The Presence of Justice in Northeast Ohio

Navigating our course toward justice

2010 Annual Report
Dear Friends & Supporters,

In 2006, as we embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning process for the organization, we could not have imagined that we were on the cusp of the worst global economic downturn since the Great Depression. By severely increasing the need for our services, that recession stretched our capacity as never before.

Thankfully, that same strategic plan called for building additional organizational capacity through more efficient operations, better leveraging of resources, and additional fund raising. That plan helped us maintain our equilibrium despite rising need from an expanded pool of clients. Even in the face of funding decreases, we are proud to have been able to retain our entire staff, thanks to the devoted support of you – our friends and supporters.

Our strategic plan reinforced that we are wholly dedicated to impact rather than just quantity. We do this work not simply to win cases, but to improve the lives of our clients. In this report you will read about how we have improved our clients’ lives. For example, in 2010, operating in a region at the epicenter of the home foreclosure crisis, we prevented foreclosure in 68% of our cases and prevented evictions in 97% of cases. Those clients are not merely numbers, but families whose housing was preserved, and neighborhoods kept strong.

In the last year, we have also made significant strides in raising the organization’s profile in the wider community. Our newly-launched website played a key role in that profile-raising, telling our story in greater depth than ever before. It better empowered our clients with the information they need to avoid and resolve problems, or to seek us out when they could do neither on their own.

A fundamental part of our mission is to reach isolated groups. All of our clients are isolated by poverty, but many are also isolated because of disability, language or geography. Our outreach efforts in the last year have helped us become ever more engaged with these clients and enabled us to provide them with more responsive services.

So on behalf of our entire board and staff, a big thank you is in order to all of our volunteers and funding partners. Our work involves helping clients push back against the exploitation and indignities of poverty and neglect. Without your tremendous support in the last year – and indeed over many years – we could not provide this high-quality legal assistance while also working for systemic change.

Sincerely,

Colleen M. Cotter, Esq.
Richard D. Panza, Esq.
Ilah M. Adkins, Esq.

Colleen M. Cotter, Esq.
The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland
Executive Director

Richard D. Panza, Esq.
Partner, Wickens, Herzer, Panza, Cook and Batista Co.
Legal Aid Board President, 2010

Ilah M. Adkins, Esq.
Vice President & General Counsel, Charter One Bank
Legal Aid Board President, 2011
2010 Data and Finances

Revenue and Other Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation (OLAF)</td>
<td>$3,314,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Services Corporation (LSC)</td>
<td>$2,441,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations and Private Grants</td>
<td>$819,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donated Services</td>
<td>$1,348,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Way</td>
<td>$241,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Agencies (Contracts for Legal Services)</td>
<td>$299,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Government Grants</td>
<td>$235,879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>$500,788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
<td>$9,201,383</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Services</td>
<td>$8,309,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Services (Administration &amp; Development)</td>
<td>$1,449,383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>$9,758,686</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excess of Revenue over Expenditures
- $557,303
Opening Net Assets
- $8,020,042

Net Assets as of 12/31/2010
$7,462,739

Breakdown of Net Assets
- Undesignated
- Net Investment in Plant
- Board Designated Endowment
- Board Designated Reserve Fund
- Temporarily Restricted
- Permanently Restricted
Net Assets
$7,462,739

Client Demographics 2010

- Females 68%
- Males 32%
- African-American 54%
- Hispanic 8%
- Other 2%
- White 36%

Types of Cases Closed 2010

Yearly Comparisons of Cases Closed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Type</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer (including foreclosure)</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health-Education-Work-Income-Immigration</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cases by County 2010

- Ashtabula 5%
- Cuyahoga 78%
- Geauga 1%
- Lake 5%
- Lorain 11%

Total People Helped by our cases handled 28,585

Total Cases Handled in 2010 11,048
- Cases Handled and Closed 8,288
- Cases Continued into Next Year 2,760

Volunteer Lawyers Program (VLP) Clinics
- Cases Handled at VLP Clinics 1,228
- Total Neighborhood Clinics 66

Personnel 2010
- Staff Attorneys 55
- Other Staff 36
- Pro Bono Attorneys 1,774
- Law Student Volunteers 228
- In-House Volunteers 85

Languages Spoken by Legal Aid Clients
(Other than English)
- Arabic
- Cantonese
- French
- Somali
- Spanish
- Russian
- Vietnamese
Lakewood resident Nahida Farunia finds freedom from an abusive marriage in April 2010. After decades of physical and mental abuse, Ms. Farunia says she "was like a cup that finally spilled over." She came to Legal Aid, where attorney Alexandria Ruden helped her file for divorce. The process took four long years. Ms. Farunia is grateful that Ms. Ruden was there each step of the way: "I still call her to check on her. I feel like [Alexandria and I] are friends more than she’s my lawyer."

In 2010, Legal Aid secured or retained safety for 95% of clients in family law cases.

Legal Aid hosts another successful Citizenship Day on April 17, 2010 – thanks to the efforts of The C. Lyonel Jones Pro Bono Immigration Committee and local members of The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). The clinic provides legal assistance to lawful permanent residents eligible for naturalization. The volunteer attorneys also combined forces with Catholic Charities, organizing specific clinics to assist refugees with the sometimes daunting process of status adjustment.

In 2010, 1,774 pro bono attorneys were active in Legal Aid’s Volunteer Lawyers Program.

