



AILA's ProBono Newsletter



Summer 2007

Pro Bono Gossip

- **Welcome** to AILA's new Pro Bono Associate Susan Timmons! Susan joined AILA in March 2007 and will coordinate, promote, and manage AILA pro bono activities, primarily working with the Pro Bono Services Committee, chapter pro bono liaisons, and other groups in the larger pro bono community. Please contact her at 202-216-2408 if you or your chapter has questions or needs regarding pro bono service.
 - **Kudos** to the 2006–07 Pro Bono Services Committee led by Chair Leslie K. Dellon for a job well done. Committee members include: Regina Germain, Gloria A. Goldman, Meredith Linsky, Kathleen Moccio, and Paul Soreff.
 - **New initiatives.** In 2006, a new chapter liaison position was born—the pro bono liaison. The liaisons were tasked to serve as resources to the Pro Bono Services Committee in identifying and promoting local pro bono activities and accomplishments. In the position's inaugural year, 19 of the 35 chapters appointed pro bono liaisons.
- Our goal in 2007 is to increase this to 100% chapter participation. If you or someone you know is interested in this exciting chapter role, contact your chapter chair or Susan Timmons at stimmons@aila.org.
- **We want to hear from YOU!** As AILA's commitment to pro bono grows, we want to ensure that our members have the resources they need to be successful in their pro bono efforts. If you have feedback on how we are doing in this area or if you would like to submit a pro bono article or profile to *Immigration Law Today*, please contact Susan Timmons at stimmons@aila.org.
 - **Pro Bono news out of New York.** The Honorable Robert A. Katzmann delivered the Orison S. Marden Memorial Lecture at the New York City Bar on February 28, 2007. Katzmann spoke about the unmet legal needs of the immigrant poor and exhorted all lawyers to take part in expanding the provision of pro bono service. You can read the full text of Judge Katzmann's speech on AILA InfoNet at Doc. No. 07040910. In conjunction with this event, Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen and Loewy, LLP announced a partnership with the New York City Bar to bring on a full-time fellow. The Fragomen Fellow will work at the City Bar Justice Center solely on pro bono immigration issues. Through this program, the firm is lending an attorney to the City Bar Justice Center for six months to a year and paying the attorney's salary. This is an excellent model for other city or state bar associations and is an innovative way for a law firm to demonstrate its pro bono commitment!
 - **Keep your pro bono clients informed.** Individuals with a pending immigration case may now change their mailing addresses online with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) at www.uscis.gov. For more information, contact USCIS Customer Service at 1-800-375-5283.

2006–07 Pro Bono Liaisons

Lena Ayoub
Lesley Baribeau
Virginia Carstens
Florence Chamberlin
Mary Margaret Cowan
Stacy Cozart

Evelyn H. Cruz
M. Renee Cummings
John Dubrulle
Marianne Gonko
Barbara J. Graham
Kara Hartzler

Anayancy R. Housman
Rose M. Kasusky
Joren Lyons
Joanne Matsuo
Leonor E. Perretta
Michele R. Pistone

Nicola Ai Ling Prall
Jennifer C. Reynolds
Alexander G. Rojas
Anita P. Sharma
Mark J. Shmueli
Ilyce Shugall

David N. Simmons
Charles Song
Anita M. Sorensen
Daniel Stracka
Miko A. Tokuhama-Olsen
Erin Marie Zipfel

Pro Bono Feature: AILA Citizenship Day 2007

By Susan Timmons

AILA's first annual Citizenship Day was a remarkable success. The event, which focused on assisting eligible legal permanent residents to prepare naturalization applications, drew green card holders from far and wide and volunteers were able to help hundreds of individuals prepare their applications. Fourteen chapters participated in the nationwide one-day drive to provide free or low-cost assistance and answer questions about the application process. Three more chapters plan on holding similar events later in the year.

Citizenship Day began as the brainchild of Washington state chapter member Paul Soreff. The Washington chapter held its first Citizenship Day in 2006, and wanted to grow the event in 2007. With the support and encouragement of AILA leadership and his chapter, Soreff presented the idea of using Washington's 2006 Citizenship Day project as a national model. Subsequently, AILA's Pro Bono Services Committee began work on the project and Citizenship Day 2007 began to take shape.

Naturalization drives are fairly common in the immigration activist community, but this plan offered a new twist—"Citizenship Day in a Box." This con-

cept, modeled on the "clinic in a box" programs that have achieved tremendous success nationwide, enabled event coordinators to focus on the logistical needs of Citizenship Day, as opposed to the nitty gritty. Using the materials the Washington chapter developed the previous year, AILA made every necessary form available for local Citizenship Day event coordinators to download from InfoNet.

