

Fall 2009

Promoting Equal Access to Justice since 1964

IN THIS ISSUE

- [Message From the President](#)
- [Grantee Spotlight: Homeless Advocacy Project](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [Featured Donor: Stephen Madva, Montgomery, McCracken, Walker & Rhoads](#)
- [Agency Attorney Profile: Stefanie Fleischer Seldin](#)
- [Score Card](#)
- [Thank You](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [How To Give](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

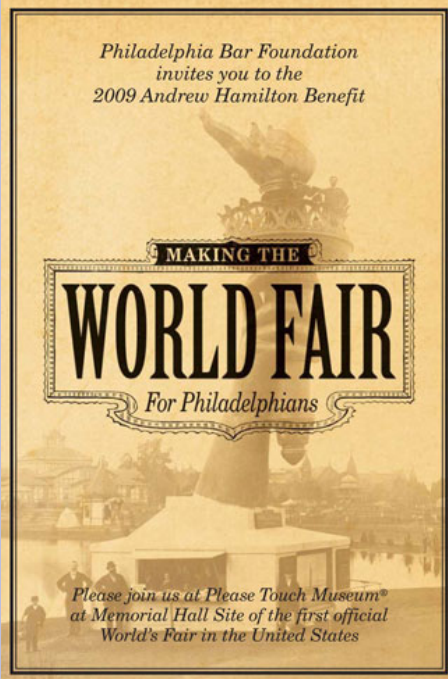


Raising the Bar is the Philadelphia legal community's most significant charitable initiative in support of the Bar Foundation and its network of non-profit legal services providers, and since its inception in 2006 has raised more than \$4 million. A program started under then-Chancellor Alan Feldman, the program asks law firms to pledge at least \$300 per attorney to support legal services for low

income people either through contributions to legal service providers or to the Bar Foundation in the form of contributions or event sponsorships. In 2008, Chancellor A. Michael Pratt expanded the program asking firms that were in a position to do so to increase their giving by 15% and to commit to the program for three years.

Now, in 2009, the legal services community needs private law firm support even more. I know this has not been an easy year for anyone. However, non-profits, by definition, even in good years, operate on a bare-boned budget, and given the funding cuts they have suffered, the only thing left to cut are the services they provide.

The Bar Foundation just conducted a survey of the agencies we fund to see what resources they were most in need of. Money, of course was number one. But how about access to an IT consultant because when their network goes down they have no one to turn to? Help in writing a grant to get new phones? Used furniture donations from law firms or businesses that are buying new? All these were identified as critical needs by our grantees.



The Bar Foundation invites you to the **Andrew Hamilton Benefit** Saturday, November 21st 7 PM to 11 PM at Please Touch Museum® at Memorial Hall in Fairmount Park

THANK YOU

Thanks to our **United Way** Donors The Philadelphia Bar Foundation is a United Way Donor's Choice Agencies. If you haven't already, we hope you will consider the Bar Foundation when you pledge to United Way. Our number is **1578**.

A special thank you to the sponsors of the **2009 Annual Golf Classic**. [See a list of sponsors here.](#)

The Bar Foundation would also

So, I again am urging the law firms of Philadelphia to demonstrate their long-standing commitment to equal access to justice by renewing their commitment to the Raising the Bar campaign. And if your firm has a used conference table with matching chairs lying around, I know someone who could use them.

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT:

Homeless Advocacy Project



Even at the height of the prosperity of the 1990's, the rate of homelessness in the U.S. was surprisingly high. Just imagine what the impact of the current foreclosure crisis is having on the rates of homeless among families and individuals. In Philadelphia, as in the rest of the country, homelessness is on the rise.

The Homeless Advocacy Project (HAP) aims to meet the unique needs of the homeless population by providing free legal counseling and representation, but also by connecting homeless clients with other social service providers and by advocating for policies that address the concerns of the homeless.

