

NAPA VALLEY LEGAL AID NEWS

HELPING UNDERSERVED PEOPLE THROUGHOUT NAPA COUNTY

LEGAL AID IS BACK! A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are extremely pleased to be releasing Legal Aid of Napa Valley's first newsletter, marking Legal Aid's reemergence as a community-based legal aid agency.

Napa County has a long and proud tradition of legal service to its low-income, senior and other vulnerable residents. Since its founding nearly 40 years ago, Napa County Legal Assistance Agency (as it was formerly known) has been dedicated to advancing social justice and assuring equal protection of the law.

Looking Back

Originally financed almost entirely by the federal Legal Services Corporation, Napa County Legal Assistance Agency merged with Legal Aid of Marin when federal funding was substantially reduced in the mid 1990s. For nearly a decade thereafter, legal aid services were delivered in Napa County by Legal Aid of the North Bay, headquartered in San Rafael and staffed by a satellite office in the city of Napa. Subsequent funding cutbacks and grant restrictions eventually forced Marin and Napa to separate their legal aid functions. In 2003, legal aid operations in Napa County were drastically curtailed. Only the Senior Legal Services Program remained open, thanks to a grant by the Area Agency on Aging of Napa and Solano.

In 2004, a small group of lawyers led by Michael Holman took up the challenge of reviving legal aid services in Napa County. With the help of many members of the Napa County community, Legal Aid has now reopened its doors, and once again provides free, locally based legal assistance to those in need.

Legal Aid Today

In this exciting, transitional year, Legal Aid has already accomplished a great deal. After an extensive search, the Board hired Karen Stevenson to serve as Legal Aid's new executive director. Karen brings to Legal Aid 25 years of experience as a lawyer and corporate executive, and an impressive record of service in the not-for-profit sector. A resident of Calistoga, Karen is a member of the Board of Directors of the East Bay Community Foundation. She previously chaired the Breast Cancer Fund

and headed development efforts for Equal Rights Advocates.

Under Karen's leadership and with the active support of the Board, Legal Aid is off to a great start in 2005:

We've opened our Baseline Legal Services Program, providing free legal services to Napa County's neediest residents, including the homeless and people at risk of homelessness, the disabled, veterans and victims of domestic violence.

Thanks to a generous grant from Auction Napa Valley, we've launched our Immigrant Legal Services Program, providing educational outreach and free legal counseling to the many immigrants living and working in Napa County.

Through our Senior Legal Services Program, we're providing comprehensive legal services to Napa County residents who are 60 years of age or older.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- About Legal Aid's Programs.....Page 2
- Meet Legal Aid's Team.....Page 3
- Thank You To Our Supporters.....Page 4
- How To Reach Legal Aid.....Page 4

We're proud of what the revitalized Legal Aid of Napa Valley has accomplished so far this year. And we're grateful for the financial contributions and community support we've received, especially from attorneys who gave their time on a pro bono basis. (We will be featuring them in our next issue.)

We hope we can count on you in the months and years to come as Legal Aid strives to fulfill its vision of access to justice and equal protection under the law for all Napa County residents.

Sincerely,



Clayton W. Kent
Chairman, Board of Directors, June 2005

THOUGHTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It's my privilege to be leading Legal Aid of Napa Valley at this exciting time in its development. Legal aid services in Napa County are once again being managed and delivered locally. Legal Aid has a renewed sense of mission, a new name and a new look. Even our logo is in bloom!

This spring, we dropped the agency's cumbersome old name, officially adopting "Legal Aid of Napa Valley" instead. People living in American Canyon or unincorporated areas of Napa County technically located outside the valley can be assured, however, that Legal Aid is here to serve them, too. In fact, reaching out to underserved clients and people living in remote areas is one of Legal Aid's top priorities. As part of our new service model, we're holding intake clinics and sponsoring other legal programs out in the community, at places where low-income people, seniors, immigrants and other vulnerable individuals live, work or receive health and social services.

We're also pleased to unveil our new logo. Designed by Annette Krammer of Forty-two Pacific, the logo features a courthouse column and our state flower, the California poppy. The column represents the strength and stability of our legal system. The poppy represents the beauty and the vibrancy of the diverse people of Napa County. Together they depict Legal Aid's vision of access to justice and equal protection under the law for all Napa County residents.

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DID YOU KNOW???

