers Alliance Supports Nonprofits Serving Survivors of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence

Our Equal Justice Works Fellow, sponsored by DLA Piper and Verizon, will prioritize expanding our services to organizations serving domestic violence survivors over the next two years.

In New York State, more than one in three individuals will experience abuse by an intimate partner in their lifetime. In New York City, police file one domestic violence incident report every two minutes, and many additional incidents go unreported. Ninety-nine percent of survivors also experience economic abuse, which makes access to free resources from nonprofits and government agencies essential for their survival.

New York City nonprofits operate safe shelters and community centers focused on healing, empowering survivors to build safety plans, access counseling, and develop financial planning skills. Organizations working with survivors of domestic and gender-based violence are often overwhelmed by the demand for services, which means there are fewer resources and less time to devote to organizational and governance matters. Lawyers Alliance and our volunteer attorneys provide much-needed legal services to these organizations as they balance the needs of communities and simultaneous funding constraints.

Aligning purposes with funding goals to maintain transitional living programs

Nonprofits working with survivors are expanding their purposes in order to better serve clients through a variety of activities. Amending a nonprofit's certificate of incorporation can allow it to provide needed services and secure necessary funding from public sources.

Case Example: Diaspora Community Services needed to amend its certificate of incorporation to facilitate the renewal of a government grant to operate a transitional living program called Mothers Gaining Hope. The program provides apartments to mothers in Brooklyn, serving as maternal group homes for pregnant or parenting runaway or homeless youth ages 16-21 from across the City. Residents receive case management services and counseling to assist with education and career goals, financial literacy, health education, healthy relationship development, and healthy parenting skills. These services enable residents to live independently by providing them with resources and skills to participate in the community as self-sufficient

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Photo: Diaspora Community Services

Diaspora Community Services provides a range of services at maternal group homes.

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adults. Diaspora Community Services received assistance from attorneys at **Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP** to facilitate the amendment process as required by its state funder, and it ultimately secured renewal of the grant to support this vital program for young mothers. “We are always grateful for the support of Lawyers Alliance who has worked with Diaspora for over 10 years in various important legal aspects. For this particular engagement, it allows us to further our mission in the community of empowering young people using a comprehensive youth development approach,” says Carine Jocelyn, CEO of Diaspora Community Services.

Creative strategies for generating revenue and securing services for clients

Nonprofits with excess or underutilized office space might consider subleasing or licensing an office or conference room to a third party for business purposes, so long as their leases permit it. An arrangement like this can be particularly beneficial when there is a synergistic relationship between the parties. If contemplating a sublease, Lawyers Alliance and our volunteer attorneys can provide legal assistance.

Case Example: The **Crime Victims Treatment Center** (CVTC) offers crisis intervention, individual and group trauma-focused therapy, legal advocacy, psychiatric consultation, prevention training, and community education. Volunteers from **Dechert LLP** finalized an agreement to sublease space within the organization’s office to a licensed

psychiatrist to provide on-site services for clients. The arrangement proved to be beneficial for both parties: CVTC’s clients obtained convenient access to a psychiatrist’s services and the psychiatrist gained space for their private practice. Amie Karp, CVTC’s Clinical Director, reports, “Our attorneys were responsive and helpful. And patient along the way when we hit hurdles. They got the job totally done for us. We’re very grateful.” Notably, the volunteers from Dechert helped make the agreement adaptable as a template for future subleases.

Protecting survivors’ privacy

It is important for nonprofits in New York to ensure that their website terms of use and privacy policy are regularly updated and compliant with relevant consumer protection laws. Statements explaining when and how an organization tracks visits to its website must be accurate, and privacy controls should work as described online.

Case Example: Founded in 1994, **New Destiny Housing** is the only organization in New York solely dedicated to the solution of permanent housing for survivors of domestic violence, the leading cause of family homelessness. After connecting through Lawyers Alliance’s Best Practices for Website Use Clinic, lawyers from **Covington & Burling LLP** volunteered to work with New Destiny Housing to revise its terms of use to appropriately disclose the organization’s current data collection practices and dispute resolution. This is particularly essential for nonprofits serving survivors of domestic and gender-based violence, especially as tech-facilitated and image-based abuse has risen. It is also important to update terms of use and privacy policies if an organization processes donations or registrations through its website. After updating the policies with help from Covington, Nicholas Lundgren, New Destiny’s General Counsel, says, “Privacy and data collection is a complicated and constantly evolving area, so we really appreciated their expertise and the expertise among their colleagues in their practice group at the firm.”

