



Poetic Justice

Volume 19 Issue 3 Fall 2022

Stories of Philanthropy and Hope from The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland

Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. to keynote Legal Aid's 117th Annual Meeting

The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland's 117th Annual Meeting is an afternoon program and reception on Friday, December 2, 2022 at the Renaissance Hotel in downtown Cleveland. Legal Aid's annual event will highlight hope, extend gratitude, and provide updates on high-impact community partnerships and initiatives. Additionally, Legal Aid leaders will unveil the organization's new strategic plan.



Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

The program will feature keynote remarks by **Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.** He will share reflections on Legal Aid's work to promote fairness, racial equity, and social justice.

Dr. Gates is the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and Director of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research at Harvard University. Emmy and Peabody Award-winning filmmaker, literary scholar, journalist, cultural critic, and institution builder, Professor Gates's most recent books are *Stony the Road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow*, and *The Black Church: This Is Our Story, This Is Our Song*.

The December 2 event will begin promptly with a 2:00 p.m. program (doors open at 1:30 p.m.; for attorneys 1.0 hour CLE credit pending). The program is followed by a 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. reception including dinner foods and drinks.

Dr. Gates will join a list of distinguished Legal Aid keynote speakers, including U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor, U.S. Senators Rob Portman and Sherrod Brown, U.S. Representative John Lewis, and most recently, U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland, who have highlighted the importance of civil legal aid at past events.

Legal Aid's Annual Meeting is a chance for philanthropists, community members, nonprofit organizations, and business leaders to gather and reflect on Legal Aid's accomplishments over the past year, as well as learn about bold new initiatives and plans for the year ahead.

Legal Aid's dedicated staff, volunteers, and strong regional partnerships are important drivers of impact. Awards will be presented to outstanding employees, volunteers, and community organizations who demonstrate profound support for Legal Aid's mission.

Sponsorships for Legal Aid's 117th Annual Meeting are still available, and individual \$150 tickets are on sale now. All proceeds from ticket sales will support Legal Aid's work to extend justice across Northeast Ohio.

Visit laslev.org/2022Event for more event details and to purchase Annual Meeting tickets.

#TogetherWeCan
#ExtendJustice



...the arc of the
moral universe is long, but
it bends toward justice.

— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Exciting Legal Aid Updates!



Legal Aid Announces Two New Directors

Legal Aid is excited to announce the creation and hiring of two new leadership roles. We are pleased to welcome **Tenille Kaus** and **Roz Quarto** to the Legal Aid leadership team.



Tenille Kaus, Esq.

As the **Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Advancement**, Tenille will advance Legal Aid's efforts to be an inclusive, welcoming, anti-racist organization and to support the professional advancement of all staff. She will implement strategies to embed diversity, equity, and inclusion principles into every aspect of Legal Aid's operations.



Roz Quarto, Esq.

As the **Director of Strategic Initiatives**, Roz will provide high level planning, project management, and analytical support for key strategic initiatives currently underway and the stewardship of growth opportunities for new programs to serve client needs.

Staff Awards

During Legal Aid's 117th Annual Meeting on December 2, 2022, staff awards will be presented to:



Alexandria Ruden, Esq.

Alexandria Ruden, Esq., Supervising Attorney in Legal Aid's Family Law Group will receive the **2022 C. Lyonel Jones Lifetime Achievement Award**. Named in honor of C. Lyonel Jones (1932 – 2006), who worked his entire legal career at Legal Aid, this award is presented to a staff member in recognition of a career dedicated to Legal Aid and its clients. With Legal Aid since the 1980's, Alexandria has dedicated her career to protecting survivors of domestic violence, both through legal representation and policy advocacy.

Corrylee Drozda, Esq., **Katherine Hollingsworth, Esq.**, **Haley Martinelli, Esq.**, and **Deborah Petit-Frere** will be honored with the **Claude E. Clarke Award** for outstanding service through professional performance.

