

JUSTICE FOR ALL

LEGAL ACCESS ALAMEDA SPRING 2019 NEWSLETTER

LEGAL ACCESS
ALAMEDA



May 16th, 2019
5:30pm-8pm

The Alice Collective
272 14th St, Oakland

Please join Legal Access (formerly VLSC) for our annual fundraiser. Bid on generously donated items from our silent auction, pledge your support during our fund-a-need, socialize with your friends! It all supports our work creating access to justice in our community.

Tickets are \$100 and can be purchased online at tiny.cc/JFA2019.

Questions? Call (510) 302-2209 or email william@acbanet.org.

In this issue:

Justice for All: Celebrating Pro Bono	1	2019 Legal Access Alameda Board of Directors	10
Guardians Of Justice	2	New Clinic: Family Law Status Conference Clinic	10
2019 Justice for All Sponsors	3	Expanded Self-Help Center Hours	11
Thank you to our 2018 Outstanding Volunteers!	4	Low-Income Landlord Clinic	11
Volunteer Spotlight: Cheri Ho	6	New Name	12
Call for Family Law Volunteers	8	Designate your Cy Pres to Legal Access	12
Get to Know our New Staff	9		

GUARDIANS OF JUSTICE

(AS OF APRIL 22, 2019)

The Legal Access created the Guardians of Justice campaign so that large firms, small firms, local businesses, solo practitioners, and individuals can help Legal Access bridge the justice gap in our community. To join Guardians of Justice, we ask that you make a commitment to support Legal Access on an annual basis.



*Conradi Family
Charitable Fund*



KERLEY SCHAFFER LLP



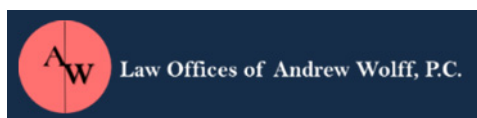
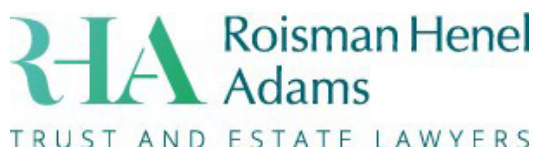
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SATTERLEY & GREENWOOD
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Hon. James Lambden, Ret.
ADR Services, Inc. - Your Partner in Resolution
justicelambden@adrservices.org



SUNDEEN & SALINAS ATTORNEYS AT LAW
we practice law to help people



Cheryl Poncini

Would you like to know more about how to become a Guardian of Justice? Contact William Strom at william@acbanet.org for more information.

2019 JUSTICE FOR ALL SPONSORS

As of April 22th

ADVOCATE LEVEL

Justice James Lambden
Keker Van Nest & Peters
Dentons

COUNSELOR LEVEL

Aiken Welch Court Reporters
JAMS
ADR Services
Reed Smith

Wendel Rosen Black & Dean
Blum Gibbs Davies & Owen

ASSOCIATE LEVEL

Bonjour Thorman Burns & Dahm
Law Office of Janice Cho
Fenwick & West
Gwilliam Ivary Chiosso Cavalli & Brewer
Frudden & Padilla Family Law
Frassetto Law
Jen Lee Law
Robert Half Legal
Kathi Pugh

Spanos Przetak
Clapp Moroney Vucinich Beeman & Schelly
Karren L. Freedman, Esq & Judge Robert B. Freedman (Ret.)
Peter Shelton
Haapala Thompson & Abern
TONG LAW

Special Event Partner: The ALICE COLLECTIVE

Become a Justice for All Sponsor!

Our annual Justice for All event hosts over 150 guests from the legal and corporate community for an evening of celebration. The event is our annual organization fundraiser, and features various event sponsors. As a Justice for All sponsor, you will join a community of firms and businesses supporting Legal Access's mission to provide equal access to justice in Alameda County and beyond.

We're bringing on sponsors for our 2019 event (May 16, 2019) now!