- 20% of Napa County residents are poor
- 31% of Napa County children live in poor families
- 21% of Napa County residents are age 60 and older
- 24% of Napa County residents are of Latino origin
- The average monthly rent of a two-bedroom apartment in Napa is \$990
- 30% of Napa County residents spend at least 35% of their total income on rent
- Only 9% of Legal Aid of Napa Valley's funding comes from the federal government

MEET LEGAL AID'S TEAM: PROFILES OF OUR BOARD AND STAFF

Legal Aid's seven-member Board of Directors is composed of attorneys who live or work in Napa County, each of whom has a strong record of community service:

Clayton W. Kent, Chairman, is an attorney with Brayton Purcell and has practiced law since 1986. From 1999 through 2004, Clay led advice clinics for the Legal Aid of the North Bay, winning the Wiley W. Manuel Award for outstanding pro bono service each year. He is a director of Legal Aid of Marin, and is a member of the Consumer Attorneys of California and the Trial Lawyers for Public Justice.

Michael J. Holman, President, is a partner in Napa law firm Dickenson, Peatman & Fogarty. During 2004, Michael chaired Legal Aid's Steering Committee, coordinating efforts to maintain an active legal service effort in Napa. A volunteer pro-bono attorney since 2000, Michael received the 2003 Wiley W. Manuel Award, given by Legal Aid of the North Bay for outstanding pro bono service.

Naomi Dreskin-Anderson, Vice-President, is a sole practitioner whose practice emphasizes issues of the elderly and their families. Naomi currently serves as Chairman of the Napa County Commission on Aging. Naomi has served as Chairman of the Advisory Council for Napa's Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. Prior to becoming a lawyer, Naomi was executive director of the California Long Term Care Ombudsman Association.

Elizabeth A. Mackenzie, Secretary and Treasurer, practices law with Coombs & Dunlap, LLP, specializing in business and real estate law and related litigation. Elizabeth is a member of the

Board of Directors of Fair Housing Napa Valley and a past President of the Napa County Women Lawyers Association.

Susan Schwegman is a sole practitioner in Napa, specializing in employment, general business law and civil litigation. Susan has provided pro bono services to the Homeless Advocacy Project in San Francisco, the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, the First

Appellate Project and the American Bar Association. From March through June 2005, Susan served as Supervising Attorney of Legal Aid's Baseline Legal Services Program.

Karin D. Troedsson is a Deputy County Counsel in the Sonoma County Counsel's Office. Formerly a lawyer with Coombs & Dunlap in Napa, Karin served as the Assistant City Attorney for the City of St. Helena and the Assistant Town Attorney for the Town of Yountville. Karin is a graduate of Leadership Napa Valley.

Teresa A. Cunningham is a partner with Gaw, Van Male, Smith, Myers & Miroglio, specializing in labor and employment counseling and civil litigation. An experienced trial lawyer, Teresa has practiced law since 1988. She is a member of the Napa County Bar Association, The Richard Sanger Inns of Court, and the Napa County Women Lawyers Association.

Legal Aid's operating team currently consists of an executive director, three part-time attorneys, a part-time legal advocate and a legal support intern:

Karen Stevenson joined Legal Aid of Napa Valley as Executive Director this spring. She is also a director of the East Bay Community Foundation, and serves on its governance and finance committees. During her career as a corporate lawyer, Karen was Vice President and General Counsel of Knight Ridder, Vice President-Law and Secretary of Transamerica Corporation, and a partner in the San Francisco-based Howard Rice law firm. A graduate of UC Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law, Karen received the San Francisco Bar Association's Award of Merit for pro bono advocacy in women's health.

Diana Dorame recently joined Legal Aid as Supervising Attorney, and is the principal staff attorney for the Baseline Legal Services Program. Diana is also senior attorney with the Napa County Department of Child Support where for 12 years she has handled a variety of child support, establishment, modification and enforcement cases. Fluent in Spanish, Diana has been Chair of the Executive Committee of the Family Law Section of the State Bar of California, and is currently an advisor to that committee. A graduate of UC Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law, Diana was previously a trustee of the Los Angeles Mexican Bar Association and an extern with MALDEF.

Claude Piller recently joined Legal Aid as Immigration Counsel, and supervises the Immigrant Legal Services Program. Fluent in Spanish, Claude is a member of the Washington State Bar and is admitted to practice immigration law before the Board of Immigration Appeals and other federal agencies. A graduate of University of San Francisco School of Law, Claude provides advice on all aspects of immigration law. Prior to becoming a lawyer, Claude worked as a case manager for the developmentally disabled.

Kristi Lesnewich has been Staff Attorney for Legal Aid's Senior Legal Services Program since 2003, and also practices with Legal Assistance for Seniors in Oakland. A graduate of University of San Francisco School of Law, Kristi specializes in all aspects of law affecting seniors. She previously served as a volunteer attorney and intake volunteer for Legal Aid of the North Bay, and received the 2003 Wiley W. Manuel Award, given by Legal Aid of the North Bay for outstanding pro bono service.