Jennifer Kinsley Smith, Esq., senior attorney who leads Legal Aid's Medical-Legal Partnership with St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, will be presented with the **2022 Leadership Award**.

Read more about their outstanding contributions on our website: lasclv.org/2022StaffAwards.

Volunteer Awards

Legal Aid's Volunteer Lawyers Program is proud to announce the following volunteer award recipients:



The Honorable
Mary Jane Trapp

The Honorable Mary Jane Trapp will be recognized with the **2022 Legacy of Justice Award**.

Pro bono volunteers **Mark Dobbins, Esq.**, **Michael Durnwald, Esq.**, **Allison Kreiner, MD**, and **Irene Meyerhoefer** will be presented with **Access to Justice Awards**.

The **2022 Community Impact Award** will be presented to family law clinic volunteers: **Leslie Gentile, Esq.**, **Lydia Gross, Esq.**, and **Jennifer Himmelein, Esq.**

Read more about their dedication at lasclv.org/2022VolunteerAwards.

Student loan cancellation advocacy work

In August, President Biden and the Department of Education announced a new program to cancel federal student debt for many borrowers. Legal Aid's Economic Justice group has been leading advocacy work around this issue, and has earned recognition as a leader in borrower education.



Josh Rovenger, Esq.

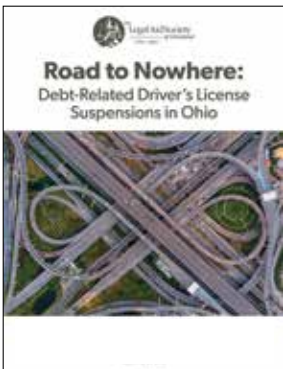


Eric Zell, Esq.

Josh Rovenger, Senior Attorney and **Eric Zell**, Supervising Attorney presented a continuing legal education seminar in partnership with the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association focused on recent developments in student loan law.

Legal Aid also organized an online training for service providers and a Facebook Live information session to provide an overview of the new federal student loan cancellation program, answer frequently asked questions, and explain how Legal Aid can assist borrowers. For more information about the student loan cancellation program, visit Legal Aid's FAQ page: laslev.org/StudentLoanFAQ, or search key word "student loan" on Legal Aid's website.

Road to Nowhere report



More than half of U.S. states – Ohio included – suspend, revoke, or refuse to renew driver's licenses for unpaid fines and fees. In Ohio, approximately 60% of all driver's license suspensions are not based on dangerous driving, but rather the result of a person's failure to pay fines and fees. These debt-related suspensions often trap drivers with limited resources in a vicious cycle. Led by **Anne Sweeney**, Managing Attorney, the Legal Aid team investigated this cycle and published the results of this research in the new report, **Road to Nowhere: Debt-Related Driver's License Suspensions in Ohio**.

Learn more and view the full report on Legal Aid's website: laslev.org/RoadToNowhereReport.

Sealing criminal records

Many Ohioans struggle to find a job or housing after being convicted of a crime, and approximately 1 in 3 American adults have some type of criminal record. Legal Aid offers education and assistance to help individuals navigate the criminal record sealing process.

In September, **Lauren Gilbride**, Managing Attorney and **Josh Rovenger**, Senior Attorney provided a presentation at the Elyria Public Library to educate the community about Ohio's record sealing laws, including who is eligible and how the process works. And in October, Legal Aid facilitated a record sealing clinic at the library to walk individuals through the record sealing application process.

Need help? **888.817.3777** to schedule an Expungement Clinic appointment.

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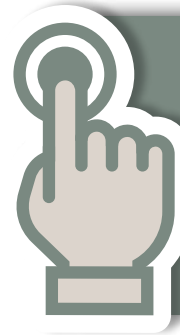
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Legal Aid receives national Pro Bono Innovation Fund grant

This summer, the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) announced fifteen recipients of national **Pro Bono Innovation Fund** grants – targeted funding aimed at supporting the growth of *pro bono* legal services for low-income Americans.

