



A history of helping. A future of hope.

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROGRAM

January 2008

News from the VLP

New Year Message

Happy New Year! We hope that 2008 will be a successful and joyful year for each of you. The VLP is off to an exciting start. This month we will launch new programs and expand existing ones. In addition, the VLP has planned two CLE seminars to be held this spring. This edition of the newsletter provides more details about all of the VLP's plans for 2008. As always, the VLP staff is grateful for your support and looks forward to working with you in the year ahead. Enjoy!



helping clients

During the last quarter of 2007, volunteer attorneys donated 651.8 hours of pro bono work, 443.8 of which were provided through direct representation.

Pro Bono Attorneys Recognized

By Stacy Rupprecht Butler

The Volunteer Lawyers Program held its Annual Awards Luncheon at the University Marriott on November 28. The luncheon is an annual event celebrating the attorneys, legal staff, law students and others who volunteer with and support the Volunteer Lawyers Program.

Now in its 26th year, the Volunteer Lawyers Program's mission is to foster hope, self-sufficiency, and equal access to the justice system by matching volunteer lawyers with low-income Arizonans who have nowhere else to turn. Currently, over 1,100 attorneys and law students volunteer with the VLP. In appreciation of their efforts, VLP incorporates many special and traditional elements to its annual lunch: a mariachi band fills the banquet hall with lively music, unique party favors and raffle tickets await the guests at their seats, and a special power point presentation reminds the volunteers of just how much their efforts have accomplished. Local attorney and stand-up comedian Elliot Glicksman (pictured at right with Anthony Young, SALA's Executive Director, Dee-Dee Samet, PCBA President, and Justice Andrew Hurwitz) MC's the event, keeping the guests entertained during their meal and the awards presentation.

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Student Update

This spring, seventy-seven law students expressed an interest in volunteering with the VLP. With the launch of new volunteer opportunities, the VLP was able to place 50 students in five projects that cover several different substantive areas of the law including domestic relations, bankruptcy, guardianship and landlord/tenant. The students were trained (pictured at right) during the week of January 21st. Many volunteer attorneys, judges and staff participated in the training. Students will volunteer in the various projects during January, February, March and April.



The VLP would like to thank everyone who participated in the training and welcome all of the students to the program!

Upcoming CLEs



Annual Ethics Update & Tips

Presented by Lynda Shely

Friday, May 9 » 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

Marriott University Park in Tucson

Box lunch will be provided

Show Low CLE

Friday, April 25 » 9:00 am to noon

Presented by Luis Ochoa and Tom Roberts

Show Low Holiday Inn

For more information or to register, please visit <http://www.vlparizona.org/CLESignUp.htm>

Quick Facts

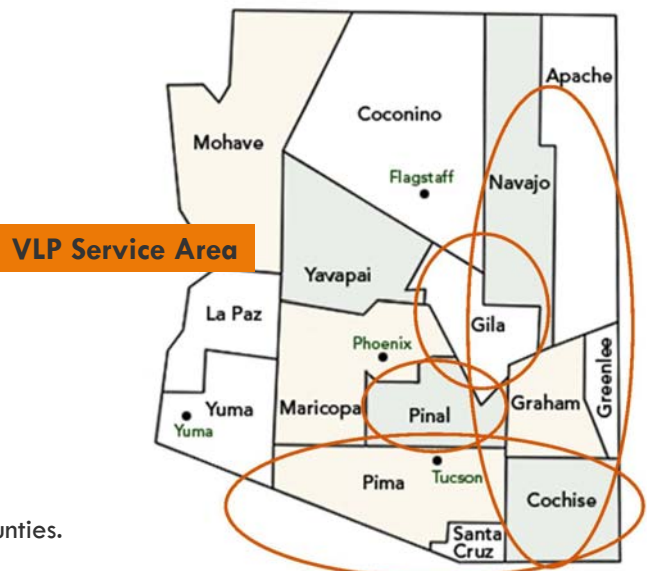
VLP serves clients in need across SALA's service area.

