

Public Service Project Bulletin

a division of Washington University School of Law



THE PUBLIC SERVICE PROJECT WAS ESTABLISHED TO:

Provide desperately needed services
to the St. Louis community

Prepare students to be competent,
ethical lawyers working toward
a more just society by instilling
in them a sense of professional
responsibility that includes a com-
mittent to public service

Help students learn about represent-
ing the underserved and to inquire
into the effectiveness of the law and
legal institutions

Provide students with valuable
practical experience and the op-
portunity to interact with members
of the St. Louis community

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Making a Difference with The Mel Brown Family LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Currently 33 graduates participate in the Washington University School of Law Mel Brown Family Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP). They are employed with a wide variety of organizations all over the country including, the Urban Justice Center in New York City, Interfaith Legal Services for Immigrants in St. Louis, and the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office in Ohio. The Public Service Project Bulletin spotlights a participant in each issue.

Michaela Ashe Guthrie, JD '02, Managing Attorney at Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center in El Paso, Texas, was interested in immigration law before coming to law school. However, her interest continued after taking Professor Stephen Legomsky's course in Immigration Law. After taking the Texas Bar Exam, she spent a week volunteering with ProBar in Harlingen, TX, where she handled asylum cases and solidified her career path in immigration law. "I have always been interested in public interest law, and I have always felt it is important for those with limited resources to have access to the law," she explains. "This is especially important in immigration law where there is no absolute right to counsel. Unlike criminal law where a public defender will represent those with limited resources, immigrants in removal proceedings need to provide their own attorney, regardless of their income level."

Las Americas was established in 1987 as a response to the numerous refugees from Central America. It has three main program areas: 1) the Asylum Project, 2) Justice for Women and Children, and 3) the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) component. Micaela directly represents indigent individuals who have fled their home countries due to fear of persecution. She has represented clients from all over the world including Iran, China, Liberia, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Burma, Kazakhstan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Belize and Nigeria. Las Americas also represents individuals who are eligible for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and who qualify for relief pursuant to the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA). "I also oversee the legal representation of detained unaccompanied minors who are in Immigration Court proceedings," she adds. "These children may qualify for relief through the asylum process and many others qualify for a Special Immigrant Juvenile visa, which is a visa available to children who have been abused, abandoned or neglected in their home country." The VAWA project assists victims

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BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS & WULAW

The 2005-06 academic year marks the 4th year of the Wash. U. Law Big Brothers Big Sisters site-based program. Through this partnership between Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri and Washington University School of Law, law students, "Bigs" are matched with students from Langston Middle School, "Littles" in the St. Louis Public School District twice a month. Littles and Bigs meet for 90 minutes at the law school and participate in activities like homework assistance, scavenger hunts, sports and games. "WuLaw makes the BBBS program so easy to participate in. I love seeing my little sister at school every two weeks - it takes all the stress out of trying to plan around my law student schedule. I also love how the program coordinators plan activities for us throughout the semester- we've done everything from playing kickball to building a gingerbread house. We have so much fun together!" remarked Becca Schendel, JD '07.

The program is designed to provide law students with hands-on leadership experience by giving them the opportunity to mentor a child and expose them to new ideas. Site-based programs differ from the traditional community-based matching relationship in that they require less of a time commitment (3-6 hours per month versus 6-10), all of the activities are planned at the same site, and the volunteers and the children come from the same source. "The kids

really look forward to their meetings," comments Eve Fitzgerald, project manager of site-based program with Big Brothers Big Sisters. "Usually after school, they go home. This gives them a chance to explore new things and form a friendship with someone they wouldn't normally interact with."

A study conducted by Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) in 1995, determined that participating in a Big Brothers Big Sisters program positively impacts Littles by decreasing the likelihood of drug use, alcohol, and truancy, and by increasing confidence in their school performance and their abilities to get along with their families. Research on site-based programs conducted by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri and based on reports from parents, teacher and volunteers showed that the programs improved children's self-confidence, sense of the future, academic performance and ability to show trust. Ninety-eight percent of the Littles stated that the program made them happy and ninety-five percent said they had a fun experience with their Bigs. "One of the best parts of my job is seeing how happy the kids are when they walk into the room. The immediately go right to their Bigs with huge smiles on their faces," says Fitzgerald.

Additionally, the Bigs also benefit from the program. "My Little Brother

is a bundle of energy and is always entertaining. It's a great break from the monotony of law school studies and the intellectual discourse that make law school exciting but draining," explains Joe Shumow, JD '07. "My Little reminds me that there is life outside of Anheuser-Busch Hall" he adds. Yinka Faleti, JD '07, comments, "I've really enjoyed being a Big Brother! It's been a neat opportunity to build a friendship with a young man named Kevin, and it's been a lot of fun. I recommend the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program to anyone who wants to make a difference in the life of a child. It's a win-win!"

