

Year 43, Volume 2
Summer 2009

Free Legal Aid Clinic Newsletter

2009 - 2010
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GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD!!!! SUMMER IS IN FULL SWING!!

Message from the Board:

Greetings from 5435 Woodward! It has been a hot summer without air-conditioning for the past few months; however, The Free Legal Aid Clinic is still going strong. Our fifteen new student attorneys have adjusted well with their family and elder law cases, while our Board is struggling with the reality that we will be FLAC alumni some day soon.

The Free Legal Aid, Inc. still offers law students the chance to see a case through from the initial intake to the final order. This opportunity to litigate as student attorneys not only makes FLAC an appealing organization in the context of law school, but it creates a bond among the students that will last long after law school is over. Wherever FLAC alumni go, they carry with them the memories of litigating a case

and the lessons they learned from one another - lessons which still have an impact in and outside the Court room setting. We feel privileged to offer this opportunity to another set of student attorneys, and see them carry on the torch of compassion that is FLAC.

It is amazing that after forty-five years, our organization is still an integral part of the Detroit community, assisting those that need our help the most. We are very proud of our partnerships with the Elder Law and Advocacy Center and Lakeshore Legal Aid, and look forward to what the future may bring. In the meantime, FLAC remains committed to serving Detroit and the Metro-Detroit community.

The 2009-2010 Board of Directors

STUDENT ATTORNEY REFLECTS ON HER SUMMER AT FLAC

Contributed By: Ruth Lyons

My summer at the Free Legal Aid Clinic has provided me with a truly rewarding and valuable experience. Access to legal services is so important given the

(Continued on page 2)

Student Attorney Reflection Continued....

opaque nature of our legal system, and I feel very fortunate to be a part of an organization that has long been dedicated to providing the community with assistance and advocacy. In addition to supplying a context for my studies and teaching me a great deal about practicing law, the Free Legal Aid Clinic makes a difference in people's lives. From offering guidance to In Pro Per clients seeking a divorce, to representing clients in court, the Free Legal Aid Clinic has provided me with first-hand knowledge and has provided our clients with an ability to exercise their Constitutional rights.

The interaction with clients makes employment at the Free Legal Aid Clinic particularly meaningful. For one client, after six months of alienation from her children, we were able to obtain a temporary order that granted her primary physical custody and allowed her to see her children that evening. Another client cried tears of joy when we assisted her in answering an upsetting Complaint for Divorce. The Free Legal Aid Clinic has an important presence in Wayne County, and I hope to remain connect with and contribute to that presence for years to come.

FLACTIVITY BRINGS FLACIES TOGETHER IN THE RAIN!

Contributed By: Glenn Ross

Team building activities have long been an important part of the experience at FLAC, and this year is no exception. On July 3, 2009, many of the current FLAC Student Attorneys and Board Members biked the beautiful new river trail along the Detroit River. Student Attorneys Brea Engel, Chantel Bahoura and Glenn Ross biked from FLAC headquarters, through the Tiger game crowd at Comerica Park as the rain began to fall and dark clouds mixed with the sunny sky.

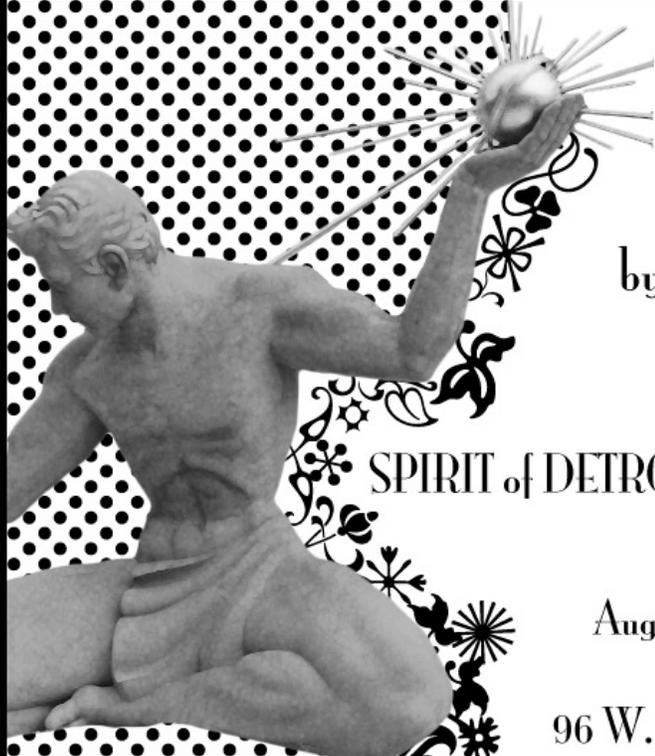
The change in weather prompted a phone call to current FLAC Chairperson and Detroit enthusiast Gregory Stamatopoulos, who was leading the motorcade group driving to Wheel-

house Detroit, where the other FLACies planned to rent bikes. "Should we turn around?" they asked. The group decided to continue on, as the partly cloudy sky turned darker with storm clouds. The rain held off until everyone had paid for an hour's bike rental. "Are you sure you want to go?" asked the employees at Wheelhouse.

