



## At Forty, Lawyers Alliance's Founding Spirit Inspires Its Future



Edward F. Greene

ON THE OCCASION OF Lawyers Alliance for New York's Fortieth Anniversary, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to all who have contributed to its success over the years. As someone associated with this vital organization at the outset, I would like to reaffirm Lawyers Alliance's important role in making New York a better place to live and work.

In 1969, we were a group of law firm associates who came together at a time when there were far too few occasions for lawyers to interact with young lawyers at other firms, and, especially, to participate in meaningful public service work. We were gratified that within our first year, more than 500 fellow associates joined what was then the Council of New York Law Associates, proof to us that we could mobilize our peers to make a fundamental difference in our communities.

Today, our network of attorneys and the nonprofits that we serve continues to exemplify the Lawyers Alliance mission of "connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities." Our volunteers have helped to launch, protect, and expand thousands of nonprofits. In turn, these organizations have created affordable housing, trained workers for jobs, supported the development of children and young people, prepared new immigrants for productive roles, and provided critical services to homebound elders – improving the lives of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers.

Now, during one of the nation's most trying times, this connection of committed individuals works to replace uncertainty with opportunity for New York's most vulnerable populations.

Those of us who created it when we first gathered in 1969 could never have imagined that Lawyers Alliance would have evolved and matured into such an instrument for positive change in New York City. I am privileged to be associated with Lawyers Alliance as we celebrate our 40th anniversary, and I look forward to many more years connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities.

Edward F. Greene  
Chair, Board of Directors



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# Connecting *Lawyers*, Nonprofits, and Communities

Pro bono: “for the public good.” Attorneys who volunteer through Lawyers Alliance take this to heart when they dedicate their time to work with organizations whose missions they admire. They know that as beneficiaries of Lawyers Alliance’s pro bono model, which includes client outreach, client screening, volunteer support, and volunteer recognition, volunteers are able to use their skills efficiently for maximum impact.

Our vigorous client outreach program attracts a diverse range of nonprofit clients, from small community-based organizations to large multi-service providers, offering attorneys projects ranging from formation work to sophisticated transactional projects. Once the match is made, Lawyers Alliance’s unparalleled volunteer support serves as an important link between pro bono attorneys and nonprofit clients. Armed with specialized nonprofit knowledge and an understanding of business law needs unique to nonprofits, a Lawyers Alliance staff attorney serves as co-counsel on every legal matter placed with a volunteer.

Lawyers Alliance honors the hard work of all its volunteers and has a long-standing commitment to recognize those who represent the ideals of pro bono. Accolades for exemplary service to nonprofit organizations include the annual Cornerstone Awards presented to law firms and individual attorneys and the annual Award for Pro Bono Leadership given to a law firm partner, most recently to **Ashley R. Altschuler** of Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP in recognition of his eight years of outstanding service.



## **Ashley Altschuler, CSCS Marketplace and Money Management Program**

Since 2001, Mr. Altschuler has served as Pro Bono General Counsel to the **Council of Senior Centers and Services of New York City**, where he has provided guidance in matters related to corporate governance, litigation, advocacy, strategic alliances and business ventures. This includes the development of The Marketplace@CSCS for discounted food and services for senior centers and the Money Management Program, in which volunteers recruited through the AARP Foundation assist older adults with paying their monthly bills on time.

Says **Igal Jellinek**, Executive Director, Council of Senior Centers and Services, “Our partnership with Lawyers Alliance and Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP enables us to be prepared legally and strategically to address the challenges and opportunities facing New York City’s senior population, and the nonprofit organizations serving seniors.”

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# Connecting Lawyers, *Nonprofits*, and Communities

Even in the midst of hardship, each day brings remarkable stories of hope and triumph to those who are most vulnerable, thanks to the efforts and dedication of thousands of nonprofits in New York City.

Lawyers Alliance was founded to serve these vital organizations that work to transform our society. Recognizing that nonprofits have a surplus of passion and capabilities, but few resources to cover costs associated with legal representation, Lawyers Alliance provides the full spectrum of business law needs that nonprofits face in operating and expanding their programs. This includes legal guidance on corporate, tax, real estate, employment, intellectual property, and other legal matters our clients face. In addition, Lawyers Alliance offers a telephone resource call service as well as a full roster of practical educational programs to help nonprofits to make the greatest possible impact.