By becoming a Justice for All sponsor, you will be leading the effort to close the justice gap in our community by helping Legal Access to:

- Sustain and enhance our current programs, including over 30 pro per assistance clinics a month.
- Provide training, mentoring and malpractice insurance to our dedicated volunteer attorneys and paralegals.
- Develop additional programs to meet the existing and growing need for legal services in Alameda County.

Contact William Strom at william@acbanet.org for more information.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2018 OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS!

We can't do it without you! A special thanks to Legal Access' 2018 superstar volunteers:

GUARDIANSHIP

Phil Campbell
Na An
Joe Fenton
Teresa Green
Alex Chan
David Hillis
Jill Bates-Moore
Allysia Holland

LANDLORD

Matthew Quiring
Wonder Liang
Valery Polyakov
Qingfeng Liao
Peggy Chang
Kimberly Louie

BANKRUPTCY

Matthew Kretzer
Connie Tche
Jackie Julian

FAMILY

Pam Ross
Ann Vandepol
Carrie Gustafson
Patricia Gutierrez de
Sunseri
Eileen Eib
Shumsha Hanif-Cruz
Christina Cisneros
Nick Baran
Holly Gutkovsky

FLDOC

Shane Nielson
Hazel Bradshaw
Travis Dillon
Camille Estes
Kate Henderson
Felipe Parker

DVRO

Cheri Ho

CLASP

Richard Roisman
Mike Smith
Angie Lee
Jonathan Wong
Wooksun Hong
Coral Trevino
CJ Kingsley
Kendall MacRostie
Omar Barrientos
Steve Mazer
Richard Roisman
Andrea Goldman
Omonigho Oiyemhonlan
Deb Goodman
Stephanie Vollmer
Randy Otey
Miguel Soto
Joel Kim



Legal Access Board President Janice Cho, Mathew Quiring, and Judge Tara Desautels



Janice Cho, Teresa Green, and Judge Tara Desautels



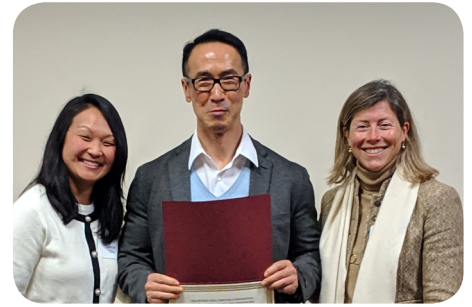
Janice Cho, Valery Polyakov, and Judge Tara Desautels



Shumsha Hanif-Cruz and
Judge Tara Desautels



Matthew Kretzer and Judge Tara Desautels



Janice Cho, WookSun Hong, and
Judge Tara Desautels



Janice Cho, Na An, and Judge Tara Desautels



Angie Lee and Judge Tara Desautels



Janice Cho, Jackie Julian, and
Judge Tara Desautels



Janice Cho, Kendall MacRostie, and
Judge Tara Desautels



Janice Cho, CJ Kingsley, and
Judge Tara Desautels



Janice Cho, Pamela Ross, and
Judge Tara Desautels



Felipe Parker and Judge Tara Desautels



Janice Cho, Kate Henderson, and
Judge Tara Desautels



Janice Cho, Hazel Bradshaw, and
Judge Tara Desautels



Janice Cho, Amarilis Medrano, Ann Vandepol,
and Judge Tara Desautels



Janice Cho, Cheri Ho, and
Judge Tara Desautels



Christine Knowles, Amarilis Medrano, Janice
Cho, Shane Nielson, Judge Tara Desautels,
and Christina WIELLETTE

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: CHERI HO



Cheri Ho
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services,
United States Department of Homeland Security

Cheri Ho is an active volunteer with Legal Access and the Family Violence Law Center's DVRO clinic.

Why do you volunteer with Legal Access?

As a volunteer with the Domestic Violence Restraining Order Clinic, I am inspired by the courage of our clients who are taking a very powerful step to protect themselves and their children from the violence in their lives. I am grateful for the opportunity to meet with folks in person, to hear their stories, and to provide support and guidance.

