

COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWS

by Chris Cronk

PRO BONO CLINIC

It's a new year and for those of you who are new I'd like to take this opportunity to invite you to participate as a Pro Bono Clinic or Intake volunteer in 2004. What is a Pro Bono Clinic or Intake volunteer and what do they do you ask? Here's the low-down on the Pro Bono Clinics:

MTPA began assisting the Nashville Bar Association's Pro Bono Program with the Program's 'Saturday Bar Clinic' from the Clinic's inception in July of 2001. One Saturday a month local attorneys partner with paralegals from MTPA and meet with clients pre-screened by the Pro Bono staff who are in need of free legal advice on numerous types of legal matters such as landlord/tenant disputes, labor and employment, personal injury, probate, collection and contract matters, to name just a few. MTPA paralegals take notes of the meeting and the advice given by the attorney, fill out interview forms summarizing the meeting, and to the extent the volunteer is experienced and comfortable with the area of law, may assist with providing and explaining appropriate and various court forms to clients, perform legal research and other tasks as needed throughout the approximately 4 hour clinic. Following each client meeting, MTPA paralegals also enter their summaries into the Pro Bono Program's database. Beginning in April of 2002, MTPA paralegals started assisting Pro Bono staff with the client pre-screening process and now a group of MTPA paralegals regularly spend several hours a month making calls to potential Clinic clients and perform intake necessary to determine qualification for the program.

If you are interested in assisting at a Saturday morning clinic, or learning how to do intake for the Pro Bono Clinic – or would like additional information about the clinics and/ or other ways MTPA is assisting the NBA's Pro Bono Division please e-mail or call me, Chris Cronk at ccronk@wallerlaw.com or (615) 850-8761.

The Clinic dates for the next six months are: February 21st; March 20th, April 17th; May 15th; June 19th; and July 17th.

Thank you volunteers!!!!

December: Sherry Colwell, Lynn York and Kathie Cravens

January: Hope Fishback, Andrea Patton, Ann Mendelson and Marsha Day

CASA NEWS

CALLING ALL ADVOCATES!!!

MTPA would like to reward a couple of CASA ADVOCATES with a special night out, but I need to know who you are. If you are an active CASA ADVOCATE, please let me know!!! Include the county for which you are an advocate, when you started and about how many cases you have had since becoming an advocate. Deadline February 15th!!!! Don't miss out!!!

Also, any CASAs that have had a particularly interesting case and would like to share the story with MTPA, please let me know.

CASA is always in need of volunteers to train as advocates. If you are interested in learning more about becoming an advocate and the training programs the various County CASAs offer, please let me know and I will have the CASA organization for the appropriate county send you an information packet.

YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION OF THE NASHVILLE BAR ASSOCIATION

Is looking for volunteers for its annual High School Mock Trial Competition. The Competition is Friday January 30th and Saturday January 31st. Volunteers are needed to be Bailiffs – who are responsible for timing the High School teams. Time slots are:

Friday 1/30 4:00 (report at 3:30)
Friday 1/30 6:00 (report at 5:30)
Saturday 1/31 8:30 am (report at 8:00)
Saturday 1/31 11:00 am (report at 10:30)
Saturday 1/31 2:30 am (report at 2:00)

Each trial goes for about 1 1/2 hour and they ask that you report 30 minutes ahead of your allotted trial time to get "trained" and materials--stop watches and flashcards. So count on two hours per trial. It is not too late to sign up. Contact me or Eileen Burkhalter directly at eburkhal@wallerlaw.com

Community IMPACT! Nashville – Volunteer Opportunity

Community IMPACT! Nashville (www.impactnashville.org), is a neighborhood-based youth and community investment non-profit organization that is empowering young people ages 15 to 24 to take control of their individual futures and the futures of their neighborhoods.

They work with youth in and through various Nashville area schools made up of predominantly low income families to try and improve community perceptions of young people and young people's perceptions of their communities as well as train youth leaders to work in their communities to further demonstrate the power and impact of youth involvement to improve community conditions.

Community IMPACT! Nashville is seeking volunteers to help with tax return preparation for low income families within various Nashville neighborhoods they serve. The program is called VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance). It was established in 1969. Each year low-income families are faced with the agonizing dilemma of 1) paying as much as \$200 to have their taxes prepared; 2) attempting to do their own taxes; or 3) not filing at all. Many families are eligible for the EITC/ Child Tax Credit but fail to apply for it due to a lack of knowledge about the ever changing tax laws and/or an inability to navigate through the various tax forms.

Volunteers are needed to prepare tax returns (IRS training provided), assist with screening, quality review of returns, tax preparation day reception, childcare, and other tasks.

A Tax Preparation class is being offered Saturday January 31st . There are also volunteer opportunities available that do not require training. There is certainly something for everyone and no prior tax experience is necessary. Tax preparation sites will start February 5th. No minimum hours of participation is required, you may help at one session or at as many as you want which will vary by date, time and location during the upcoming tax season. If you are interested in learning more about this Community Service opportunity, please e-mail your name, e-mail address, telephone number and the days of the week and times of day which will work best with your schedule to Chris Cronk at ccronk@wallerlaw.com.

LAW DAY MAY 1 2004 – TO WIN EQUALITY BY LAW

Is this year's Law Day theme. More will follow – but please let me know if you are interested in joining a committee to help plan this year's event.

*******BE ACTIVE IN 2004*******

*If you have any ideas or suggestions for MTPA participation
in community related activities, please let me know!!
MTPA Members are the BEST!!*