Throughout its history Lawyers Alliance has focused on program priority areas that meet the pressing needs of New York neighborhoods. For example, legal work in Affordable Housing and Homeless Services, one of Lawyers Alliance’s core program priority areas, has helped to create thousands of units affordable and special needs housing, while expanding services for families and adults.

**Case Example:** Imagine being in an abusive relationship and being forced to stay because you have no options for stable, affordable housing. Working to help domestic violence survivors by developing new housing and making existing housing resources more accessible, longtime Lawyers Alliance client **New Destiny Housing Corporation (New Destiny)** is unique among domestic violence service providers in New York City. With the help of Lawyers Alliance and volunteer attorneys from Goodwin Procter LLP, New Destiny recently completed Marcello Manor, a service-enriched affordable rental project in the Northwest Bronx. The Goodwin Procter team assisted with the review and production of the numerous documents required by four lenders. As a result, the nine-story, 39,000 square-foot building houses 38 units, with half of the units set aside for low-income domestic violence survivors coming out of shelters.

Says **Carol Corden**, Executive Director, New Destiny Housing Corporation, “New Destiny is a small not-for-profit, which, despite its size, is involved in relatively complex real estate deals. Through Lawyers Alliance, we have been provided with excellent pro bono legal services from dedicated and experienced professionals that we could never begin to afford given our resources.”



Progress at New Destiny

# Connecting Lawyers, Nonprofits, and *Communities*

*Lawyers Alliance Serves Hundreds of Nonprofits Each Year in All Five Boroughs Of New York City*

## MANHATTAN

**Encore Community Services (Encore)** is dedicated to giving elderly residents of the theater district and neighboring Hell's Kitchen/Clinton community an "encore" to life. Encore offers programs and services including on-site congregate meals, delivered meals, social services, and health and recreational programs that enable people to maintain their independence and remain living in their community. Encore was awarded one of the home delivered meals contracts for Community Boards 4 and 7. Lawyers Alliance staff attorneys and volunteers from **Dewey & LeBoeuf LLP** are assisting Encore Community Services with Meals-on-Wheels SUBcontracting agreements.

**The result:** Encore and its community partners will deliver 265,000 meals annually.

## STATEN ISLAND

Located on 83 acres of City park land, **The Staten Island Botanical Garden (the Garden)** offered horticultural, environmental and cultural programming. The City park land was shared with **Snug Harbor Cultural Center (Snug Harbor)**, a premier regional arts organization that promotes artistic excellence and community spirit. The Garden and Snug Harbor worked collaboratively, and the board of directors decided to merge the two organizations to enhance corporate identity and achieve economies of scale. Lawyers Alliance and attorneys from **Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP** represented the Garden in negotiating a merger agreement and securing the necessary governmental approvals.

**The result:** The Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden offers Staten Island residents a unique blend of gardens, museums, theaters, educational opportunities, and seasonal festivals.

## BRONX

**Grand Concourse Academy Charter School (GCA)** is one of the City's top performing K-5 charter schools serving 376 students. Originally, GCA was chartered as a K-4 school, but it soon became clear the school needed to expand to include a 5th grade. With enrollment expanding GCA outgrew its main building and found additional classroom space nearby in a building owned by Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDCO). Lawyers Alliance staff attorneys and volunteers from **Dechert LLP** negotiated a lease agreement with WHEDCO.

**The result:** GCA opened an additional 4 classrooms to serve 100 elementary school students.

## QUEENS

**East River Development Alliance (ERDA)** works to expand economic opportunities for residents of New York City Public Housing Developments, particularly in Western Queens. Lawyers Alliance and volunteer attorneys from **Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy LLP** aided ERDA with negotiating and finalizing a contract with FoodChange in connection with a mobile Earned Income Tax Credit site in Long Island City to be collaboratively staffed and run by ERDA and FoodChange.

