POETIC JUSTICE



Stories of philanthropy and hope from The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 2 SUMMER 2014

Working Mom Gets Help

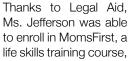
Legal Aid helps a family access benefits to get back on their feet.

On game day at FirstEnergy Stadium, when fans are roaring and the Dawg Pound is barking, Tamika Jefferson enjoyed the atmosphere as a member of the stadium's security department. But last season, in the middle of a difficult pregnancy, her doctor ordered her to stay home.

Without her job, the single mom of four soon fell behind in her rent. After being denied an extension of short term benefits, Ms. Jefferson was scared. She told her doctor at MetroHealth's Broadway Health Center she needed help.

Ohio Works First should provide short-term cash assistance to people in Ms. Jefferson's situation. When Ms. Okere looked at Ms. Jefferson's paperwork, she recognized that the agency wasn't applying the proper eligibility criteria. The county requires a "pending eviction," but Ms. Jefferson's housing situation was precarious; there was no pending eviction. Her landlord indicated that he didn't want to put a family out on

the street, but that his patience had a limit.



and got 6 months of cash assistance to help her with living costs. Ms. Jefferson says she is grateful not only for the successful outcome, but for the relief of having her attorney's support.

"Shelly told me I was doing everything I'm supposed to be doing and to let her take it from there. She told me everything's gonna be fine," said Ms. Jefferson. Her Legal Aid lawyer went to all the meetings and kept in touch to let her know how things were progressing.

Baby Demetrius was born in early June – five weeks premature – and spent his first two weeks in the hospital. In addition to caring for her newborn, Ms. Jefferson looks forward to going back to work. Ms. Jefferson is eligible to reapply for extended benefits – but she won't. She states, "I have to provide for my kids."



Tamika Jefferson needed help to tide the family over before baby Demetrius was born.

With a letter from an attorney, they feel empowered and supported...

The MetroHealth social worker, Tangela Woods, referred Ms. Jefferson to Legal Aid's Community Advocacy Program onsite at MetroHealth. Through this program, medical providers and Legal Aid work together to resolve legal issues that are barriers to health for low-income patients. Legal Aid attorney Shelly Anarado Okere has regular office hours at the clinic, so help was just down the hall.

Ms. Woods has seen many cases like Ms. Jefferson's where vulnerable people aren't aware of their rights. "With a letter from an attorney, they feel empowered and supported in the challenges they are facing," she says. "Transportation is a big barrier for our patients, so a one-stop shop really works for them. They can see the doctor, the attorney and me all in one visit."

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ARE YOU ON THE LIST

2013 Donors to Legal Aid begins on **PAGE 8**

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MAKE SURE YOU ARE ON THE LIST FOR 2014!

Use the envelope enclosed and make a gift today!

Partners in Justice

Ambassadors for Legal Aid

"Partners in Justice" are those who serve as Legal Aid ambassadors to their law firms and corporate counsel departments. This year, more than 40 organizations are participating.

Because of the volunteer effort from Partners in Justice, Legal Aid can help more people. Legal Aid's clients are low-income people who are confronted with a legal problem that - if left unresolved - will result in loss of housing, education, income, food, safety or family stability. The problems they face are life problems that have a legal resolution. These clients have legal rights, but, without an attorney, those rights will not be enforced. At Legal Aid, we use the power of the law to help those who are poor and vulnerable.

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Board Member Profile: Vanetta Jamison



Vanetta Jamison, Legal Aid Board Member

Vanetta Jamison was proud to join The Legal Aid Society's board of directors in 2011. Ms. Jamison had been an entrepreneur and active member of her community for a decade prior to joining Legal Aid. She was always drawn to helping families and children and Legal Aid was the perfect place for her to nurture her passions.

Ms. Jamison knew first-hand the impact Legal Aid can have on a family: she was a family law client in 2004. Her connection to the organization was solidified through the intense encouragement and dedication of her attorney, Susan Stauffer. Ms.

Stauffer is a Senior Attorney at Legal Aid and describes Ms. Jamison as a "fabulously determined woman and so dedicated to her kids," from day one of her representation. Ms. Jamison's divorce was granted and soon after, she graduated from college with a degree in business administration. Ms. Jamison now works with The United States Department of Veterans Affairs. There she is able to work with a client base similar to that of Legal Aid while remaining an active board member, frequently attending neighborhood brief advice clinics.

Ms. Jamison brings her unique experience

and determination to Legal Aid's board of directors. She says she never hesitates to refer people to Legal Aid when they're in need of information or services, noting that the most important thing Legal Aid gave her was "a support group; people who understand what you're going through and how you feel.'



Ms. Jamison at work in a Legal Aid Board Meeting

Two New Fellows Serve Legal Aid Clients

Legal Aid is proud to host both an Equal Justice Works Fellow and an Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Fellow. Both programs help young lawyers pursue careers in public interest law.



Danielle Gadomski Littleton, Esq.