One of HAP's greatest strengths is its emphasis on direct outreach. Not only does HAP collaborate with shelters, homeless advocates and community service providers on policy issues and providing services to the homeless, HAP staff and volunteer attorneys go into homeless shelters and soup kitchens to offer legal clinics. In 2008, HAP hosted 174 legal clinics at 25 different locations, providing advice and referrals for 924 clients and full representation for 1,264 homeless individuals and families.

like to thank these early sponsors of the **2009 Andrew Hamilton Benefit:**

Diamond Sponsors

Pepper Hamilton
UPS

Platinum Sponsors

Ballard Spahr
Buchanan Ingersoll
Duane Morris, LLP
Hangley Aronchick
Segal & Pudlin
White & Williams
USI Affinity

Gold Sponsors

Blank Rome
Marshall Dennehey
Schnader Harrison
Segal & Lewis

Bronze Sponsors

Chimicles & Tikellis
Comcast
Dilworth Paxson
Duffy + Partners
Eisenberg Rothweiler
Winkler Eisenberg & Jeck
Hire Counsel
The MCS Group
Law Offices of
Lenard A. Cohen
Oppenheimer & Co., Inc.
Panitch Schwarze
Belisario & Nadel
Tactix Real Estate Advisors
Zarwin Baum DeVito Kaplan
Schaer Toddy

FAQS

[Read more ...](#)

FEATURED DONOR:

*Stephen
Madva,
Montgomery,
McCracken,
Walker &
Rhoads*



Montgomery, McCracken, Walker & Rhoads has historically shown a strong commitment to public service starting with Owen J. Roberts, one of the firm's founders, and his service on the Supreme Court, to Don Kramer, now of counsel at MMWR. As a partner, Don Kramer lectured and wrote extensively on non-profit law and helped the firm build a large roster of non-profit clients and reinforced the ethos of pro bono service.

Stephen Madva, Montgomery McCracken's managing partner, fits right into this culture of giving back. Beginning his career as a public defender, Steve's heart and enthusiasm has always been with the public sector. When he came to Montgomery McCracken, he was excited that the firm encouraged their attorneys to do public service, and throughout his career, Steve's involvement with the public sector has remained strong. In addition to the hands-on pro bono work he has done, Steve learned that his experience as a lawyer could help organizations in other ways. He uses that experience in his work chairing a wide variety of boards—from the Opera Company of Philadelphia board to St. Christopher's Hospital for Children to the Philadelphia Prison System board of trustees which he chairs at the request of Mayor Michael Nutter.

Within the public interest legal community, Steve is a member of the Community Legal Services board and chairs their Development Committee. As he says, "We lawyers have a calling to help others, and it's our responsibility to use our time and our money to help the underserved."



[Top](#)

Steve is an active supporter of the Bar Foundation through his Hamilton Circle membership and by co-chairing the Raising the Bar committee with Ron Kovler in 2008. Steve characterizes the Raising the Bar program as a “brilliant idea of Alan Feldman’s to provide continuity and stability in funding for our legal services organizations.” Working with the 2008 Bar Association Chancellor, A. Michael Pratt, Steve was instrumental in helping Chancellor Pratt extend the program by asking firms to make multi-year commitments to Raising the Bar.

[Read more ...](#)

AGENCY ATTORNEY PROFILE:

Stefanie Fleischer Seldin

Stefanie Fleischer Seldin, a Managing Attorney for Philadelphia VIP, was named the Pennsylvania Bar Association’s Civil Legal Aid Attorney of the Year for 2009. The award recognizes an attorney’s outstanding commitment to obtaining equal justice for the poor.



How did you get into public interest legal work?

I always gravitated toward public interest issues, but it was participating in Penn Law School’s civil practice clinic and volunteering for the SeniorLAW Center during law school that really cemented it for me. During my clerkship year after graduation, I applied everywhere hoping to get a job in the public interest community here. I started at the City Solicitor’s office, and when a job opened up at the Support Center for Child Advocates, I

jumped at the chance to work with Frank Cervone and his amazing team.

I feel badly for people coming out of law school now who want a career in public interest law. The public interest community here is so talented and wonderful to work with, but the economic situation has affected most of the agencies and jobs are hard to find.

You created Philadelphia VIP’s Philly FReE program which is an integral part of Philadelphia’s groundbreaking Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Pilot Program. Could you say a little about that?

Last year VIP got a call from Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Judge Annette Rizzo asking us to provide pro bono attorneys for the Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Program she and President Judge C. Darnell Jones (now a U.S. District Court Judge) were developing.