**The result:** Hundreds of local residents of Queensbridge, Ravenswood, Astoria, and Woodside Houses were able to obtain their Earned Income Tax Credits, which, depending on income and number of children, could be as much as \$6,000 per family.

## BROOKLYN

**Brooklyn Economic Development Corporation (BEDC)** links entrepreneurs to capital markets, advances enterprise formation, and develops initiatives aimed to eliminate barriers to economic growth in low-income communities. The Moore Street Retail Market (the Market) in Williamsburg, Brooklyn is one of three remaining markets set up under Mayor LaGuardia to bring healthy produce to poor, immigrant neighborhoods. The New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC), which operated the Market, was considering closing it unless BEDC assumed Market management. Lawyers Alliance staff attorneys and volunteers from **Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher** represented BEDC in its assuming operation of the Market.

**The result:** BEDC is filling vendor vacancies to expand offerings of goods and services, as well as various programming at the site, including business workshops and community events.

# A Lawyers Alliance Timeline

1969 - 1979

## Cultivating voluntarism and activism

- **Recruited** more than 500 law firm associates in the first year alone
- **Spearheaded** efforts to mobilize attorneys, share information, and create new public interest law organizations to assist individuals and nonprofit organizations with pressing legal needs
- Volunteers **served** as trained, neutral observers of political demonstrations and helped organize 2,000 lawyers to march in Washington, D.C.
- Volunteers **drafted** legislation for elected officials at the federal, state, and local levels

1979 - 1989

## Strengthening communities

- **Created** the Community Development Legal Assistance Center to advise nonprofit housing groups and other community-based organizations
- **Launched** the Nonprofit Law Program to provide legal education and training and to advocate for the nonprofit sector in the public policy arena

1989 - 1999

## Reaching new horizons

- **Renamed** Lawyers Alliance for New York and reaffirmed the mission of uniting lawyers to effect positive change in New York City, recruited law firm partners and corporate counsel as board leaders
- **Recognized** members of the legal community whose pro bono service had a far-reaching impact with the inaugural Cornerstone Awards
- **Launched** program priorities that focus on child care, economic development, workforce development, and public schools improvement, in addition to continuing work in affordable housing

1999 - 2009

## Achieving advances and unprecedented growth

- **Invigorated** new and expanded program priorities, resolving to support the work of more nonprofit organizations to create affordable housing, stimulate economic development, and serve children and young people, the elderly, and new immigrant communities
- **Delivered** business and transactional legal services to more than 1300 nonprofit clients on more than 3000 legal matters
- **Experienced** unprecedented growth in volunteer network, with more than 1,000 pro bono attorneys assisting nonprofit clients in 2008
- **Renewed** commitment to core mission with a new brand identity and website
- **Created** the Community Development and Nonprofit Law section of Probono.net to support the legal community on issues critical to representing the nonprofit sector
- **Led** Disaster Relief Initiative in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 to assist nonprofits both affected by the disaster and responding to it
- **Completed** a five-year, \$10 million Anniversary Campaign to help sustain and expand services to community-based nonprofit organizations

Today

## Shaping the future

- **Launched** Program Preservation Initiative to help nonprofits cope with the economic downturn at a time of increased demand for their services
- **Embracing** a new era of activism and service guided by founding principles and inspired by the dynamic landscape of New York nonprofits

## Lawyers Alliance Staff

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## On Tuesday, May 19, 2009 – 40th Anniversary Celebration

Lawyers Alliance for New York recognizes the following outstanding partners in public service:

- ★ **Michael Helfer**, on behalf of the Legal Department of Citigroup
- ★ **Thomas C. Baxter, Jr.** of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York
- ★ **Fatima Goldman** and the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies

Lawyers Alliance celebrates 40 years of public service and reaffirms our commitment to the future of the nonprofit sector of New York City.

For event details, visit:

[www.lawyersalliance.org/40th\\_anniversary.php#anniversary](http://www.lawyersalliance.org/40th_anniversary.php#anniversary).

For more information about Lawyers Alliance's 40 years of history, visit:

[www.lawyersalliance.org/40th\\_anniversary.php](http://www.lawyersalliance.org/40th_anniversary.php).