These materials enabled even the smaller chapters to participate—the only missing ingredient was manpower. Many chapters developed partnerships with community-based organizations, immigration advocacy groups, local churches and schools to get the word out and staff the clinics. Most used their partners' facilities as site locations on the day of the event. Several chapters also partnered with local law schools, encouraging the next generation of immigration practitioners to commit to pro bono service early in their careers.

Holly Smith, a student at Seattle University School of Law, remarked about her experience, "This really helped me remember why I wanted to be a lawyer—helping people." Another Seattle Law student said

of the 10-hour volunteer stint, "This was the most meaningful experience of my law school career."

At the end of the day, 1,700 individuals were helped along their journey to citizenship. The chapters who participated reported that the individuals served expressed sincere, heartfelt thanks and appreciation for the volunteers' assistance.

Citizenship Day was not only a day for immigration advocates to come together to address their communities' needs, but also a time to build camaraderie. Citizenship Day offered an opportunity to meet other AILA attorneys and develop professional relationships with one another. One chapter reported that in those rare moments when they were not serving applicants, attorney volunteers broke into round-table discussions on current issues facing their practices.

The response AILA National has received regarding Citizenship Day has been overwhelmingly positive. All of the local coordinators reported that their volunteers were enthusiastic about the project and looking forward to Citizenship Day 2008. We hope to see you there!

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." — Margaret Mead

AILA Wants to Recognize Your Pro Bono Work

Stand up and be counted! The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) Pro Bono Services Committee wants to recognize members who devote their time and energy to public service and pro bono activities. In this year's membership directory, AILA will recognize each of its members who have provided at least 10 hours of pro bono service in the last year. For those members who have contributed 25 or more hours of pro bono service to our immigrant communities in the last year, AILA will also award a 10% discount coupon for AILA publications,* and members who have provided at least 50 hours of pro bono service will receive a 25% off coupon for AILA publications.* Please complete the online Pro Bono Recognition Survey (<http://www.aila.org/surveys/ProBono2007.HTM>) by June 30, 2007, so that we can thank you for your efforts. You can even complete the survey on site at the 2007 AILA Annual Conference! Your responses will help AILA improve upon the resources it provides to members who volunteer their time to help our immigrant communities. (*Coupons are valid for one book order)

Know Your Rights Materials

Recent raids and arrests have left many fearful. To help counter some of the fear and myths, the American Immigration Law Foundation (AILF) has prepared a resource list on Employer Sanctions and Know Your Rights materials. The list is available on AILA InfoNet at Doc. No. 06042569. Be prepared if a raid occurs in your community! Speak to your chapter chair about how you can become a part of your local AILA Raids Rapid Response Team. Take the time to prepare now so that your chapter will be ready if and when a workplace enforcement raid happens.



National Center for Refugee & Immigrant Children Seeks Volunteers and Mentors!

In June 2005, AILA and the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) launched the new National Center for Refugee and Immigrant Children (Center), a program of USCRI. During its inaugural two years, the Center has consistently provided high quality pro bono services to unaccompanied children released from detention in the United States.

Help the Children's Center Give Hope

You can help the Center continue to make a difference by volunteering your time to represent a child or sharing your expertise as a mentor. Mentorship can vary from sharing specific country asylum expertise, sharing sample briefs, or troubleshooting on an appellate issue to walking a young attorney through a case. If you would like to sign up to represent a child or mentor another attorney, please visit the Children's Center website at www.refugees.org/nationalcenter.

The South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Project (ProBAR)

ProBAR needs you! Asylum seekers are among the most vulnerable populations that immigration attorneys serve. Since opening its doors in 1989, the South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project (ProBAR), a joint project of the American Bar Association, the State Bar of Texas and AILA, has answered this call in south Texas.

ProBAR is a national effort to provide pro bono legal services to asylum seekers detained in south Texas by the U.S. government. The project recruits, trains and coordinates the activities of volunteer attorneys, law students and legal assistants.

Every year, hundreds of asylum seekers are detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in south Texas. They have fled civil war, ethnic fighting and religious and political persecution. Most have little, if any, money by the time they arrive in the United States and are not able to hire counsel or post the substantial immigration bonds required for release.

Having language barriers, little understanding of U.S. law and court procedures, and few financial resources, they face almost insurmountable obstacles to proving their asylum claims. As a result, many risk being deported back to places where they may face persecution and even death based upon their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.

