

Ka Leo Kaulike

Newsletter

Fall 2009



LEGAL AID
SOCIETY OF HAWAII

Legal Aid Welcomes its New Deputy Director



Deputy Director Patty Eads

The Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i welcomes Patricia "Patty" Eads as its new Deputy Director. Patty returns to Legal Aid after a hiatus where she practiced worker's compensation law and lived for a time in Texas. Patty previously headed Legal Aid's Family Law unit and is known to be

a level-headed and easy-going supervisor who is able to get things done. She brings over thirty years of legal experience to the organization and has worked as an administrative hearings officer for the Department of Human Services. She is a member of the William S. Richardson School of Law's first graduating class.

According to Executive Director M. Nalani Fujimori Kaina, "I'm excited to have Patty join our staff as the

new Deputy Director. Patty brings great energy and a commitment to helping the poor get access to justice. Further, her previous experience at Legal Aid combined with her experience in the private sector provides her with a great perspective in supervising Legal Aid's staff and helping to shape our services in the future." Patty is the mother of four and paddles in her spare time. ♦♦♦



Pro Bono attorney Elizabeth Paek chats it up with Deputy Director Patty Eads at her reception

A Mother/Daughter Team Paying it Forward



Legal Aid salutes long-time volunteer Lori-Ann Alves aka "Sgt. Momma" for her tireless volunteer help.

When asked why she has put in so much time with us, she stated, "I spent 22 years in

the Air Force, 12 as a paralegal. I've volunteered working with Habitat for Humanity, the local schools with children and reading, field trips, and as my boys' basketball team mom. I retired out of the AF JAG School and came back to Hawaii.

Time came to look for an outside opportunity to give back. In my search I found the Legal Aid website and found the need for volunteers.

I dragged [along] my daughter, Liane, an Airman First Class in the Airforce, who did some volunteer work at Legal Aid, whether making copies or putting together brochures. And, I was given the Affordable Rental Listing that a poor attorney was doing in addition to all of his other work.

Having worked at several USAF legal offices I know how important a handout can be for clients and how busy everyone in a law office can get. So doing this little bit for Legal Aid is a real honor for me." ♦♦♦

Family Unit Head, Steve Duck Receives Award from Family Court

On September 2, 2009, Family Unit Head, Steve Duck received an award from Family Court for his outstanding service as a member of the Executive Committee of the Child Support Guidelines Task Force.



Steve was responsible for redesigning the Child Support Guidelines Worksheet and attachments, automating calculation of child support and the automatic completion of the required attachment forms. Additionally, Steve played an important role in looking out for the unrepresented litigants in the court process, to ensure that the new guidelines were fair and balanced and would not be unduly burdensome or complicated for persons representing themselves.

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii congratulates, Steve, for his award acknowledging his important contributions to Family Court. ♦♦♦

"She, 'Sgt. Momma' (pictured above left), is a court reporter for the military, is married, has sons at home...I don't know how she's able to carve out the time to [help]."

- Rhoda Brown, Legal Aid Staff

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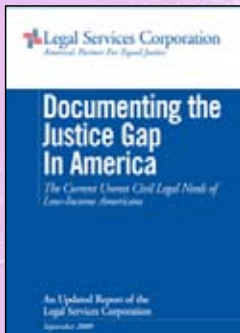
M. Nalani Fujimori Kaina

Legal Aid is Hawaii's oldest and largest non-profit law firm dedicated to assisting the low- to moderate-income community. Our mission is to achieve fairness and justice for Hawaii's people through quality legal representation, advocacy, advice, community partnerships, education and outreach.

Established in 1950, Legal Aid has 9 offices statewide, and over 90 attorneys, paralegals, and administrative staff all dedicated to achieving Legal Aid's vision of "Building a Just Society."

www.legalaidhawaii.org

LSC Reports on Justice Gap in America



Washington, DC – Nearly a million poor people who seek help for civil legal problems, such as foreclosures and domestic violence, will be turned away this year by the nation's largest nonprofit legal aid network because of insufficient resources, the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) projects in a recent report.