In my day job as a federal government lawyer, I spend most of my time researching, writing, and talking with other lawyers. While this can be rewarding, I rarely have the chance to interact with the individuals we serve and the communities that are impacted by the work that we do. By volunteering with the Clinic, I am able to work directly with clients to help them

document the serious risks that they are facing so that the judge will have the information needed to grant protection.

I admire those who are committed to social justice and community service, and participating in the Clinic allows me to pursue these goals, while learning about the legal tools to challenge domestic violence, providing a needed service, and connecting with survivors.

Do you have a particularly memorable volunteer experience or Legal Access client?

The diversity of the clients seeking domestic violence restraining orders is what has stood out for me. We assist men as well as women, young people and folks in retirement, individuals who have lived in Alameda County their entire lives, and immigrants and refugees from all over the world, and people from many ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

For some of our walk-in clients, our meeting may be the first time they have told another person about the extent of the violence and abuse. Sharing these experiences, especially any fears for the safety of their children and other family members, is often extremely emotional for the client, and for the volunteer.

In one memorable case, showing that anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, I assisted a refugee who as a prominent individual in his home country. After resettling in the United States, the client had to start from scratch, and he was no longer able to support his family. The stress of being uprooted, financially dependent and without community support

contributed to family dysfunction and abuse, such that he needed a restraining order to maintain health and safety.

What other community activities are you involved in?

In addition to volunteering with the restraining order Clinic twice a month, I have a weekly shift as a crisis counselor with Crisis Support Services of Alameda County (CSS). I support the "Teens for Life" program, which provides confidential support for youth and others in crisis, using a text platform. CSS provides extensive training in suicide assessment, safety planning, and motivational interviewing, and we also focus on best practices for conveying warmth and empathy through text while also supporting client safety.

In 2017, I volunteered to assist FEMA with disaster relief efforts in Florida after Hurricane Irma, and I have also volunteered with domestic violence restraining order clinics in San Francisco, and Montgomery County, Maryland.

How does having the opportunity to work with an attorney help the clients/litigants?

Many clients come in to the Clinic frustrated or unsure. Some do not understand the legal process, and others have had difficult experiences with law enforcement or other public officials. They face an array of complicated legal forms for the restraining order, child custody and visitation, and income and expense information. After we help them complete the forms and explain the next steps in the process, our clients are more confident in their ability to pursue their cases, and very grateful

for the assistance.

Additionally, because many of our clients have very limited resources, they are not able to secure private representation. When we provide assistance with the required forms and in-court representation by Family Violence Law Center staff, this helps to ensure that our clients are supported during this stressful process, and able to obtain the protection they seek.

What is one thing you wish our donors and supporters knew about Legal Access and the Family Violence Law Center?

The legal staff from the Family Violence Law Center are an amazing group of people, and I greatly admire the attorneys who run the Clinic -- Laura, Nicole, Corey, Esther, and former staff member Gavin. They are compassionate, knowledgeable, and professional, and I learn something new from them during every Clinic. I appreciate their instruction and patience as they assist with my on-the-job training.

Given the tremendous needs of the community, I know that staff would like to represent as many clients as possible. However, given their overwhelming workloads and staffing limitations, they are unable to assist everyone. I would encourage donors and supporters to volunteer at the weekly clinics so that staff can continue to provide outstanding legal services to survivors of domestic violence.

Many thanks to the Family Violence Law Center for the critically important work that you do!

CALL FOR FAMILY LAW VOLUNTEERS

70-80% of family law litigants in Alameda County are unrepresented. The majority of those are also lower income. Legal Access Alameda is one of the only legal organization in Alameda County to offer pro bono family law services where there is no domestic violence involved. There is an incredible demand for family legal assistance and Legal Access' family law clinics consistently have long wait lists. On average 40% of the 80-100 clients at Legal Access' monthly Saturday CLASP clinic present with family law issues.

Legal Access desperately needs more experienced family law attorneys to volunteer for its general Family Law clinics. It is a three hour commitment that makes an outsized difference to a low-income litigant in need. Family law clinics take place every second Thursday and third Friday of the month, from 10am-1pm at the ACBA office in downtown Oakland and every third Tuesday from 3-6pm at the Fremont Family Resource Center.

