

Opportunity Is Knocking

By JOSHUA J. DEVINE

The Young Lawyers Section (YLS) has been active this fall creating and promoting valuable programs despite the ongoing pandemic. The current YLS Executive Committee is a group of highly motivated young lawyers dedicated to developing outstanding programs for our members. These programs include continuing legal education (CLE), networking or non-CLE events, and programs that promote personal well-being and family friendly environments.

While September presented many programming challenges due to the ongoing pandemic, the Executive Committee was still able to hold its monthly meeting and hosted its first Lawyers in the Classroom Volunteer Training program of the year, both virtually.

For those of you unaware of the Lawyers in the Classroom program, it is a civics workshop for Connecticut elementary school students in grades 4–6 taught virtually by volunteer attorneys. The program responds to research on declining civic engagement and the call by Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson of the Connecticut Supreme Court for attorneys to do their part in educating the public on racism and civics throughout their careers. During the 2020-2021 bar year, the YLS and its 38 attorney volunteers reached 22 classrooms and nearly 400 students in schools throughout Bridgeport, Bristol, New Britain, New Haven, Southington, Vernon, and Wethersfield. If you are interested in volunteering or learning more about the program or know of a school that may be interest-

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ed in participating, please reach out to me directly.

October was an opportunity for young lawyers to return to some sense of normalcy, with the YLS organizing and hosting a slate of events. The Executive Committee's civics education directors hosted their second Lawyers in the Classroom Volunteer

network with other young lawyers and nearly 15 non-profits from throughout the state, while also hearing from members of CBA leadership and the Honorable Ingrid L. Moll. Lastly, the YLS had several members participate in the Virtual Pro Bono Clinics held during the last week of October during National Pro Bono Week, working towards my challenge for us to

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Training program and a group within the Executive Committee organized the YLS 2021-2022 Kick-Off Happy Hour in Milford. Additionally, the YLS hosted the “Be the Best You”: A Health and Wellness Event, which included a hike on Talcott Mountain, a yoga session, and a presentation by a licensed nutritionist. YLS members also gathered for our annual pro bono fair where they had the opportunity to

achieve 1,000 hours of public service and pro bono time.

The bar year is well underway and the YLS will continue to organize and host several other events for young lawyers throughout the state. These events will include CLEs such as “Essentials of Federal Practice;” “Professionalism, Ethics and Technology;” and “Com-

mon Ethics Issues and Addressing IOLTA Audits and Grievances” as well as volunteer, networking, and well-being initiatives.

The YLS Executive Committee understands young lawyers have busy schedules and committing to multiple events a month can be difficult. Our expectation is not for you to attend every meeting or CLE but rather we will continue to strive to provide our 2,200 plus members with as many opportunities to learn, grow, and network as possible.

Past Chair Cindy Cieslak once said, “... if new attorneys are not taking advantage of networking opportunities, they could be missing out on an opportunity to meet a potential mentor” and I could not agree more. YLS sponsored events are attended by attorneys in all stages of their careers. Attendees range from attorneys who are partners, leaders, business owners, referral sources, and colleagues. Additionally, seasoned



attorneys and judges often attend and support YLS events.

Opportunity is knocking at YLS sponsored events, whether you are looking to network, find a new career opportunity,

or find a mentor. My question for you is are you ready to “Get Comfortable, Being Uncomfortable” and do something that pushes you outside of your comfort zone? I hope you are, and I hope to see you at a YLS sponsored event soon. ■

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