As a recipient, Legal Aid will address the housing safety needs of tenants with low-incomes through the **Lawyers Advocating for Safe Housing** (LASH) project. In addition to eviction defense, this project will identify ways for volunteers to assist with issues that relate to unsafe living situations such as poor housing conditions, lockouts, and utility shutoffs.



Want to Advocate for Safe Housing? Pro Bono Help Needed!

Volunteers who are interested in using the power of the law to support shelter and stability for low-income tenants are welcome to join in this work.

Contact attorney Bobbi Saltzman at probono@lasclev.org to learn more!

Legal Aid in the Community



1. Lake County residents with their Legal Aid attorneys on steps of the Lake County Courthouse. Read more: www.lasclev.org/09072022-3/ 2. Zachary Hofstetter, Esq. (Squire Patton Boggs), Stephanie Adams, Esq. (Sherwin Williams), and law student Yuzi Wang (CWRU) counsel a client. 3. St. Edward High School Legal Eagles volunteer at a Legal Aid clinic 4. Nicole Riggins, Esq. and Tanmay Shah, Esq. (Legal Aid) share information about Legal Aid at the Cleveland Housing Court event 5. The Legal Aid team at the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association Halloween Run for Justice 6. Bruce Heary, Esq. (Ogletree Deakins) at a Legal Aid clinic 7. Legal Aid attorneys Mike Russell, Josh Rovenger, and Corrylee Drozda (left and far right) with Legal Aid paralegal Tammy Adams (middle) at El Centro Clinic in Lorain County. 8. (left - right) Volunteers Joe Rodgers, Esq. (Eaton), Sonali Wilson, Esq. (Cleveland State), Daniel McIntyre, Esq. (Brindza McIntyre & Seed), and Peter Kirner, Esq. (Kimer & Boldt), with Legal Aid attorneys Haley Martinelli and Lily Mann 9. Morgan Foster (Pro Bono Coordinator at Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court) with Kimberly Barnett-Mills, Esq. (Legal Aid) and Judge Joan Synenberg (Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court)

WAYS TO GIVE

Your Individual Support = Impact



Quick Facts: Other Ways to Give



Dianne Foley, Esq.

Direct IRA distributions to Legal Aid:

Attorney and Legal Aid supporter Diane Foley recently reflected on the impact of giving through an IRA distribution:

"I give to Legal Aid because I deeply appreciate what it does for people who really need an attorney, who need help with matters that mean more than anything; a roof overhead, stability during a family crisis, or accessing critical benefits. Legal Aid's compassion for the community is unmatched."

"Donating through a **Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from an IRA account** is simple. I work with my financial advisor – the administrator of my IRA accounts – to make sure the designated organizations receive my gifts, and the advisor does the rest. It's as simple as listing the nonprofits I want to support, along with the amount of each gift. My advisor then issues checks from my IRA distributions directly to the nonprofits in accordance with IRS regulations."

Don't forget about your Donor Advised Fund:

Consult with the administrator of your DAF to direct funds to Legal Aid. The check will go directly to Legal Aid from the third-party administrator – which means no hassle for you!

The gift that keeps on giving – endowed funds:

Legal Aid has several endowed funds that create long-term sustainability for the organization. Reach out to Legal Aid to learn more!

Plan your legacy today:

Create a better tomorrow by including Legal Aid in your estate plan through a bequest and become a member of *The 1905 Society*. Consult with your attorney or financial professional about this option today, and contact Legal Aid to let us know your plans.

Questions? Want to learn more? Call Camille at 216.861.5590

Legal Aid leverages gifts to maximize community impact. It is easy to make a gift – pick what works for you:



Online at
[ExtendJustice.org](https://www.extendjustice.org)



Via phone by calling
216.861.5590



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Cleveland, OH 44113

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