

# Legal Aid Link

Volume 5, Issue 2

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## Note from the Editor

I hope you enjoy this latest issue of *Legal Aid Link*! As you might have noticed, for the past three years, it has been produced on a bi-monthly basis. However, for the foreseeable future, it will be produced on a quarterly basis due to limited resources. Please let me know if you have any input for making this e-newsletter as effective as possible!

To stay up to date on the latest news of the Massachusetts legal aid community, please connect with us via the following social networking sites:

Find us on [Facebook](#) 

Follow us on [twitter](#) 

View our profile on [Linked in](#) 

Thank you!

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## MLAC News

### You're Invited to MLAC's Annual Meeting

Please join us at MLAC's Annual Meeting, which will be held on May 10 from 5 to 7 p.m. at Mintz Levin. Bob Sable, who will be retiring in June as executive director of Greater Boston Legal Services, will be honored for his 43-year legal aid career. View the invitation [here](#) for more details. You can RSVP by e-mailing [rsvp@mlac.org](mailto:rsvp@mlac.org) or calling 617-367-8544.

### Submit Your News to The Unbeatable Advocate

The next issue of the client board member newsletter, The Unbeatable Advocate, will be distributed in June 2011. Please send your stories and ideas to David Pearson at [dpearson@shawmuteducation.org](mailto:dpearson@shawmuteducation.org) before May 2. The Winter 2010 edition is available [here](#).

### **FY10 MLAC Fact Book Available**

The Fact Book is produced each spring and includes detailed information on MLAC and its grantees. You can view the FY10 Fact Book [here](#).

### **Retention Task Force Update**

The Retention Task Force held its fourth meeting on April 12. The five work groups: Best Practices (local, statewide, national), Contracts, Culture of Inclusion, Data Collection and Statement of Principles - have been developing their recommendations, which will be presented at the next meeting on May 25. Recommendations will be presented to MLAC in June. For more information, please contact Task Force Chair Jacqui Bowman at [JBowman@gbls.org](mailto:JBowman@gbls.org) or Diversity Coalition Director Joyce Allen-Beckford at [jallen-beckford@mlac.org](mailto:jallen-beckford@mlac.org).

### **Strategic Planning Update**

The MLAC Board Strategic Planning Committee met on April 25 to hear recommendations from the three Strategic Planning Task Forces: Planning/Delivery Systems, Leadership Transitions, Communications. On May 10, the Committee will discuss with the MLAC Board the next steps in the planning process. The Committee also will convene a broad group of stakeholders on June 23 to discuss the themes and questions that have arisen during the Strategic Planning process. The Committee will draft a Strategic Plan over the summer and early fall.

### **Constituent Services Briefing Update**

The 2011 Legal Aid Constituent Services Briefing was held at the State House on the morning of March 1. Nearly 75 legislative staff members attended to hear presentations from legal aid advocates and meet representatives of their local programs.

## **Equal Justice Coalition News**

### **House Ways & Means Recommends Level Funding!**

We're thrilled to report that the House Ways & Means Committee recommended level funding of \$9.5 million for MLAC's line item (0321-1600) in FY12. The full House is expected to adopt the recommendation tomorrow, and then we'll turn our attention to the Senate. Take a look at our [funding fact sheet](#) for more details on the legislative campaign.

### **Walk to the Hill a Success Despite Weather Woes**

For the first time in its 12-year history, Walk to the Hill got snowed out on February 2. It was rescheduled for February 22, and even though Chief Justice Ireland was not able to attend, Justice Ralph Gants delivered inspiring remarks to kick off the speaking program.

More than 500 attorneys from 45 firm "teams" participated this year, including 17 managing partners. The winners of our annual highest attendance awards are:

- **1st Place:** Ropes & Gray - 42 attorneys
- **2nd Place:** WilmerHale - 41 attorneys
- **3rd Place:** Nutter McClennen & Fish- 25 attorneys
- **Nancy King Award** (for the highest percentage of firm participation): Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi - 7 out of 15 attorneys. This was the firm's first year participating!

And as always, we greatly appreciated the program staff who volunteered to help with registration and directing participants. Thank you!

## **People**



### **Mass. Law Reform Institute (MLRI) Names New Executive Director**

Georgia Katsoulomitis joined MLRI on March 1 as its new executive director. She comes to MLRI with significant leadership experience, a deep understanding of antipoverty strategies and a passion for social justice. She most recently served as managing director of the Boston Bar Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the Boston Bar Association, and as a consultant to numerous non-profit organizations on management, communications and development.