If your nonprofit supports survivors or advocates against domestic violence and is in need of pro bono business and transactional legal services, please contact Equal Justice Works Fellow Frances Tyler at ftyler@lawyersalliance.org.

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Photo: Crime Victims Treatment Center

CVTC staff members in the psychiatrist’s space.

Cornerstone Awards Honor Outstanding Pro Bono Achievements



Honoree Gregory Nelson (center) with Jonathan Feldman and Karen Murtagh of Prisoners' Legal Services of New York



Dara Cook of Expect Fitness and Honoree Richard J. Lee



Honoree Christina T. Holder and Eve Wolff of Dancing Classrooms

A festive crowd of more than 100 volunteers, nonprofit clients, colleagues, and friends and family gathered for the 2024 Cornerstone Awards on October 28 at **Paramount Global**. Cravath and Thomson Reuters received Institutional Awards in recognition of their superior legal services to nonprofits. The Cornerstone Award winners also included six talented individuals selected from more than 2,200 business and transactional lawyers who volunteered through Lawyers Alliance during the past year. A new Cornerstone Award category, Pro Bono Professional, was introduced this year to acknowledge the importance of pro bono coordinators and counsel. **Sarah Harp**, Senior Vice President, Senior Counsel, Corporate Transactions and Securities at Paramount Global, welcomed the guests as Paramount hosted the Awards for the eighth time.

"The Cornerstone Awards are a wonderful opportunity to connect Lawyers Alliance's volunteers, clients, and supporters to celebrate the vital pro bono work of our honorees," said **Hedwig O'Hara**, Lawyers Alliance's Interim Executive Director. "These attorneys have helped strengthen nonprofits across New York City and beyond. Along with all of our volunteers, they truly make a difference for nonprofits and communities."

Marie L. Gibson, Partner, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Lawyers Alliance's Board Chair, presented the Institutional Awards to **Adam Sanchez**, a Partner at Cravath who accepted the Award on behalf of the firm, and **Helen Respass**, Senior Managing Editor, Practical Law at Thomson Reuters and a past Individual Cornerstone Honoree, who accepted the Award on behalf of the company.

Institutional Honorees

Cravath: Cravath has partnered with Lawyers Alliance since 2001, providing pro bono assistance to more than 60 nonprofit clients on more than 66 legal matters, including 19 new cases during the past year. The exemplary support of Cravath's attorneys has led to the success of many pro bono projects, including strategic alliances, lease agreements, privacy policies, and entity formations.

Thomson Reuters: For the past decade, Thomson Reuters has been a consistent, thoughtful, and holistic partner to Lawyers Alliance, with close to 50 volunteers handling 44 limited scope representations and 27 cases. Beyond legal assistance, Thomson Reuters has supported Lawyers Alliance through programs like AI for Justice and IMPACTathon.

Laren E. Spirer, Lawyers Alliance's Program and Strategy Director, presented the Pro Bono Professional and Individual Awards to this year's deserving honorees.

CORNERSTONE
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Pro Bono Professional Honoree

Christina T. Holder, *Lowenstein Sandler LLP*: Our inaugural Pro Bono Professional lends her transactional expertise to Lawyers Alliance clients, not only assisting them directly with legal matters, but also building the firm's corporate pro bono engagements.

Individual Honorees

David Broderdorf and Gregory Nelson, *Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP*: This dedicated team helped a legal justice organization negotiate its first collective bargaining agreement.

Maddy Hayes, *Linklaters LLP*: In just the past two years, this committed employment law attorney has provided pro bono legal assistance to seven Lawyers Alliance clients on 10 matters.

Richard J. Lee, *Crowell & Moring LLP*: This skillful corporate attorney helped demystify financing for nonprofits serving low-income communities.

Gavin Orman, *Getty Realty Corp.*: This adept and patient in-house attorney provided real estate law expertise to nonprofits working in affordable housing and community services.

Marcus T. Strong, *Brown Rudnick LLP*: This expert attorney shared his intellectual property knowledge with a special focus on nonprofit arts groups. In addition, in honor of Lawyers Alliance's 55th Anniversary year, long-term volunteers with decades of pro bono service were recognized as members of the 20 and 25 Year Circles.

Congratulations to all of the 2024 Cornerstone honorees!