Of course, the Littles do not always benefit from their Big Brother's or Sister's advice. Bob Koplar, JD/MBA '06, described an afternoon with his Little, "I played Monopoly with my Little. Wanting to teach him a little about finance, I told him I would be his banker and gave him advice throughout the game. I convinced him to take some calculated risks against his better judgment. We went bankrupt."

Over the last three years, more than 100 students have participated in the Wash U Law Site-Based Program. Several students have converted to "Site-Based Plus" matches which enables them to spend time with their Littles outside of the scheduled meeting times at the law school. "I've had so much fun in the WuLaw BBBS program that I went "site-based plus" with my little sister this summer. Now instead of only seeing Briana every other week at school, we get to hang out together outside of the program too," comments Schendel. Currently, 20 students are going through the matching process so that they can participate in the program this year.

For more information, contact Elizabeth Patton, assistant director of student services, at eapatton@wulaw.wustl.edu or (314) 935-6457. For more information about Big Brothers Big Sisters, visit www.bbbsemo.org.



Becca Schendel, JD '07, and her little sister, enjoy an afternoon together through the Wash U Law Big Brothers Big Sisters Site-Based Program.

Student Organization Spotlight

Family Law Society

The Family Law Society (FLS) is dedicated to the advancement of the field of family law by equipping interested law students with resources, networking opportunities with family law practitioners, and knowledge about the issues that affect the practice of family law. Most important, however, is the commitment FLS has to the community. "FLS recognizes that the family is the heart of the community, and our work in the St. Louis area is geared toward women and children," explains Tina Ikpa, 2005-06 FLS President. "Every year, as part of our commitment to serving families in the community, we conduct a canned food drive and a 'Giving Tree' drive. The generosity of our fellow law students makes these outreach programs a success every year." The Giving Tree program gives gifts to needy children in the St. Louis area.

Last year FLS began an ongoing outreach project with Lydia's House, which provides transitional housing and support for survivors of domestic violence and their children. "Through the nature of their work, family law attorneys encounter the circumstances of domestic violence frequently. FLS wanted to provide opportunity to serve the domestic violence community and raise awareness among Washington University law students,"

remarks Yeena Yoon, 2004-05 FLS Public Service Chair. FLS and Lydia's House set up a number of mandated domestic violence trainings on campus for interested students to familiarize them with the effects of violence on children. Students were originally asked to provide tutoring services; however, due to a delay in the completion of a new housing facility, students instead provided child-care for Lydia's House's after-school programming. "Participants found the experience of sharing their time and love with children who so urgently need it to be extremely rewarding," comments Ikpa. "The children were infectious and the volunteers bonded with them quickly." FLS hopes to make the outreach program a permanent facet of the organization as opportunities to serve continue to arise. During the summer, law school students were given the chance to tutor mothers preparing for their GREs and nursing licenses. "FLS looks forward to its continued collaboration with Lydia's House this year," Yoon remarks.

In addition to fundraising for summer public interest stipends, the Family Law Society hosts speakers who address the field of family law in general as well as particular issues currently facing family law practitioners.

"Family Law Society's leadership is very enthusiastic and looking forward to building upon the already thriving foundation laid by the previous leadership," says Ikpa. Kate Segal serves as Vice-President, Misty Coombs as Community Service Chair, Sarah Chung as Treasurer and Jason Koslofsky as Social Chair.

During 2005-06 year, FLS hopes to launch a mentoring program with the Family Law Division of the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis. Ikpa adds, "Having a mentor is important to beginning a career in law, and our desire is to foster relationships that will be valuable to aspiring practitioners." Already this year, the Family Law Society coordinated a successful canned food drive for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. When the drive ended, Operation Food Search reported that Washington University School of Law collected 1627 pounds of food contributing to over 65% of the total collected by Washington University as a whole.

For more information about the Family Law Society, contact Tina Ikpa at tswashington@wulaw.wustl.edu.

Micaela Ashe Guthrie, JD '02, outside Las Americas, where she is the Managing Attorney. For more information about Las Americas, visit www.las-americas.org.



For more information about the Mel Brown Family Loan Repayment Assistance Program, visit law.wustl.edu/LRAP or email Elizabeth Patton at epatton@wustl.edu.

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of domestic violence obtain legal status in the United States and to eventually self-petition for status as a lawful permanent resident. They are also engaged in advocacy efforts to promote more humane treatment of immigrants in the United States.

"The Loan Repayment Assistance Program has allowed me to take a position in public service. Without it, repaying loans would have been impossible in this field," she remarks. Micaela describes that the best part of her job is the client interaction. She is often humbled listening to her clients share their stories and discovering how much they have experienced and suffered in their home countries. Unfortunately, Las Americas is not able to assist every individual who fears returning to his or her home country, and "a frustrating part of this position is that the laws surrounding asylum are becoming more strict and may make winning cases even more difficult," she adds.