"I am honored to be part of the Massachusetts legal services community and to have the opportunity to lead this exceptional organization and staff. I am committed to building upon MLRI's legacy of effective and fearless advocacy on behalf of low-income and underserved populations," she said.

Her immediate priority is to ensure that MLRI has the resources to maintain, and expand, its systemic reform initiatives and that it remains responsive to the state's legal service field programs and other community partners who rely on MLRI for its specialized expertise and support services.

### **MLRI Advocate Honored for Anti-Hunger Work**

Patricia Baker, MLRI policy analyst, received The Dr. Raymond Wheeler / Senator Paul Wellstone Anti-Hunger Advocacy Leadership Award, presented by the national Food Research Action Center at its annual conference in Washington, D.C. in March. The award was given to Pat in recognition of her central role in fighting hunger through public policy.

### **Meet Kate: Northeastern Co-op Student at MetroWest Legal Services**

Kate's 6-month internship as a receptionist/intake worker was funded in part from proceeds raised at the 2010 Nancy King Memorial Golf Tournament. Read more about Kate [here](#).

### **Legal Aid Attorneys to Receive MBA Honors**

Several legal aid attorneys will be honored as part of the MBA Centennial Conference. [The Annual Access to Justice Awards Luncheon](#) will take place on Wednesday, May 18, from 12:30 to 2 p.m. at the Boston Sheraton Hotel.

**Linda Landry** of Disability Law Center of Massachusetts and **Dan Manning** of Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) will receive the Legal Services Award, which is given to "a public or nonprofit agency attorney who contributes to the provision of low-income legal services beyond his or her required job responsibilities."

**Eleanor Newhoff**, a volunteer attorney in the GBLS Immigration Law Unit, will receive the Pro Bono Publico Award, which is given to "an individual who has been instrumental in developing, implementing and supporting pro bono programs for the MBA, a local bar association, law firm or agency."



### **In Memorium: Barbara Olin, Fiscal Officer, Merrimack Valley - North Shore Legal Services (MVNS)**

Barbara, who worked for MVNS for the past 37 years, died unexpectedly on March 28. Barbara was famous for her dedication to duty and for her acerbic wit. To the end, she was a perfectionist: the auditors arrived the day following her death to begin the annual audit and found her corporate records aligned in immaculate order ready to go, her final gift to MVNS.

## **Event Recap**

### **Community Legal Services and Counseling Center (CLSACC)**

CLSACC held a successful annual Volunteer Appreciation Event on April 11 at Lesley University. The Dr. Brenner Award was given to two community partners, Dr. Ilana Amrani-Cohen of the Guidance Center and Michelle Fine of RESPOND, for their work on developing domestic violence High Risk Assessment and Response teams in Cambridge, Arlington and Belmont and in Somerville.



Photo: CLSACC 2011 Dr. Brenner Award Honoree Michelle Fine of RESPOND, and accepting on behalf of Dr. Ilana Amrani-Cohen, staff from The Guidance Center, with CLSACC Executive Director Barbara Mitchell and Board President April English. From L to R: Michelle Fine, Charlene Luma, Cindy Nemet, Howard Yaffe, Gail Council, April English and Barbara Mitchell.

### **South Coastal Counties Legal Services / New Center for Legal Advocacy (SCCLS / NCLA)**

**[Kenneth Feinberg](#)**, a Brockton native, was the honored guest at a fundraiser benefiting SCCLS and NCLA on March 24. More than 150 people attended the cocktail reception, held at the Fuller Craft Museum in Brockton. During the evening, Brockton attorney Bettina Holton received the Plymouth County Pro Bono Publico Excellence Award.

Feinberg focused his comments on the needs of those less fortunate in Southeastern Massachusetts, stressing the "important work that pro bono and legal aid attorneys provide to our region's most vulnerable residents each day."



Photo: Kenneth Feinberg (L) with event co-chairs Lawrence Siskind and David Slutsky

## **Advocacy Update**

### **The Center for Law and Education (CLE)**

One of the amicus briefs CLE filed this winter was before the U.S. Supreme Court. In *Camreta v. Greene*, CLE argued against expanding the scope of the school-based "special needs" exception to the Fourth Amendment's search and seizure requirements by allowing law enforcement officers and CPS workers in a non-emergency situation to bypass traditional Fourth Amendment protections when they conduct custodial police/CPS investigations in schools.