For every client served by LSC programs, another person who seeks help is turned away. The conclusion reaffirms a 2005 report by LSC that also found 50% of potential clients seeking help from LSC-funded programs were not served because of a lack of resources. "This nation is built on the promise of equal justice under law, but there is a justice gap in America. We must do more to close the justice gap and provide equal access to justice for all Americans, regardless of their economic status," LSC President Helaine M. Barnett said.

In one category – foreclosures – LSC-funded programs are projected to turn away two for every person served. Programs also will take up fewer than half of the requests for help with employment and family law matters, the report shows.

Despite increased appropriations from the Congress in recent years, state and local government funding and contributions from charitable donors and foundations declined during the recession. The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii is a recipient of funds from LSC. To read the report, visit: www.lsc.gov ♦♦♦

Nobel Laureate Betty Williams

Making the Connections of Community Amidst Hardship



Betty Williams with Legal Aid's Director of Development & Communications, Kathryn Xian

The rise of injustice and violent crimes in Hawaii is tethered to the economic recession, declining education opportunities, unemployment, and a lack of community resources. This rise in crime was recently predicted by executives of social services statewide as the economy worsened and funding began to dry up, forcing Hawaii's poor into a corner with a deficit in resources.

At a legislative hearing, Nobel Laureate, Betty Williams, advised lawmakers to pay attention to community groups working toward a solution. "You don't create the solution from the top down," she stated with clear conviction, "You have to create the solution from the bottom up."

Betty was responsible for helping to create peace in war-torn Northern Ireland after witnessing the deaths of three children who were hit by a car that swerved off the road, driven by an IRA member who was shot by British military. She ran to the children to help, but it was too late. This tragic result of violence changed her life forever.

Soon thereafter, she co-founded "The Community of the Peace People," an organization of both catholic and protestant Irish committed to ending sectarian violence in Ulster. Her community building efforts led to the groundbreaking Northern Ireland Peace Agreement signed in 1998, also known as the Good Friday Agreement.

"We've seen it all in Ireland. Every sort of problem. And, if we can create peace, if we can do it, anyone can do it." Betty said, in reference to the social ills befalling the islands in these tough economic times. She went further to urge lawmakers to listen to their community groups and social services in the best interests of peace and justice for Hawaii's people. ♦♦♦

"Just Drinks" ~ Networking for Justice

The second installment of the quarterly socials called "Just Drinks" once again was a fun-filled event, uniting the legal community for justice networking.

This socially conscious celebration of Pro Bono attorneys was another grand success, attracting dozens of Hawaii's brightest young attorneys with a heart for giving back to the community.

If you missed that last event, consider being a part of the solution and join us next time. For more information email: kaxian@lashaw.org ♦♦♦



Brengyei Katosang and Kyle McNamara



Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu, Nalani Fujimori Kaina and Russ Awakuni

Housing Help from Legal Aid

Federal Stimulus at Work in Hawaii

Thanks to Federal Stimulus help, Legal Aid boosts its services to people facing homelessness and those who are in need of housing. Three new grants put housing support issues to the forefront of services. Legal Aid also continues to provide assistance on foreclosure counseling and homeless outreach.

Through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program, Legal Aid will assist those in need of legal services to prevent eviction and to assist in removing barriers to finding new housing, statewide. Coordinated by Managing Attorney Emiko Meyers on Kauai and Homeless Project Supervising Attorney Janet Kelly on Oahu, the program collaborates to connect our legal assistance to rental assistance provided by other agencies. Funding was awarded by the City & County of Honolulu for services on Oahu and by the State of Hawai'i for services on Kauai, Maui County and the Big Island.

Legal Aid also received funding from the City & County of Honolulu's Community Development



Block Grant program for a Home Preservation Project which allows Legal Aid to provide services to those facing foreclosure, victims of foreclosure rescue scams, or those in need of services due to improper evictions. The program aims to preserve housing for those in need on Oahu and to ensure that accurate information on foreclosures is provided.