A new truck sits in Douglas Walls’ East Cleveland driveway. Mr. Walls, a big rig driver, was stunned when his company terminated his employment – along with a lease-to-own agreement for his own vehicle. Additionally, the company kept $5,000 which Mr. Walls had already paid toward the truck. Legal Aid attorneys Stephanie Jackson and Julie Cortes sued the company for breach of contract and unjust enrichment, and arrived at a settlement: The remaining cost of the truck was slashed in half, and Mr. Walls was given several months to pay. Ms. Jackson says, “We did not simply provide Mr. Walls with a fish, but obtained the tools Mr. Walls needed to fish for a lifetime."

In 2010, for clients with work and income issues, Legal Aid increased monthly income by more than $162,000.

Lorain resident Kristin Seljan’s electricity bill was almost double the usual amount because her landlord was allowing other tenants in the two-family home to run a cord from her residence; she was paying both families’ electricity costs. After Ms. Seljan complained, the landlord turned off her electricity. Ms. Seljan was extremely concerned for her asthmatic toddler, who needed breathing treatments from a machine. She came to Legal Aid for help, and staff attorney Amanda Davis worked to ensure the electricity was restored the next day.

In 2010, Legal Aid prevented 97% of evictions for its housing law clients.

In 2010, Legal Aid secured or retained safety for 95% of clients in family law cases.
Ashtabula County is home to approximately 21,000 low-income residents who are eligible for free legal assistance with civil legal matters affecting basic necessities of life. The county boasts 92 volunteer attorneys who work with Legal Aid to remove legal barriers to shelter, health, safety, income and education.

In 2010, prevention of homelessness is the focus of many pro bono cases. Additionally, Legal Aid staff attorneys protected participation in subsidized housing programs in 95% of cases.

In June 2010, Cody Gwinn walks the stage to accept his Shaker Heights High School diploma. When Cody was in seventh grade, and in the care of his aunt Ava Viera, he began to have trouble at school and was expelled. Ms. Viera wanted to ensure her nephew had a “fair shake” at an education and contacted Legal Aid. Legal Aid education attorneys took the case, ensured an Individual Education Plan was in place, and continued to work with the family until Cody’s graduation. Cody says: “Even though I was young, I had never seen someone show so much compassion. That’s very rare for people to stick with you.”

In 2010, Legal Aid removed barriers to education for 98% of education law clients.

Ashtabula County is home to approximately 21,000 low-income residents who are eligible for free legal assistance with civil legal matters affecting basic necessities of life. The county boasts 92 volunteer attorneys who work with Legal Aid to remove legal barriers to shelter, health, safety, income and education.

In 2010, prevention of homelessness is the focus of many pro bono cases. Additionally, Legal Aid staff attorneys protected participation in subsidized housing programs in 95% of cases.

Legal Aid attorney Jennifer Becker works to launch an initiative to assist low-income veterans. She helps Vietnam War veteran Douglas Weisman navigate the year-long process of reinstating his benefits after they were unjustly suspended. Mr. Weisman also faced a $39,000 overpayment charge that was subsequently dismissed. He says, “I wouldn’t have been able to handle waiting if I didn’t know someone was working for me.”

In 2010, in addition to helping veterans with benefits issues, Legal Aid secured health insurance benefits in 92% of cases through family law and public benefits work.

Legal Aid provides free legal advice and representation in five counties in Northeast Ohio.
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In 2010, Legal Aid increased assets for our clients by more than $25 million (mostly by saving homes from foreclosure).
Legal Aid Donors – 2010

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In 2010, Legal Aid reduced debt for our clients by more than $11 million.

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Jeffrey and Rosemary Margulies
Jeffrey Marks
Richard Maron and Judy Eigenfeld
Craig and Joan Martahus
James Martello
Janet Martin

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Jeffrey and Rosemary Margulies
Jeffrey Marks
Richard Maron and Judy Eigenfeld
Craig and Joan Martahus
James Martello
Janet Martin

In 2010, Legal Aid reduced debt for our clients by more than $11 million.
please email Melanie.Shakarian@LASClev.org.

Every effort was made to reflect all 2010 philanthropic gifts to Legal Aid. If you note an error or omission, please email Melanie.Shakarian@LASClev.org.
**Donors to Special Funds – 2010**

**The Community Advocacy Program (CAP)**

A medical-legal partnership between The MetroHealth System and Legal Aid

In 2007, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation pledged a four-year, $500,000 grant to support Legal Aid’s medical-legal partnership with The MetroHealth System. The grant was awarded through the foundation’s Local Initiative Funding Partners in which local foundations and corporations agree to match the $500,000 gift.

The **2010 local funders include:**

- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Thompson Hine LLP
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- United Black Fund of Greater Cleveland, Inc.

**Leadership Fund for Organizational Development**

In 2010, an endowment gift was made to Legal Aid to create the Allen Madorsky Memorial Fund, which benefits Legal Aid’s Leadership Fund for Organizational Development. The Fund provides specific support for strategic planning and implementation, staff and volunteer training and staff leadership development.

Fund raising continues for this endeavor, especially for staff leadership development activities.

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**Lead Donors:**
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- Allen Madorsky Memorial Fund

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- Margaret W. Wong

**In 2010, Legal Aid eliminated or reduced risk to children in 95% of family law cases.**

**Sgt. Harry Fund Donors**

The Sgt. Harry Fund was established in 2008 with funds from the first annual John and Ginny Elam Pro Bono Award, presented to Legal Aid Board member David Kutik by the Ohio State Bar Association. The $5,000 award has been leveraged with donations from individual donors to support Legal Aid’s Volunteer Lawyers Program, which engages the private bar in Legal Aid’s mission. The Fund is named for Mr. Kutik’s father, Sgt. Harry Kutik.

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In 2010, Legal Aid preserved assets for 86% of clients with consumer law problems.

Our Mission
is to secure justice and resolve fundamental problems for those who are low-income and vulnerable by providing high-quality legal services and working for systemic solutions.
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