### **Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS)**

More than four years ago, GBLS attorneys Dan Bartley, Wynn Gerhard and Alex Mitchell-Munevar, along with the National Consumer Law Center, MLRI, and other groups, began working to pass legislation to increase protections for low-income debtors. GBLS staff's efforts included investigating the impact on low-income debtors of the property exemption law then on the books; drafting, re-drafting, and filing proposed legislation; providing testimony before the judicial legislative committee; and meeting with individual legislators to obtain support. Alex added a section to the bill that ultimately passed, focusing on protections for elders and the disabled. The

bill, filed by Sen. Pat Jehlen, passed at the end of December 2010. Gov. Patrick signed it into law in January 2011.

#### **Mass. Law Reform Institute (MLRI)**

In December 2010, MLRI filed litigation in U.S. District Court against a private background screening company for disseminating inaccurate criminal history in violation of the Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act.

In November 2010, MLRI, on behalf of Mass. Coalition for the Homeless and several individual plaintiffs, sued the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), alleging that DHCD was violating the law by not having fair and duly promulgated rules governing the Emergency Assistance "Flex Funds" program, through which the agency is spending approximately \$30 million of EA funds in FY11 on short-term subsidies for otherwise homeless families. Read more [here](#).

Last fall, MLRI issued a report, "[A Bridge to Where?](#)," calling for the state to evaluate its over-reliance on short-term housing subsidies to address homelessness. Over the past two years, thousands of families have been placed in private market housing with 12-month subsidies. The temporary subsidies were meant to be a "bridge to permanent housing," but for most the goal of permanent housing is not realized.

### **Save the Date(s)!**

#### **Disability Law Center**

Annual Gala

Silent Auction & Award Ceremony, with Guest of Honor Ted Kennedy, Jr.

May 12, 6-9 p.m.

The Charles Hotel, Cambridge

[Visit the Annual Gala web page for more details.](#)

#### **MetroWest Legal Services**

2011 Nancy King Memorial Golf Tournament

May 23, 11:30 a.m. registration / 12:30 p.m. start

Framingham Country Club

[Register here!](#)

#### **Merrimack Valley-North Shore Legal Services**

1st Annual Race for Justice

June 26, 9 a.m.

John St., Lowell

[Register here!](#)

### **Media Highlights**

For links to a full list of media coverage, visit the [News](#) section of MLAC's Web site.

#### **[Brennan Center for Justice: The Economy and Civil Legal Services](#)**

4/22/2011 - This article summarizes a new report from the Brennan Center, "Cut Off & Cut Out: Funding Shortfalls Force More Low-Income Families to Face Critical Legal Needs Alone."

#### **[BusinessWest: Making a Strong Case](#)**

4/12/2011 - BusinessWest profiles Western Mass. Legal Services as it embarks on its second annual fundraising campaign, 4 Counties 4 Justice.

#### **[Mass. Lawyers Weekly: Sable Steps Down as Executive Director of GBLS](#)**

4/7/2011 - Bob Sable will be retiring this summer after 20 years as executive director of Greater Boston Legal Services.

## [Harvard Crimson: Disability, Race Discussed](#)


4/1/2011 - Rick Glassman of Disability Law Center participated in a panel discussion at Harvard Law School on the intersection of disability and race.

## Tech Tips

### Internet Explorer Tip


Did you know you can have multiple home pages using Internet Explorer (IE)? All will open when you launch IE.

To add additional home page tabs to your browser. Find the site you access regularly (i.e.:

[www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)), Click the Home icon arrow  on your Explorer toolbar. Select Add or Change Home Tab. Select 'Add this webpage to your home page tabs'.

You can add up to 8 saved tabs in IE7 and IE8, but can have multiple different pages open at any given time. Here's an example of multiple pages open at once:



To quickly view all tabs at one time click the Quick Tabs icon,  and all pages will display in a thumbnail view.

## "People Pages"

[CLICK HERE](#) to print "People Pages," an alphabetical directory of Massachusetts Legal Services staff members and their contact information (NOTE: You must log in to MassLegalServices.org in order to access the list). You can also look up staff individually by last name using the search function on MassLegalServices.org.

## Important Dates

**May 10** - MLAC Annual Meeting, 5-7 p.m. at Mintz Levin PC

**June 23** - MLAC Board Meeting, 3-5 p.m. at NCLC 4th Floor

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