

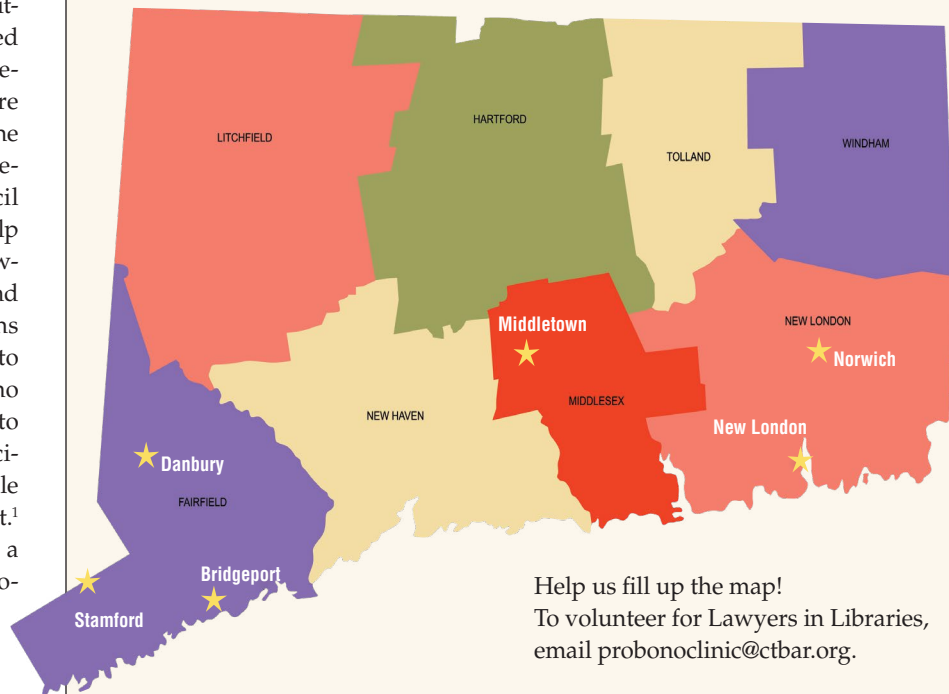
# We're All in This Together

By DANIEL J. HORGAN

**A**s I help lead the Pro Bono Committee through these unprecedented and challenging times, I am reminded that our 8,000 plus members are connected more than ever thanks to the efforts of our dedicated staff and unrelenting leadership of President Cecil Thomas. We share common goals to help one another reach our potential as lawyers through our CLE programming and the collaborative efforts of our sections and committees. One common goal is to help each other participate in pro bono services. We have responsibilities to meet our ethical obligation and participate in pro bono work as outlined in Rule 6.1 of Professional Rules of Conduct.<sup>1</sup> That is why our profession is not just a livelihood but a noble and honorable profession striving to attain *justice* for our clients. Our pro bono programs make it so easy to meet that obligation without interfering with the demands of operating your offices and serving your clients' needs. Trust me—as a solo practitioner litigator, the last two years have seen revenue streams reduced and many of us questioning how we are going to get through this pandemic with reduced staffing, closed courthouses, and financial hardships facing many of our clients. Remember, WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER and together we can make a positive impact on the lives of Connecticut's indigent citizens.

We are more than halfway through the bar year, and despite the challenges that the Omicron variation of COVID-19 has presented both in our practices and personal lives, the CBA's pro bono programs and agenda has been growing and expanding thanks to the continued support of our membership! We have already had two successful virtual Free Legal Advice Clin-

## Lawyers in Libraries Program



Help us fill up the map!  
To volunteer for Lawyers in Libraries,  
email [probonoclinic@ctbar.org](mailto:probonoclinic@ctbar.org).

ics on October 26-28 and again on January 25-26. The January sessions served over 60 clients. That number was double the clients served this past October. That tells us that the need for our continued free services is growing and with the uncertainties of the reopening of some courthouses, the access to justice gap is widening. We can and we must do better. We have mostly the same lawyers working the Free Legal Advice Clinics, but as the need grows, we need more help. If you are reading this column and you have not participated in the clinics, please consider signing up for one hour at the spring clinics, and/or recruit a colleague to participate.

Our Lawyers in Libraries program has now expanded into Bridgeport and discussions are underway to add Hartford. (Light that map up!). Most libraries in the program host a monthly two-hour

session, and the program requires three lawyers to work each session. The program has been a huge hit with the libraries. I received the following email from the Middletown Library relaying what a client thought of the program:

### Catherine Ahern, Russell Library

"Just wanted to say thank you so much for your Lawyers in Libraries program yesterday, Monday 11/22. For one thing, what a forward-thinking, progressive vision of what a library can be. On a personal level, this program accomplished what a month of cold-calling law firms could not. I've been looking for help with my landlord-tenant issue since the end of the summer, and most law firms won't touch it. I get the impression that it's not a very lucrative or desirable area of law. I couldn't get a call

back or a follow-up email. So, this was the first time I was able to truly get some information on my situation. If not for your program, I'd probably still be chasing fruitless leads. Please put a feather in the cap of whoever brought the idea to the table. Circulation desk staff answered a quick question for me, and reference desk staff checked me in for the event."

That remark inspires and validates what we are trying to accomplish, but we can and we must do better. Each library needs a pool of 5-7 lawyers from which three can manage one session. If you have any inkling to help out in any of the areas starred on the map, don't wait to get in touch with the CBA—simply call Kyle LaBuff at (607)229-4165 or me at (860)705-1293 right now.

The work and sacrifices that our Pro

Bono Committee, Legal Aid organizations, and volunteer attorneys have done during the last two years is quite remarkable. If you haven't received an email or phone call from our new director of access to justice initiatives, Jenn Shukla, you will. Her direct outreach to members is resulting in more participation in our programs and fresh ideas being exchanged to improve existing and create new pro bono programming. The access to justice gap can be reduced through our efforts. Many of us are consumed with keeping our practices going and that is understandable, but we as members of the CBA can be the change that is needed for those who have nowhere else to turn to for their legal problems.

As legendary singer Sam Cooke sang, "Oh, there been times that I thought I couldn't last for long, but now I think I'm

able to carry on, it's been a long, a long time coming but I know a change gonna come, oh, yes it will"

We can be that change. We can and we will. ■

## NOTES

1. PRC 6.1- "A lawyer should render public interest legal service. A lawyer may discharge this responsibility by providing 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."



**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.



## CBA Free Legal Advice Clinic: Volunteers Needed

Tuesday, April 26  
10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 27, 2022  
10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.



If you have 30 minutes free, you can volunteer. Volunteer attorneys will answer legal questions in their area of practice during a 30-minute remote session with a client.

Volunteers are needed in the following areas:

- Fraudulent Business/Debt Collection
- Employee Rights/Unemployment
- Immigration Law
- Landlord/Tenant
- Family Law
- Tax Law
- Bankruptcy
- Pardons
- Wills and Estates
- Torts

Volunteer opportunities are available for paralegals and law students as well. Visit [ctbar.org/FreeLegalAdviceClinics](http://ctbar.org/FreeLegalAdviceClinics) to learn more and register.