Legal Aid also continues to provide foreclosure counseling and legal assistance through a grant from NeighborWorks and continues to provide homeless outreach services in the community through generous grants from the Housing and Urban Development's Continuum of Care and from the County of Maui's Community Partnership Program. ♦♦♦

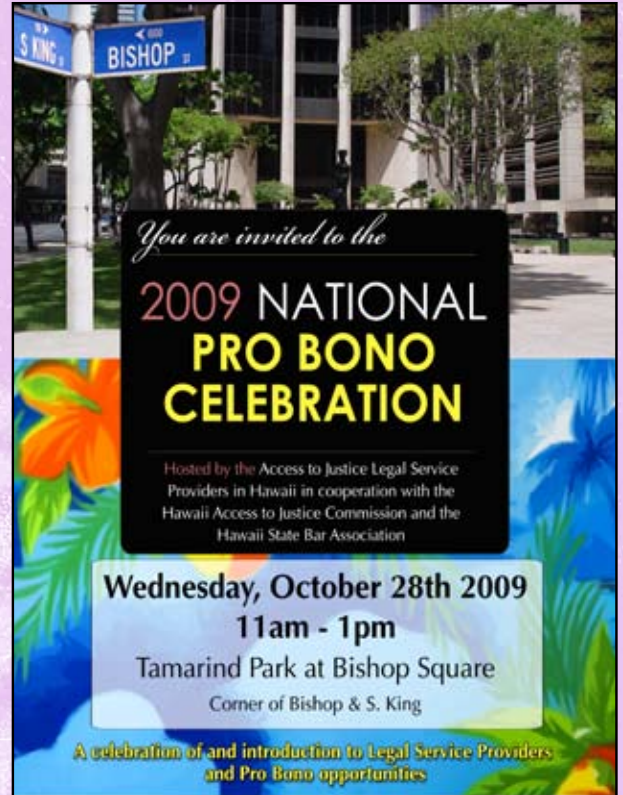
Protecting Your Rights! Pro Bono Changes People's Lives

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A LEGAL AID STAFF ATTORNEY

- Fair Housing staff aided Mr. M, a man suffering from paralysis, who had been pleading unsuccessfully for 2 years to his landlord to replace his broken bathroom sink basin. Mr. M was unable to use his bathroom sink to wash his face or brush his teeth because his wheelchair got in the way. In less than two weeks, Legal Aid succeeded in having Mr. M's landlord obtain and install a new basin.
- Legal Aid's Foreclosure Counselors helped Mr. and Mrs. G, an elderly married couple who had modified the loan on their home, with managing a payment plan for their mortgage after Mr. G suffered a stroke. Unfortunately, Mr. G never recovered from his stroke and died shortly thereafter. But, instead of becoming homeless in their golden years, Legal Aid set up a manageable payment plan in their time of need. Mr. G was able to pass away in peace and with dignity in his own home.
- Legal Aid Waianae Attorneys defended a woman who had become homeless due to the damage her apartment suffered from the floods in 2008. She was unable to live in her home for three months, however her Section 8 continued to pay the rent during that time for an uninhabitable unit. When Section 8 demanded a rent refund from the woman, Legal Aid went to court on her behalf and succeeded in getting the woman a refund for the amount due.
- Mr. R was denied General Assistance Benefits for "not being disabled enough." Legal Aid successfully argued Mr. R's case based on his seizures, heart disease, and psychiatric disability, earning him the benefits he deserves.

The first National Pro Bono Celebration falls upon us the week of October 26, 2009. Coordinated by the American Bar Association, the National Pro Bono Celebration aims to showcase the difference pro bono attorneys can make in our community. In Hawai'i, Legal Aid has gathered together with other legal service providers, the Access to Justice Commission and the Hawai'i State Bar Association to celebrate pro bono at Tamarind Park at Bishop Square on October 28, 2009 from 11 am - 1 pm.

With many firms and attorneys committing over the previous months to meet their rule 6.1 commitment, the celebration is a one stop shop opportunity for attorneys to find something that fits their schedules in order to help someone in need. According to Yulkin Aluli, a pro bono attorney with Legal Aid, "I believe that for the privilege of having a law license we lawyers should be contributing to the good of the public. Legal Aid was formed by lawyers to be a vehicle for such work." Come check it out!



Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Visits Legal Aid



From left to right:
Nalani Fujimori Kaina, Assistant Secretary
John D. Trasviña,
Jennifer La'a,
Sheila Lippolt,
Jelani Madaraka,
and Shawn Quapaw

On September 28th, John D. Trasviña, Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) paid a visit to Legal Aid to discuss key issues specific to Hawaii related to fair housing and how his department may better aid our efforts in issues raised by Hawaii's cultural diversity, disabled population, familial status of clients, and language access among our Micronesian population.

FHEO administers and enforces federal laws and establishes policies that make sure all Americans have equal access to the housing of their choice.

Before joining the Obama Administration, Assistant Secretary Trasviña served as President and General Counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF). There he led the "law firm for the Latino community" by advancing litigation and public policy in the areas of civil rights, immigration, education and related issues. ♦♦♦

Legal Services Corporation Meets with Legal Aid Staff



From left to right:
Stephanie Edelstein,
Merrill Oka,
Rob Palin,
Nalani Fujimori Kaina,
Tim Watson,
John Idleman,
and Janet LaBella

In September, the Federal Legal Services Corporation's (LSC) Office of Program Performance paid a visit to the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii to check in on its services to Hawaii's less fortunate.

Founded by the U.S. Congress in 1974, LSC distributes more than 95 percent of its total funding to 137 independent nonprofit legal aid programs with 923 offices that provide legal assistance to low-income individuals and families in every congressional district. ♦♦♦

"If you want peace, work for justice."
~ Henry Louis Menken

To make a secure online donation
visit: www.legalaidhawaii.org

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SOCIETY OF HAWAII

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Executive Director

Legal Aid Justice Campaign Pledge Form

Thank you for your support of this important campaign! Your gift will help ensure that the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii will be able to continue to address its mission of achieving fairness and justice for Hawaii's people through quality representation, advocacy, community partnerships, education and outreach. Mahalo nui loa!

Name/Organization _____
Address _____
City State Zip _____
E-mail _____

PLEDGE AMOUNT AND METHOD OF PAYMENT

- SINGLE DONATION:** My firm/I pledge to give the following amount by June 30th 2009:
\$ _____ . OR
- 3-YEAR PLEDGE:** My firm/I pledge to give the following amount by **June 30 of each year**
for the next 3 years: \$ _____ .

I/We would like to make payment of our pledge as follows:

Check enclosed for \$ _____
Please charge \$ _____ to my Visa MasterCard (Check one)
Card holder name: _____
Card Number _____ Exp. date: _____

Authorized Signature _____

Please send me a reminder of my pledge at least 15 days before June 30th 2010

If you do not wish Legal Aid to recognize your contributions in its various program publications and in its Annual Report, please check the following box:

If sending a check, please make payable to Legal Aid Society of Hawaii, or LASH. Legal Aid Society of Hawaii is a charitable organization under IRS Section 501(c). All gifts to Legal Aid Society of Hawaii are tax deductible to the full extent provided by the law. Contributions will be used to fund activities permitted by LSC Law & Regulation.

"There's no better way to thank God for your sight than by giving a helping hand to someone in the dark."
~ Helen Keller

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The Last Wish of a Loving Father



Mr. and Mrs. "P" had been raising their nephew as their own child for the past 13 years. When Mr. P was diagnosed with terminal liver cancer, he became determined to legally adopt his nephew. Mr. and Mrs. P called Legal Aid to help them achieve this adoption quickly, as Mr. P was only given a short time to live by his doctor. Within 6 weeks, Legal Aid helped Mr. and Mrs. P obtain the adoption. Legal Aid's Adoptions Manager traveled to Mr. P's bedside to provide notary services to swear him in and to assist in the successful court hearing.

Five days later, Mr. P passed away but he died knowing that the adoption was completed and that the child that he had raised as his own son was now legally his. Mr. P held on during the final days of his life with the hopes of seeing this day come to pass. Legal Aid is proud to have been a part of making his last wish come true.



Legal Aid bids a fond farewell to the 2008 AmeriCorps team who worked tirelessly on various organizational capacities such as intake and outreach, we also welcome the incoming 2009 AmeriCorps members.

Legal Aid considers itself lucky to have such great teams furthering the cause of justice.



2009-10 AmeriCorps Team