Fred Fuentes is a legal advocate in the Baseline Legal Services Program. Fred received his paralegal training at Napa Valley College. He has extensive experience in law enforcement, having served as a correctional peace officer and a police officer for more than 20 years before becoming a legal assistant. Fluent in Spanish, Fred is a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps.

Oswaldo Gómez-Martínez is Legal Aid's Legal Support Intern this summer. A native of Mexico and graduate of Napa High School, Oswaldo graduated from UC Berkeley with a double major in political economy and comparative literature. He was a public policy and international affairs fellow at the University of Michigan and studied abroad at the American University of Paris and the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Oswaldo will pursue a master's degree in international affairs at Columbia University this fall.

The latest information on Legal Aid of Napa Valley is at our website, where you can find client eligibility requirements, office hours, times and locations of intake clinics and immigration law forums, links to news articles, and more.

www.legalaidnapa.org

ABOUT LEGAL AID'S PROGRAMS

New Legal Services Program Reaches Out To Napa's Immigrants

Legal Aid launched its Immigrant Legal Services Program in May 2005, thanks to a generous grant from Auction Napa Valley. Through this program, Legal Aid provides consultation, direct advice and full representation on a wide range of immigration law issues, including:

- Requirements for U.S. citizenship
- Family visa petitions
- Legal permanent residence (green cards)
- Violence Against Women Act protections
- V, T and U Visas
- Asylum

Under this program, immigrants receive free or low-cost intake, advice and representation on immigration law matters in Napa County by appointment two days a week.

The Immigrant Legal Services Program also provides legal advice to immigrants on housing, domestic violence, employment discrimination, civil rights and consumer problems. Immigrants with non-immigration law issues can be served through Legal Aid's Baseline and Senior Legal Services programs as appropriate. All three programs provide Spanish-speaking advocates and translators.

An important part of the Immigrant Legal Services Program is community education through free immigration law forums. At these events, immigrants receive free one-on-one legal consultations with immigration law experts at various locations throughout the county.

Legal Aid held its first immigration law forum on May 1 at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Napa. More than 200 people came to hear noted

immigration law expert Mark Silverman of the Immigrant Legal Resource Center in San Francisco speak on matters of great importance to the immigrant community. In addition to information about immigration law requirements, immigrants learned how to protect themselves against scams and other fraudulent activities

Legal Aid's Immigration Law Forum "meant a great deal to people who often live in fear, as you helped allay not only fear but ignorance as well."

—Father Gordon Kahlil, St. John's Catholic Church

directed at the immigrant population. Eleven immigration lawyers from around the Bay Area volunteered their time, giving free private legal consultations to approximately 70 people on such topics as family visas, naturalization, legal permanent residency for victims of domestic violence, and asylum.

Eighty people attended Legal Aid's second immigration law forum on June 5 at the St. Helena Catholic School gym, and 40 families received private consultations with immigration lawyers. A third forum will be held in Calistoga on July 10, and others are planned for later in the year in other areas of the county.

Baseline Legal Services Program Serves Napa's Neediest

Legal Aid opened its Baseline Legal Services Program this spring, providing free legal services to low-income people, especially those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, veterans, the disabled and victims of domestic violence.

The Baseline Legal Services Program helps low-income individuals and families with a variety of legal issues, including:

- Access to public benefits such as Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, food

stamps, Medi-Cal and MediCare, and veterans benefits

- Housing problems such as discrimination in renting, eviction proceedings, security deposits, and landlord's failure to make repairs
- Advising victims of domestic violence about dissolution proceedings, separation, child support, child custody and visitation; assisting them as required in obtaining restraining orders to protect themselves, their children and other family or household members who may be in physical danger from a spouse or partner
- Employment problems such as workplace discrimination, wage claims and unemployment benefits
- Disability and civil rights issues

The Baseline staff provides direct legal services to individuals and families, ranging from limited consultations to full representation. In complex cases or as otherwise necessary, clients are referred to outside counsel who represent them on a pro bono basis.

Baseline legal advice clinics are held regularly at locations convenient to individuals and families in need, such as homeless shelters and day centers, health clinics and safe locations for victims of domestic violence. People seeking legal advice may walk into the clinics to consult with a legal advocate without an appointment.

As a member of Napa County's Continuum of Care and the Napa Valley Non-Profit Coalition, Legal Aid works collaboratively, referring Baseline clients who need non-legal services to other local social service providers.