Danielle Gadomski Littleton is Legal Aid's Equal Justice Works Fellow focusing on legal issues of youth in foster care and young adults aging out of the system. She works closely with the various county family services departments, and other partner agencies for foster youth.

"Youth in foster care have undergone a lot of trauma in their birth homes or as a result of their removal and that can trigger mental health issues," says Ms. Gadomski Littleton, noting that the rate of post-traumatic stress

disorder is higher for children in foster care than for combat veterans.

She trains families and social workers to recognize potential legal issues, for example, access to appropriate education. "A teacher might see a child acting out, but that impulsive behavior may be related to their situation. The school may recommend discipline or expulsion, when the youngster really should be getting support services so they can stay in school and graduate." She may advise or represent the young person to get the school district to provide appropriate services.

At Denison University, the Columbus native understood that not everyone grew up with the advantages and family support she had and that pushed her to be more proactive. While deciding between a graduate degree in social work or law, she was an AmeriCorps volunteer at an agency for children in foster care. She observed that judges looked to attorneys as the authorities on the cases. A public interest scholarship funded her law degree from Ohio State University's Moritz College of Law with a Certificate in Children's Studies.

"I fell in love with this issue because I saw the impact one person could have" as a child advocate, she says. "I wanted to work with Cleveland Legal Aid because it is a strong program and I knew I would get great training and exposure to lots of issues."

Jami Altum-McNair is serving the civil legal needs of low-income veterans as Legal Aid's Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Fellow.

"For some vets, something happens in the service that makes it difficult to adjust to civilian life," she says. "That can start a domino-effect of problems - their marriage falls apart, then they can't pay their child support payments, so they lose their driver's license and then they can't work. Some veterans may end up homeless or with substance abuse problems, or both.

"There are many veterans' service organizations in Cleveland, but none of them do legal work. Sometimes veterans need someone who can go to court for them," she says.

Jami Altum-McNair, Esq.

In addition to representing clients, Ms. Altum-McNair also increased access to legal services for veterans by holding brief advice clinics twice a month at a VA facility, one in conjunction with volunteer lawyers from McDonald Hopkins and Legal Aid's Volunteer Lawyers Program staff. Vets can bring in legal paperwork they don't understand, talk to an attorney and learn what the documents mean and what to do.

The daughter of a veteran, Ms. Altum-McNair served in the Army as a licensed practical nurse stationed at Fort Campbell, KY and was deployed to Kosovo. She became the first person in her family to attend college, graduating summa cum laude from Wright State; then attended law school at Case Western Reserve University and graduated *cum laude*, concurrently earning an MA in Bioethics.

Ms. Altum-McNair adds: "I had a family support network to help me when I left the service. Now I want to be that help for others. We moved to Cleveland so our son could go to the same schools as my husband, Cuyahoga County prosecutor Ben McNair, so when I found this opportunity to serve low-income veterans in my adopted hometown, I couldn't have been more excited."

Legal Aid's 2014 Annual Report to the Community

Featuring Keynote Speaker:

United States Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez

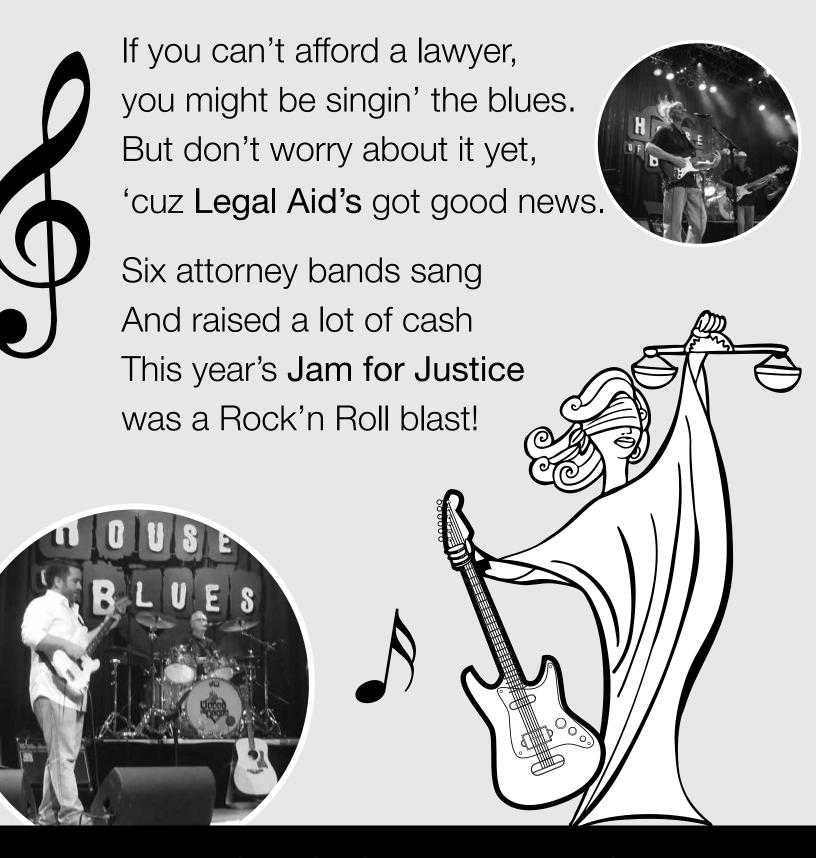
Questions? Reservations?