For more information or to volunteer, e-mail ProBAR Director Meredith Linsky at probar@sbcglobal.net, or call her at 956-425-9231.

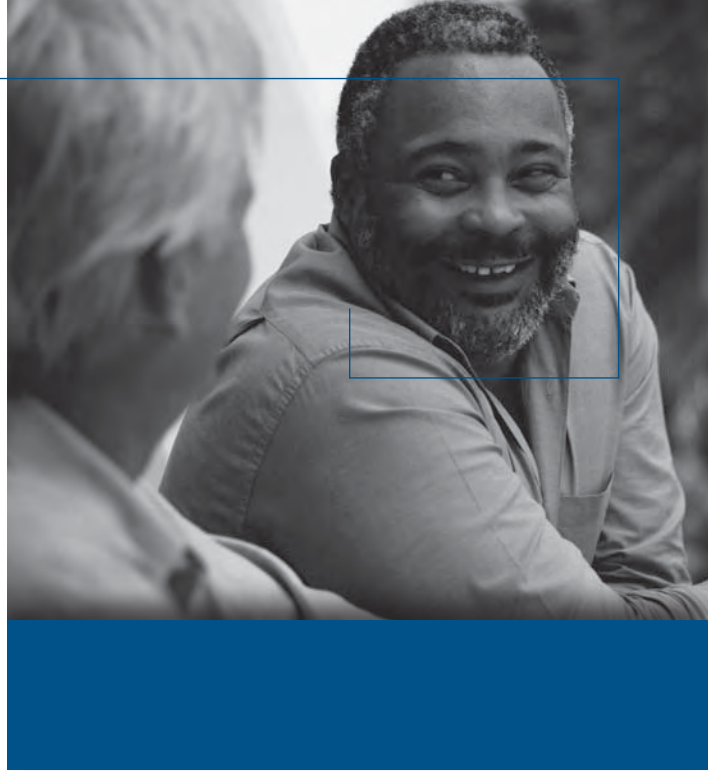
The BIA Pro Bono Project Seeks Volunteers and Mentors!

The BIA Pro Bono Project works to increase the level of pro bono representation to immigrants who are detained and without representation before the BIA. The Project is coordinated by the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), in partnership with the Executive Office for Immigration Review, AILF, AILA, the Capital Area Immigrants' Rights (CAIR) Coalition, and the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild.

All cases involve persons who were not represented before the Immigration Judge, and who remain pro se before the BIA. BIA Project cases are carefully screened by attorneys representing CLINIC and its partner agencies.

If you don't have time to write a brief, but want to support the BIA Project, consider signing up to be a mentor! To better engage law firms with limited immigration practices in the BIA Project, the Project conducts trainings and pairs individual attorneys with seasoned immigration practitioners. The Project needs experienced immigration lawyers to mentor eager pro bono attorneys with limited immigration backgrounds.

For more information about the BIA Pro Bono Appeals Project, contact Carol Pelton at CLINIC at cpelton@cliniclegal.org or (202) 756-3753.



Pro Bono Articles & Profiles

Want to be inspired? Check out the articles and profiles in the pro bono section of *Immigration Law Today* each month. The profiles share the stories of immigration attorneys just like you who are supporting justice by doing pro bono work around the country. The examples of these leaders should stir us to action.

Pro bono work allows an attorney to work on something different from his or her typical practice area. It broadens an attorney's knowledge of the law and allows junior attorneys to gain more experience. Even if comparatively inexperienced in a particular area of the law, immigration lawyers who take on pro bono work can make a significant impact on the lives of others—often a bigger impact that they thought possible.

If you are interested in pro bono but are uncertain about where to begin, don't hesitate to contact your chapter pro bono liaison or AILA National for guidance. There are opportunities for everyone—litigators and transactional attorneys alike. AILA can help you find a place where your unique skills will shine!

Volunteer Opportunities

Help sustain the organizations that AILA has pledged to support. Learn how you can assist detained asylum seekers in south Texas, represent an unaccompanied immigrant child, or screen cases for appeal to the BIA. For more information on these dynamic programs, please visit the Pro Bono Partnerships section of InfoNet at www.aila.org/probono.



ABOUT AILA

AILA National Office
918 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20004
202.216.2400
www.aila.org

The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) is the national bar association of more than 10,000 attorneys and law professors who practice and teach immigration law. Founded in 1946, AILA is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that provides continuing legal education, publications and information, professional services, and expertise through its 35 chapters and over 50 national committees. AILA is an affiliated organization of the American Bar Association and is represented in the ABA House of Delegates. For more information about AILA, please visit our website at www.aila.org.