The Baseline Legal Services Program is made possible in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. It is also supported by individual donations, including a cy pres distribution from Alexander Hawes & Audet, LLC.

Senior Legal Services Program Helps Napa's Elders

Legal Aid of Napa Valley's Senior Legal Services Program provides free legal services to residents of Napa County who are 60 years of age or older. Though there are no income limits, we give priority to older individuals whose legal problems involve public benefits, health, nursing homes, loss of shelter, family violence and civil rights.

Legal Aid advises seniors and their caregivers principally in the following areas:

- Housing and landlord/tenant advocacy
- Elder abuse and neglect
- Nursing home care
- Debt and consumer matters
- Access to public benefits
- Health care benefits and support services
- Small estate planning, advance health care directives and durable powers of attorney
- Simple dissolutions of marriage and other family law matters

Important components of the Senior Legal Services Program are free

community education programs and legal workshops that are held at locations convenient to seniors. The community education programs address financial fraud, elder abuse and other subjects of greatest concern to older people and their families living in Napa County.

This spring, the Senior Legal Services Program presented a series of free workshops for seniors on the importance of advance health care directives. Following a lecture by staff attorney Kristi Lesnewich, interested seniors received the opportunity to complete a directive. These clinics were given at senior residential facilities and the Napa Senior Center in Napa, the Veteran's Home in Yountville and Creative Living in Calistoga. Other workshops are planned for American Canyon and rural areas of the county this summer.

To provide comprehensive and effective services to seniors, Legal Aid works collaboratively with the Long-Term Care Ombudsman of Napa County, the Volunteer Center, Adult Protective Services and other agencies serving seniors.

The Senior Legal Services Program is supported in part by a grant from the Area Agency on Aging Serving Napa and Solano.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Legal Aid is grateful to the many people, firms and organizations whose contributions enable Legal Aid to carry out its mission. Major support received through June 15, 2005 is recognized below.

\$50,000 and above:

Alexander Hawes & Audet, LLC (cy pres)
Auction Napa Valley

\$20,000 and above:

Area Agency on Aging Serving Napa and Solano

\$10,000 and above:

Brayton Purcell
Dickenson Peatman & Fogarty
The Peter A. and Vernice Gasser Foundation
U. S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development

\$5,000 and above:

Coombs & Dunlap, LLP
Gaw Van Male Smith Myers & Miroglio
State Bar of California (IOLTA and Equal Access)

\$1,000 and above:

Teresa A. Cunningham and Robert M. Gardner
Lewis & Blevans LLP
Napa County Women Lawyers Association
Karen Stevenson and Bill McClave
Upjohn Fund of San Francisco
Zeller, Hoff & Zeller, Inc.

\$500 and above:

Bruce L. Ahnfeldt
Michael J. Holman and Yoli Holman
Clayton W. Kent and Robin Kent
Susan Schwegman and David Beckstoffer

\$250 and above:

David J. Linden
Elizabeth A. Mackenzie

\$100 and above:

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Kristin N. Casey
Naomi Dreskin-Anderson
Leroy C. Manners
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Toller & Novak
Karin Troedsson and Michael Corrigan
Visions of the Valley
Kathleen Winter

In-Kind Donations

Kevin Alfaro, G & J Seiberlich & Co.
Terry Anderson
Robin Gladstone
Allison Kinnier
Annette Krammer
Rob Kusel
Napa County Legal Secretaries Association
Debbi Quick

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I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve the people of Napa County, a place my husband and I have come to love since moving to Calistoga more than five years ago. In my first few months as Legal Aid's executive director, I've been impressed by the outpouring of support from so many individuals and organizations who share Legal Aid's dedication to enhancing the economic security and civic integration of all underserved members of our community.

It's been said that a society should be judged by how it treats its least fortunate members. By that standard, Napa County is an extraordinary community. All of us at Legal Aid look forward to working with you to improve the quality of life for all residents of Napa County, making it an even better place for everyone to live and thrive.



Karen Stevenson, Executive Director

HOW TO REACH LEGAL AID OF NAPA VALLEY

Legal Aid has two offices: one for our Baseline and Immigrant Legal Services Programs and Administration, and another for our Senior Legal Services Program. Consultations and advice are by appointment only. Please call to schedule an appointment or speak with a legal advocate.

To learn more about Legal Aid of Napa Valley, including the schedule and location of our legal intake clinics, immigration law forums and other events, visit our website:
www.legallaidnapa.org.

BASELINE AND IMMIGRANT LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAMS and ADMINISTRATION:

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(707) 259-0579**

SENIOR LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM:

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