Volunteer attorneys provide services to clients in Apache, Cochise, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, Navajo, Pima, Pinal and Santa Cruz Counties.

These services are coordinated in the Tucson office.

In 2007, the VLP assisted 40% of the clients helped by SALA in Cochise, Graham and Greenlee Counties.

Similarly, VLP attorneys provided legal services to 25% of the clients helped by SALA in Santa Cruz Counties.



VLP 4th Quarter Statistics are in!

During October, November and December of 2007 volunteer attorneys donated 651.8 hours. 443.8 of these hours were provided by attorneys to clients in matters where the attorney provided direct representation to the client. 208 of the hours donated were provided to clients in one of the VLP Clinics. The financial equivalent of the donated hours is $651.8 \times \$200/\text{hour} = \$130,360$ dollars in a single quarter.

New Services to be provided in 2008

Wills Project

This month the VLP, in partnership with the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona, will launch a pilot project to help prepare wills for clients with HIV/Aids. Through this project, clients in need will be linked with volunteer attorneys who will prepare wills and assist with small estate issues.

Law Student Pilot Project » Minor Guardianship Court Project

Under the supervision of an attorney, students will meet with unrepresented clients at their guardianship hearings in Probate Court. The students will explain the proceedings and review the client's file to ensure that the paperwork is in order and that all the legal requirements have been met. Students will then have the opportunity to appear before the Court and offer the Court their recommendation as to whether the client should be awarded guardianship.

Expansion of Community Education Project

In addition to the law student program, the VLP will expand its undergraduate volunteer program this spring. In partnership with community agencies such as New Beginnings, Old Pueblo Community Services, Pio Decimo, Primavera Foundation and Tucson Center for Women and Children, the VLP will utilize undergraduate students interested in legal careers to give informative presentations to agencies that serve the poor in Tucson. These presentations consist of valuable information regarding the type of services offered by the Volunteer Lawyers Program. The students are able to impart information regarding how to apply for services and distribute resources during the presentations.

New Rural Projects

Guardianship Project » Cochise County

In December of 2007, the VLP expanded services to clients in need of both minor and adult guardianships in Cochise County. The Guardianship Clinic will be staffed monthly by volunteer attorneys who practice in Cochise County. The clinic will provide the necessary forms for clients to file for guardianship as well as information, advice and brief service.

Domestic Relations Clinic » Pinal County

This spring, the VLP is preparing to expand services offered to clients in need of help with family law matters in Pinal County. The program will launch what it expects will be a monthly clinic to assist pro per clients filing for divorce. The first clinic is scheduled to be held at the public library in Casa Grande in early March.

Domestic Relations Clinics in Spanish » Tucson, Nogales & Sierra Vista

For some time, the VLP has been providing advice and brief service to clients seeking help with divorce and paternity matters. These services have traditionally been offered in English. However, in November of 2007, the VLP expanded services and began to offer this assistance to clients in Spanish in Tucson. Plans have now been laid to expand the services further to offer services to Spanish speakers in Nogales and Sierra Vista.

Staff Corner

The VLP welcomes.....

The VLP is proud to welcome Diane Wangelin to the staff. Diane joins the program as a secretary. She comes to the program after working for more than twenty years with the Red Cross. Her experience with non-profits will serve the program well. Welcome, Diane!

The VLP says good-bye...

After seven years with the VLP, Helen Gonzalez resigned as the program's bankruptcy paralegal in November. We appreciate Helen's long time dedication to our clients. She worked for years in a very challenging area. With Helen's help many families were able to remain self-sufficient, protecting their wages from garnishment and their vehicles from repossession. Helen resigned from the program to accept a position with the Legal Defender's Office. Although we are all sad to see Helen leave, we understand that this was the best decision for her family. We wish Helen the best of luck. She will be missed by both clients and staff!

Questions or comments? E-mail Michele Mirto at mmirto@sazlegalaid.org or call 520.623.9465, ext. 4171.

The VLP is a joint program of Southern Arizona Legal Aid and the Pima County Bar Association.



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