If you are interested in volunteering please contact Legal Access Clinics & Volunteer Coordinator Amarilis Medrano at amarilis@acbanet.org.

Legal Access also has two in-court family law clinics housed at the Hayward Hall of Justice in collaboration with the Court and the Self-Help Center: 1) Family Law Day of Court (FLDOC) and 2) Family Law Status Conference (FLSC).

Legal Access' Family Law Day of Court (FLDOC) program began back in 2005 aimed at assisting self-represented litigants on RFO calendars. Volunteers are asked to volunteer their time for the morning calendar to assist with the

preparation of orders, review cases and provide information (such as discussing how to effectuate service or enforce a court order), or run a DissoMaster calculation. The volunteer attorneys usually meet with the bench officers prior to the start of the calendar to get an overview of the morning and discuss some issues that might come up. The usual time commitment is from 8:45am through noon.

This program offers low-income Alameda County litigants the assistance they need on the spot, and most litigants are able to leave court with a signed enforceable order in hand. The FLDOC program will continue to operate in all 6 family law departments in 2019 covered by the Court Self-Help staff and Legal Access' new FLDOC Supervising Attorney, Beth Litwin.

Last year, Legal Access and the Court collaborated on a grant proposal to fund a program to help self-represented litigants at Status Conference. The result is Legal Access' new Family Law Status Conference (FLSC) clinic, launched February 5, 2019 in the new Settlement Department in 504 with Commissioner Bishay. Settlement Conferences will no longer be scheduled in Alameda. Status Conferences for self-represented litigants will now be set on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons in the Settlement Department, where the FLSC clinic will be there to assist.

The goal of the FLSC clinic is to move SRL cases towards a resolution with fewer hearings. This clinic will also have the added benefit of taking the SRL status conferences out of their normal department, unclogging those calendars. Christine Knowles will be supervising and administering this clinic in partnership with the Court's Self-Help staff.

GET TO KNOW OUR NEW STAFF

The new FLSC clinic will also need experienced family law attorneys to volunteer as it ramps up. Volunteers will assist with service issues, completion of disclosures and any final steps to help litigants try to resolve their issues. Additionally, a judgment clinic will be held one morning each month, where parties will be able to leave the clinic with a signed judgment. As with all Legal Access clinics, volunteers will not be representing parties nor assisting in the trial process.

Volunteering even one day every other month provides the court, the litigants, and the legal community with an invaluable asset. Ideally the continuation of the FLDOC program, and the implementation of the new FLSC program, will help reduce the court's backlog and assist in the reduction of clogged calendars. Anything you can do to help volunteer time to Legal Access' family law programs will be greatly appreciated, and beneficial to all family law attorneys in the area.

Please contact Christine Knowles at christine@acbanet.org for additional information. or to inquire about volunteering for any of the clinics run by Legal Access.



Beth Litwin
FLDOC Supervising Attorney
beth@acbanet.org

What is your current position?

Family Law Day of Court Supervising Attorney

What were you doing before this?

I was the Director of ACBA's Lawyer Referral Service for almost four years.

What are you working on now?

I just finished training to manage the Day-of-Court program. Working at the LRS, I learned a little of everything about a lot of practice areas, so now I'm switching gears and doing a deeper dive into family law.

If you could be doing anything what would you be doing?

Living and working abroad with my family.

Where would you be working if you weren't at Legal Access?

I'd probably be working at another non-profit or in government—somewhere I could be the most useful to people most in need of help.

What's your favorite aspect of working at Legal Access?

Being in court and getting to meet the many kinds of people who often called the LRS intake line. It's meaningful to be able to see them face to face and to help them make sense of a difficult process.

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NEW CLINIC: FAMILY LAW STATUS CONFERENCES CLINIC

On February 5, 2019, Legal Access launched a new clinic to assist Self-Represented Litigants with Family Law Status Conferences (FLSC). The FLSC clinic takes place two days each week in Department 504 at the Hayward Hall of Justice on special pro per only Family Law Status Conferences.