The program, which is overseen by Judge Rizzo, is a collaboration among the City, the court, housing counselors, legal services agencies, and lenders. One of the keys to the success of the program is the work of the pro bono attorneys VIP recruits and trains. We have 10 pro bono lawyers in Judge Rizzo's courtroom every Thursday to help homeowners navigate the program, doing everything from answering questions about the law to providing representation. All together, our 300 volunteer attorneys have donated over \$1 million of their time and helped about 1,000 Philadelphians to try to save their homes.

VIP wasn't working on mortgage foreclosure at the time, and we didn't have any extra staff to work on this. We really had to scramble to put together the logistics of managing the program and to figure out ways to make it less challenging and burdensome for our existing staff. We couldn't have done it without the help of Community Legal Services and Philadelphia Legal Assistance, both of which play an integral role in the Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Program.

What would you like people to know about the clients you help?

There's been a lot of news coverage about the people who took on bigger mortgages than they knew they could afford, but those are not our clients. All the people we have been helping through Philly FReE are in trouble with their mortgages because of some fundamental problem in their lives. These are people who have lost their jobs, or their resources have been depleted because of caring for an elderly parent or a sick child. Maybe their homes needed repair and they took out loans that were made by predatory lenders. Many of them are seniors or disabled. Their situations are really tragic.

The most someone can earn and still be eligible for legal services through Philadelphia VIP is \$44,000 for a family of four. Our clients are people who would be homeless if our volunteer lawyers weren't there to help.

SCORE CARD: *Fundraising Update*

21st Annual Philadelphia Bar Foundation Golf Classic

On June 22nd, despite difficult economic times (and two weeks of uninterrupted rain) nearly 100 golfers came out Huntingdon Valley Country Club to support the Bar Foundation and its network of non-profit legal services providers. Lawyers, judges and members of the business community joined together for a (rainless) day of golf, cocktails, surf and turf dinner and a silent auction with items donated by area restaurants and retailers.

Sponsorships, a portion of the golfer fees and the proceeds of the silent auction sustain the grants that the Bar Foundation makes each year to fund its legal services priorities. This year's event raised \$74,000 to support the Bar Foundation's missions of providing equal access to justice for our region's most vulnerable citizens.

[Click here for sponsors and winners of the skills prizes.](#)

Individual Giving Campaign

This spring, the Board of Trustees kicked off a campaign to increase the number of individual donors to the Bar Foundation. Over the years, the support of individual lawyers has been crucial to the Bar Foundation's ability to provide grants to the non-profit public interest legal organizations that provide direct legal services to those struggling with poverty, abuse and discrimination. Please [click here](#) for more information about our donors and email [Gene Sirni, Executive Director](#) or call him at 215-238-6334 to discuss how the Bar Foundation can meet your personal philanthropy goals.

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT: *continued*

In addition to its community-based clinics, HAP has a number of programs to address the legal needs of its clients. Through the Children's and Families Project, HAP has helped children in homeless families with issues ranging from access to disability funds to special education needs. HAP targets the needs of homeless veterans—who make up 23 percent of all homeless people in our country—through the Veteran's Project which helps them with benefit issues, disability payments and access to pensions.

Most recently, HAP contracted with the City of Philadelphia's Office of Supportive Housing to help the City implement a federally mandated pilot project for Pennsylvania to rapidly complete and submit fully developed SSI applications for homeless persons. The plan developed by HAP for the program, called SOAR (SSI Outreach Access and Recovery Program), has been so successful that it has been touted as the model for the SOAR programs around the country.

As if we needed proof of Homeless Advocacy Project's excellence in providing legal services to the homeless, we got it when Governor Rendell announced that HAP was one of only 10 organizations statewide that will receive federal stimulus money as part of the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program. Congratulations to Marsha Cohen, HAP's executive director, and her dedicated group of staff and volunteer attorneys.

FEATURED DONOR: *continued*

“The Bar Foundation has been important in focusing the law firms' attention on the legal services community. Giving to the Bar Foundation and the public interest legal services organizations needs to be institutionalized as a charitable priority for the private bar.” With this in mind, Steve is proud of Montgomery McCracken's multi-year pledge to support the Raising the Bar campaign.

[Top](#)

© 2007 Philadelphia Bar Foundation | 1101 Market Street, 11th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107 | t: (215) 238-6300

Sent to <<Email Address>>. [Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Forward to a Friend](#)