

PRO BONO PRESS

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VLP Trainings

- Be sure to check at the VLP website for the latest information on training schedules and registration
- March 27, 2006 — Landlord/Tenant Law Training
- April 11, 2006 — An Introduction to SSI
- April 24, 2006 — Unemployment Benefits Training

VLP Has A New Partner

VLP and the Family Advocacy Project (FAP) at Boston Medical Center will begin working together this spring to replicate FAP's successful legal clinic at the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center. Day Berry & Howard lawyers are staffing a weekly legal clinic at the East Boston site with support from FAP. The *pro bono* attorneys interview potential clients and agree to handle cases that require representation. Currently overflow cases are sent to VLP for referral to its *pro bono* panel.

Over the next year VLP and FAP plan to expand the clinic model to three additional neighborhood health centers in the City of Boston. We will be reaching out to law firms and individual panel members to staff the weekly clinics and to handle cases accepted at the clinics. Cases generated through the clinic intake are not limited to, and frequently do not involve, health care issues. Rather the cases run the gamut of civil legal problems. The emphasis is on preventive legal assistance. Clinics run



approximately two hours, including time to conduct 2-4 interviews and hold a debriefing session to determine which clients need assistance beyond the on-site advice provided.

Please watch the VLP website for more information as plans develop. Also, if you and/or your firm are interested in staffing a clinic, please contact either Lynn Girton or me here at VLP.

Meg Connolly
Executive Director

Unemployment Cases — A Note of Thanks

During the past year I have been referring unemployment compensation cases to VLP volunteers. Clients come to VLP who have lost their jobs and have had their claims for unemployment compensation unfairly denied. Many clients have no source of income when they come to VLP. Panel members represent the clients at the hearing to appeal the denial of benefits. Some attorneys are handling their first case while others are veterans, having handled a number of cases. The volunteer attorneys respond quickly to e-mails, take cases on short notice, and, most importantly, have a high rate of success (95% win rate) in the cases.

In addition to the wonderful work of the attorneys all year long, we are looking forward to the summer associate program whereby

VLP can assist even more clients through the assistance of summer associates in several large Boston firms. I am sure this summer will be a repeat of last year's success. On behalf of VLP clients and staff, I thank all of the attorneys and firms who have participated in the unemployment project. Your work has ensured our clients' financial stability during a difficult time. Thank you for your continuing commitment to equal access

By Damaris
Gayle



Article in *Equal Justice* Featuring Senior Partners

The Winter 2005 issue of *Equal Justice*, published by the Legal Services Corporation included an article featuring Judge Edward Ginsburg and Senior Partners for Justice. The article is wonderful publicity for the swiftly growing Senior Partners, and is focused on the many benefits not only for clients but also for the over 240 panel attorneys that take their cases.

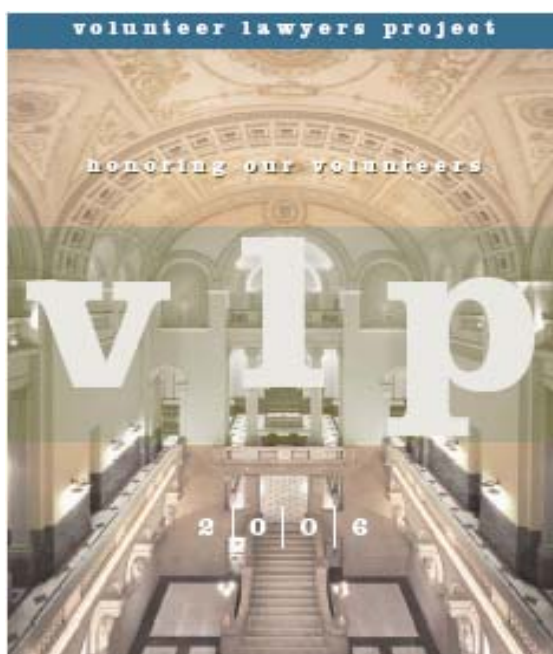
SPFJ matches attorneys, both retired and active, with clients who would otherwise have been *pro se*. The volunteers may opt for a caseload that is in line with their past experience, but also have the option of branching out into new areas of law. SPFJ has grown into a

program that encourages professional development in younger attorneys who have become involved and also provides educational opportunities with the new student internship offered through Suffolk Law School. The program has proved to be a mutually satisfying experience both for the attorneys that take cases and for the clients that get lawyers who would otherwise have to represent themselves.

For more information about Senior Partners for Justice, please contact: Jill Crockett at jcrockett@vlpnet.org, or ext. 144, and please visit the website at: www.spfj.org.

You Are Invited...

VLP is having our annual reception to honor our Volunteers! Please join us.



WHERE:

John Adams Courthouse
One Pemberton Square, Boston
Second Floor Conference Suite

WHEN:

Tuesday, April 4th, 2006 at 4:30 pm

RSVP:

Please call 617-423-0648
(Press '0' for the operator)
Or email Damaris Gayle at
dgayle@vlpnet.org

New Medical Debt Guide Now Available

VLP and the Health Law Advocates have just completed a new publication entitled "Medical Debt: A Guide for Massachusetts Advocates." This work focuses on what remedies are available for consumers who have substantial debt because of medical bills. Recent studies have

documented that many people who have to file for bankruptcy protection do so because of medical debt. This occurs either because people are uninsured or inadequately insured. We are most grateful to the Campbell and Hall Foundation for making this effort possible as well as our colleagues at the National

Consumer Law Center for their assistance.

If you would like a copy, please contact Joanna Allison, ext. 143 or Lynn A. Girton, ext. 132.

Volunteer Lawyers Project of the Boston Bar Association

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New Training for Unemployment Benefits

The Litigation Section of the Boston Bar Association has initiated the *Pro Bono* Response Project. This effort will focus on a different issue every year and assist in developing the necessary *pro bono* resources.

The Project this year will be focusing on clients who need representation in securing unemployment benefits. A training on unemployment matters sponsored by the Litigation Section as well as Volunteer Lawyers

Project will be held on April 25 from 4 to 7 at the Boston Bar Association. The trainers will be experienced practitioners from both the private and public bar.

There is no cost for the training; however, we hope that all lawyers attending the training will take one *pro bono* case during a year.

To sign up for the training or to get more information, please feel free to contact either Lynn Girton (LGirton@vlpnet.org, ext 132)

or Damaris Gayle (DGayle@vlpnet.org, ext 123).

