

News Flash: Lawyers Are Among the Most Generous People on the Planet

By DANIEL J. HORGAN

The bar year for pro bono programs is off to a good start. The lingering effects of the pandemic remain with us and the need for legal assistance for so many of our citizens is great. By the time this column goes to print, our fall virtual free legal clinic will have taken place on October 26, 27, and 28. The clinic ran from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. with dedicated 30-minute consultations slots through Zoom. This format made it so easy for our members to hop on a Zoom call and offer advice to a Connecticut resident in need from the comforts of their office or home. I estimate more than 70 consultations took place based on last year's participants. Confirmed numbers will be published in the next edition.

Thank you to all CBA volunteers and employees who continue to make this program a huge success, especially Don Philips, Marc Finer, and Ashleigh Morelli. We hope to hold another clinic in December and two more in 2022 before the end of the bar year in June—lofty expectations but we can do it! Lastly, special thanks to new CBA member Jamal Wright who gave me free radio time to promote the clinics on his iHeartRadio show, *The Jamal Show—The Place to Get Intelligent*.

The CBA encourages your support of its many pro bono projects, including Lawyers in Libraries, CBA Pro Bono Connect, Bankruptcy Pro Bono Program, and CT Free Legal Answers. We also wish to recognize and applaud CBA members who selflessly offer their legal expertise free through their firm's sponsored programs. One example is Attorney Christopher Kriesen of the Kalon¹ Law Group.

Lawyers in Libraries Program

Our Lawyers in Libraries program continues to grow with Danbury and Middletown recently added; Fairfield County is in the works thanks to Board of Governor member Steven Conover's efforts. Let's continue to light the map with more participating Libraries.

His firm aspires to promote social good through a social entrepreneurship model. Chris is well known to CBA leadership through his work on our COVID-19 Task Force, and opened his private practice in 2017. At the core of his practice was a pro bono mission born from his time spent overseas and his yearning to help others in need, especially refugees.

Chris created the Kalon Human Rights Clinic, which consists of third year law students called Kalon Fellows who work with attorneys in assisting asylum-seeking refugees from Central America. The referrals come from the Connecticut Insti-

tute for Refugees and Immigrants (CIRI). Chris and his team provide representation through the deportation hearings, which can take years to reach. "Most of our clients are terrorized by violent gangs such as MS-13. Our fellows are fluent in Spanish, which aids in the communication and representation process," said Kriesen. As I perused the firm's website, I noted that the pro bono services provided is woven into the purpose of forming the firm. It states in part, "Some firms measure pro bono work by the number of hours they contribute. We measure our pro bono work by the value we add to the lives of our clients," (kalonlawfirm.com). Hats off

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to Chris and other CBA members who use their practices in part to provide free legal services on an ongoing basis without fanfare. We are interested in hearing from other CBA members about their pro bono activities. Your programs and ideas can help the CBA Pro Bono Committee in forming future free legal programs. Don't be shy—reach out to me. After all, it is your efforts in giving away countless hours of free legal services that makes Connecticut the greatest and most generous state to practice our chosen craft. Cheers to you!! ■

NOTES

1. Kalon is a word used by ancient Greek philosophers to describe certain ideals they held.



Daniel J. Horgan is the CBA president-elect and chair of its Pro Bono Committee. He is an experienced litigator with Horgan Law Office in New London.

Connecticut's Rules of Professional Conduct for attorneys (Rule 6.1) defines Pro Bono Publico legal services as: "... professional services at no fee or a reduced fee to persons of limited means or to public service or charitable groups or organizations, by service in activities for improving the law, the legal system or the legal profession, and by financial support for organizations that provide legal services to persons of limited means." Volunteer today through one of our pro bono programs.

CBA Pro Bono Connect

Get connected with one of Connecticut's civil legal services providers, based on your expressed pro bono interests, to provide civic legal services to Connecticut residents in need. Connections to training is also available.

CT Free Legal Answers

CT Free Legal Answers is an online civil legal service for people who cannot afford to pay for an attorney. Attorneys will answer questions through an online portal.

Lawyers in Libraries

Provides pro bono legal services to members of the public at libraries throughout the state in the areas of landlord/tenant, immigration law, family law, employment, consumer rights, and personal injury.

Bankruptcy Pro Bono Program

The Commercial Law and Bankruptcy Section has formed a panel of volunteer attorneys to represent needy and qualified individuals or married spouses pro bono in Chapter 7 bankruptcy cases, contested matters, and adversary proceedings.

Visit ctbar.org/members/volunteer to learn more about these programs and other pro bono resources.



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