Clinic staff and volunteers assist SRLs in moving their family law case towards judgment, including service issues, financial disclosures, property and support issues, judgment forms and even a few dismissals.

The creation of this new clinic has been a collaborative process between Legal Access, the Self-Help Center, Judge Nixon and Commissioner Bishay. FLSC has been slowly ramping up over its services first eight weeks; we have assisted over 90 SRLs in March and completed 13 judgments in the first two months. The FLSC clinic is gearing up to serve even more low income individuals with their dissolution case.

We are seeking volunteer family law attorneys to staff this clinic on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, as well as some Friday mornings. Email Christine at christine@acbanet.org for more information on becoming a volunteer.



EXPANDED SELF-HELP CENTER HOURS

On March 25, 2019, the Alameda County Self-Help Center opened a new center in Oakland. The North County Center is on the 3rd Floor of the Wiley W. Manuel Courthouse on Washington Street.

The center is open for drop-in hours from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Monday – Thursday each week. This center is focused on civil issues and can assist with: name changes, gender changes, small claims, debt collection, eviction defense, guardianship (of the person), and restraining orders.



Self-Represented Litigants needing assistance with family law issues should continue to visit the Self-Help Center at the Hayward Hall of Justice, as the north county center does not assist with family law matters. We are excited that low income litigants can now access self-help services in Oakland.

LOW-INCOME LANDLORD CLINIC

Legal Access Alameda's weekly Low-Income Landlord clinic has moved to the Wiley W. Manuel Courthouse along with the new Self-Help Center.

This clinic is held every Tuesday morning and is designed to provide eviction assistance for low-income landlords and master tenants in non-payment of rent cases. Volunteers assist with the preparation of notices, judicial forms, and court procedures.

While there are several tenant defense resources, there are no other resources available to low-income landlords renting a room or master tenants who have taken in a tenant to make ends meet. Many of the clients that come to the clinic rely on their rental income as their only means of income or to supplement their Social Security payments. Almost 60% of those helped at this clinic are seniors.

If you are an attorney interested in volunteering at this clinic, please contact Amarilis Medrano at amarilis@acbanet.org.

LEGAL ACCESS

ALAMEDA

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1000 Broadway, Suite 290
Oakland, CA 94607

Tel: (510) 302-2222
Fax: (510) 452-2224

We're on the web!
[www. legalaccessalameda.org](http://www.legalaccessalameda.org)

LEGAL ACCESS STAFF

Tiela Chalmers, CEO

Christina WIELLETTE, Director

Amarilis Medrano, Volunteer
and Clinics Coordinator

William Strom, Events and
Development Coordinator

Christine Knowles, Court
Programs Managing Attorney

Beth Litwin, FLDOC
Supervising Attorney

Cynthia Chandler, BALI
Director

Mauna Minagar, Start Small
Bay Area Program Manager

Chris Gordon, Start Small Bay
Area Coordinating J.D.

For more information about
volunteer opportunities, please
contact Amarilis Medrano at
amarilis@acbanet.org or (510)
302-2219.

For more information on ways to
support Legal Access Alameda,
please contact William Strom
at: william@acbanet.org or
(510) 302-2209.

*New name, same commitment to
closing the justice gap*

LEGAL ACCESS

ALAMEDA

The Alameda County Bar Association Volunteer
Legal Services Corporation ("VLSC") struggled
for years with a long and unwieldy name.
Some parts like "corporation" have been off-
putting to grantors.

Our Board started the process to change our
name in 2018. Lead by Ruben Sundeen, the
Board struggled with getting the wording just
right.

We thank our Board for all their hard work!

Designate Your Cy Pres to Legal Access Alameda!

If you are involved in class action matters, please consider
including Legal Access Alameda in your settlement or
judgment. We are happy to talk with you about crafting
an appropriate designation, and to help negotiate this
issue with opposing counsel and the judge.

Questions?

Please contact Christina WIELLETTE with any questions at
(510) 302- 2216 or christina@acbanet.org.