VISIT: www.lasclev.org/2014event • CALL: 216-861-5217 TWEET: @LegalAidCLE • EMAIL: events@lasclev.org

Wednesday, November 12, 2014 Renaissance Cleveland Hotel 24 Public Square

Reception Opens – 11:15 a.m. Lunch and Program – 11:45 a.m.

This is a fundraiser for Legal Aid. All proceeds help Legal Aid ensure shelter, safety, and economic security for the most vulnerable in Northeast Ohio.



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2013 Data and Finances

REVENUE AND OTHER SUPPORT	2013	2012
Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation (OLAF)	\$2,418,089	\$3,055,705
Legal Services Corporation (LSC)	\$1,988,049	\$2,064,009
Donations and Private Grants	\$1,206,019	\$1,159,563
Donated Services	\$926,508	\$557,351
Other Government Grants	\$376,659	\$1,038,456
United Way	\$296,101	\$308,284
Partner Agencies (contracts for legal services)	\$90,061	\$75,188
Other Income	\$371,502	\$546,705
TOTAL REVENUE	\$7,672,988	\$8,803,261
EXPENSES	2013	2012
Program Services	\$6,986,258	\$7,343,103
Support Services (administration & development)	\$1,090,654	\$1,153,037
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$8,076,912	\$8,496,140
Excess of Revenue over Expenditures	-\$403,924	\$307,121
Opening Net Assets	\$6,860,991	\$6,553,870
NET ASSETS as of year end	\$6,457,067	\$6,860,991
Breakdown of Net Assets		
Unrestricted		
-Net Investment in Plant	\$2,920,584	\$2,945,171
-Board Designated Endowment	\$13,608	\$11,337
-Board Designated Reserve Fund	\$2,815,163	\$2,891,063
	\$5,749,355	\$5,847,571
Temporarily Restricted	\$652,662	\$958,370
Permanently Restricted	\$55,050	\$55,050
		\$6,860,991



Total People Helped by Legal Aid



Total Cases Handled in 2013:	8,904
 Cases Handled and Closed: 	7,364

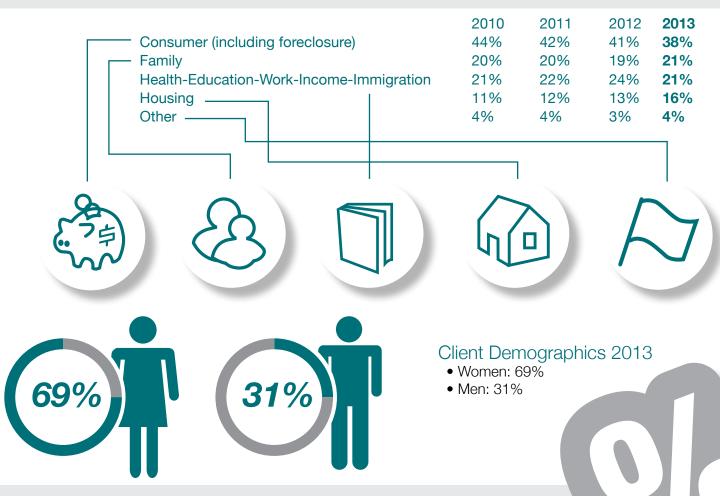
Cases Handled and Closed: 7,364Cases Continued into 2013: 1,540

Volunteer Lawyers Program: Cases Handled by Volunteers: Number of Neighborhood Clinics:	1,586 60
Pro Bono Attorneys: Law Student Volunteers: In-House Volunteers:	1,500 200 46
Personnel Attorneys on Staff: Other Staff:	45 27

Legal Aid's Success in 2013:

- Increased assets and income, and reduced debt, by \$25 million for clients' helped
- Prevented foreclosures in 76% of cases
- Removed barriers to education in 85% of cases
- Prevented eviction in 98% of cases
- Secured safety in 98% of cases

Yearly Comparison of Cases Handled



Focus on Special Populations:

- 48% of all households helped included children
- 14% of all clients are older adults
- 670 cases involved U.S. Veterans. These cases impacted 1,340 people
- 86% of households helped make less than \$25,000/year

Ethnicity:

- Black = 58%
- White = 32%
- Hispanic = 8%
- Other = 2%



Cases by County 2013

- 1. Cuyahoga: 79%
- 2. Lorain: 10%
- 3. Lake: 6%
- 4. Ashtabula: 4%
- 5. Geauga: 1%



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Without your gifts, so many would not have access to shelter, safety and economic security through the justice system.

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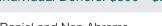
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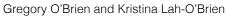
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