Honorees Maddy Hayes (left) and Marcus T. Strong with Lawyers Alliance Senior Staff Attorney Lori Moses



Honoree Gavin Orman



(Left to right) Adam Sanchez of Institutional Honoree *Cravath*; Richard J. Lee, *Crowell & Moring LLP*; Gavin Orman, *Getty Realty Corp.*; Maddy Hayes, *Linklaters LLP*; Gregory Nelson, *Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP*; Marcus T. Strong, *Brown Rudnick LLP*; Helen Respass of Institutional Honoree *Thomson Reuters*; and Christina T. Holder, *Lowenstein Sandler LLP*; Not pictured: David Broderdorf, *Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP*

For more photos from the 2024 Cornerstone Awards visit:
www.lawyersalliance.org/volunteer-recognition

Legal Program Is Supported by Talented New Fellows

This Fall Lawyers Alliance welcomed **Frances Tyler** and **Dalton Valerio** to our staff. They both bring meaningful perspective and skills to their jobs, enhancing our legal services.

Frances Tyler is a Legal Fellow sponsored by DLA Piper and Verizon through an Equal Justice Works Fellowship. Frances' project offers critically needed services to survivors of domestic violence by furnishing nonprofits with transactional legal services, enabling their continued success. Frances graduated from New York University School of Law in 2024. Prior to law school, she earned a B.A. in English with minors in Spanish and Film and Media Studies from Georgetown University in 2020. This Fall Frances worked with Senior Policy Counsel and Interim Legal Director Laura Abel on proposing language to amend the New York State standard



Dalton Valerio and Frances Tyler

contract to protect the privacy rights of a non-profit's clients. Frances observed that this project felt particularly meaningful as "protecting client confidentiality echoed in my weekly meetings with organizations serving survivors of domestic violence, many of whom are immigrants." Read about Frances' work with domestic violence support groups in this issue's cover story.

Our seventh fellow from NYU's National Center on Philanthropy and the Law, **Dalton Valerio**, joined us in September. NCPL Fellows participate fully in providing legal services to our nonprofit clients. Dalton graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law with certificates in International Law and Public Interest & Social Justice. He graduated in 2017 with an M.A. in Dance Performance from Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance, and in 2014 with a B.S. in Biology from the University of New Mexico. One of Dalton's early assignments was to help a client amend its fiscal sponsorship agreement to streamline the flow of funds. When our client, a fiscal sponsor, amended its agreement and the sponsored project received support for its mission, the parties benefitted from Dalton's own experience with a sponsored organization. Dalton noted that the work resonated with him "because as someone who has worked for fiscally sponsored organizations in the past, I know how burdensome it is to spend personal funds – or to not know where the initial capital will come from – before getting reimbursed."

For full bios and contact information for Frances and Dalton, and all of Lawyers Alliance's staff, visit www.lawyersalliance.org/staff.

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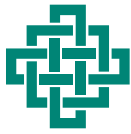
Frances Tyler
Legal Fellow, Equal Justice Works

James Valentin
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Dalton Valerio
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Greetings from Interim Executive Director Hedwig O'Hara



Hedwig O'Hara

It has been a privilege to serve Lawyers Alliance as its Interim Executive Director. As you can see from the photos in this Newsletter, our annual Cornerstone Awards in October kicked off a joyous Fall season. It was an inspiring evening hosted by Paramount Global with the lights of Times Square as a backdrop. Our annual Law Firm Appeal, led by Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, yielded a record-breaking \$953,340. For more information, visit www.lawyersalliance.org/contributors. We launched searches for a Staff Attorney and a Program Assistant and filled both positions with great candidates who began in early January. You will learn more about our newest staff, Tara Knapp and Amelia Roth-Dishy, in our next Newsletter! In December we received news of a \$1,700,000 five-year grant from the IOLA Fund's Access to Justice program, representing the largest IOLA grant in Lawyers Alliance's 55 year history. This grant, along with increased funding from other sources, will enable Lawyers Alliance to continue our vital work of improving the quality of life in low-income neighborhoods. Our search for

a permanent Executive Director was launched through On-Ramps. Interested candidates should visit www.lawyersalliance.org/job-openings. We introduced our Board training support and conference room rentals. We convened a meeting of Exponentum™ and began plans for an in-person Exponentum meeting for members in the Spring. Our staff began tracking the policies enacted by the new federal administration in order to best serve New York's nonprofit sector. In part that effort involved collaborations on trainings and educational materials with New York Lawyers for Public Interest, Nonprofit New York, Philanthropy New York, and others. We are looking forward to continuing to collaborate with experts and key technical assistance providers in order to serve the sector in the best way possible in the coming months.

We appreciate your continued interest in and support for Lawyers Alliance! Please feel free to reach out to me at hohara@lawyersalliance.org if you have questions about our services and our work in the sector.