Through the downpour that rolled in, the group slogged its way down the river trail to Mt. Elliott Park. There, it was discussed whether the group should venture further and cross the bridge onto Belle Isle. "Let's go, we're already here!" shouted the ever-enthusiastic Student Attorney Eleni Gouvas. After a very short discussion in-

terrupted by the sounds of thunder, the rest of the group made a nearly unanimous decision to turn around and head back.

Completely soaked and full of laughs, the FLACies made their way back to the Wheelhouse, where they were greeted by a few dry co-workers who had opted against the journey. As for upcoming FLACtivities, a less weather-dependant Karaoke Night in Eastern Market took place on July 31, 2009, and many FLACies attended a Tigers game on August 5, 2009. There will also be another riverfront bike ride, but hopefully on a more weather-permitting day. And yes, we will bike to Belle Isle!



Support
FLAC
by having a good time

SPIRIT of DETROIT SUMMER SOIREE

August, 21st 2009 5-8pm
Leon & Lulu's
96 W. 14 Mile Rd. Clawson, Mi

Please join us for one of our annual fundraisers planned by our Student Attorneys. This event features food and refreshments, music, and a silent auction of local wears and Detroit-themed artwork. Leon & Lulu's is a unique home and accessory store, & FLAC will receive 10% of all sales during the event.

FLAC HELPS DEVELOP RADIO SPOTS FOR SENIORS!!

Contributed By: Michael Kwarcinski

FLAC & the Elder Law & Advocacy Center/Neighborhood Legal Services Michigan are planning to create a series of short radio spots on issues affecting Senior Citizens. Produced together with the

Detroit Area Agency on Aging, FLAC hopes the radio spots will provide information and awareness on a variety of topics facing Senior Citizens. Elder Law & Advocacy Center attorneys will super-

vised Free Legal Aid Clinic students in scripting and recording the radio spots. The radio spots will then be used as part of in pro per presentations for Senior Citizens.

HELPING CLIENTS GET JUSTICE: GOOD STORIES FROM FLAC!

Client came to FLAC seeking a divorce from her imprisoned husband. Client had given birth to a child while her husband was in prison, but there was no way her husband could be the father because he was in prison at the time of conception. Even though in Michigan a child born during a marriage is presumed to be the husband's child, we were able to assist the client in getting her divorce, and in the process proved to the court that her husband could not be the father. Client was very grateful and hugged her Student

Attorney.— Brea Engel, FLAC Student Attorney

Client owed \$27,506.51 in support arrears to the State. We filed a motion for a payment plan and got client on a payment plan for \$100.00 per month for 27 months for a total of \$2,700.00. Once client complies with the payment plan, his remaining arrears will be discharged. Therefore, we will have saved him a total of \$24,806.51 in support arrears. This is especially important for this client because he is a dis-

abled war veteran who is living on a fixed income. This payment plan will really help him financially.— Megan MacLeod, FLAC Secretary

Client came to us seeking a divorce from her abusive husband. He had beaten her with a gun and stolen money from her Social Security checks. He was abusive to her in front of her grandchildren. We were able to assist client in obtaining a default judgment of divorce so she could move on with her life.— Jason Kanter, FLAC Student Attorney

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Staffed by Wayne State University Law Students

Movin' On Up? Retiring Down South?

Whether you're finding a new job or leaving an old one, be sure to keep your FLACies in the know.

There are three easy ways for you to do this:

1. Send us a postcard with your new address
2. Call (313) 833-0058 and ask for any available Board member
3. Drop us a line at flac@wayne.edu



Another great way to stay informed is to subscribe to the FLAC alumni list! Just send an email to: listserv@lists.wayne.edu. Leave the subject line blank and include "subscribe flacalumni your name" in the text portion of the message.

Example: subscribe flacalumni Joe Schmoe

Updating your address with us is a great way to learn about various FLAC events!