She advises law students who are interested in working in the immigration field to brush up on their foreign language skills. "The summer in between my second and third year of law school I spent interning in Nicaragua. While this is not a traditional way to spend a summer, it helped me develop my Spanish language skills. This really helped me in obtaining my present job since such a large number of our clients speak only Spanish," Micaela remarks. "It is also important to pay attention to current events. So much of asylum law involves detailing country conditions that reinforce and corroborate your client's story." However, her number one recommendation is to get experience in the field doing volunteer work that allows law students to handle asylum cases. "This type of experience is invaluable."

Micaela and her husband, Matthew, live in El Paso with their 10 month old daughter, Emma Pilar. Eventually Micaela would like to get involved in a law school legal clinic providing students with the opportunity to learn asylum law through direct representation.

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During the Spring 2005 semester, members of the law school community contributed to numerous organizations in the St. Louis area, including:

- American Diabetes Association
- American Cancer Society
- American Red Cross
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri
- Boy Scouts of America
- Brittany Woods Middle School
- Citizens for Modern Transit
- DC Bar Association
- Epworth Children & Family Services
- Fox Theatre
- Humane Society
- Interfaith Legal Services for Immigrants
- International Institute of Metro St. Louis
- Jewish Center for the Aged
- Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation
- La Clinica
- Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation
- Los Cambios
- Lydia's House
- Mathews-Dickey Boys' & Girls' Club
- Operation Brightside
- Progressive Youth Connection
- Ready Readers
- Rockwood Valley Middle School
- Ronald McDonald House
- Special Olympics Missouri
- St. Louis Area Food Bank
- St. Louis Board of Elections
- St. Louis Chinese Christian Community Center
- St. Louis City Circuit Attorney's Office
- St. Louis City Family Court
- St. Louis County Family Court
- St. Louis Volunteer Lawyers & Accountants for the Arts
- St. Patrick Center
- Voices for Children
- Wellston School District

AUGUST

Friday 19
Orientation Service Project
12:30 pm - 3 pm

SEPTEMBER

Monday 12
Student Public Service Fair
11 am - 1 pm, W.L. Hadley Student Commons

Wednesday 14
Public Interest Law Speakers Series (co-sponsored by the Alternative Dispute Resolution Program): "Fewer Trial, More Law, More Jokes" by Marc Galanter, Professor of South Asian Studies and John & Rylla Bosshard Professor of Law, University of Wisconsin.
11 am, Anheuser-Busch Hall

Saturday 10
School-Wide Volunteer Activity: Forest ReLeaf

Tuesday 27
Faculty/Student Public Service Roundtable with Professor Bill Dorothy
12-1 pm, Room 201

Wednesday 28
Public Service Brown Bag Panel: Environmental Law
11 am - 12 pm, Room 404

OCTOBER

Saturday 15
School-Wide Volunteer Activity: Beyond Housing

Wednesday 26
Public Service Brown Bag Panel: How to Thrive on a Public Service Salary
11 am - 12 pm, Room 404

NOVEMBER

Wednesday 2
Public Interest Law Speakers Series (co-sponsored in conjunction with the Assembly Series and Abuse in America's Prisons hearing): "Crime, Prison and the Death Penalty: The Influence of Race and Poverty" by Stephen Bright, Director, Southern Center for Human Rights in Atlanta.
4 pm, Anheuser-Busch Hall

Sunday 6
School-Wide Volunteer Activity: Ronald McDonald House Family Dinner Program

Thursday 10
Public Interest Law Speakers Series (co-sponsored by Women's Law Caucus): "Civil Rights and Civil Litigation" by Martha Chamallas, Robert J. Lynn Chair in Law, The Ohio State University.
12 pm, Anheuser-Busch Hall

Tuesday 15
Public Interest Law Speakers Series & Tyrrell Williams Lecturer: "Judicial Independence and the Rule of Law" by David Boies, Chairman, Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP
4 pm, Anheuser-Busch Hall

Wednesday 16
Public Service Brown Bag Panel: Disability Law
11 am - 12 pm; Room 404

Saturday 19
School Wide Volunteer Activity: St. Louis Area Food Bank
9 am - 12 pm

JANUARY

Wednesday 18
Public Interest Law Speakers Series & Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Speaker (co-sponsored by Black Law Student Association): "Shall We Overcome? Democracy, Race & Multiculturalism in the 21st Century" by Sheryll Cashin, Professor of Law, Georgetown University.
11 am, Anheuser-Busch Hall

Wednesday 25
Public Interest Law Speakers Series (co-sponsored by the George Warren Brown School of Social Work): "Civil Liberties in Wartime" by Geoffrey Stone, Harry Kalven, Jr. Distinguished Service Professor of Law, University of Chicago.
11 am, Anheuser-Busch Hall

FEBRUARY

Wednesday 1
Public Interest Law Speakers Series: "Courting Disaster? The World Historical Transformation of Marriage" by Stephanie Coontz, Professor of History & Family Studies, The Evergreen State College; Director of Research & Public Education, Council on Contemporary Families.
11 am, Anheuser-Busch Hall

Wednesday 8
Public Interest Law Speaker Series: "Accountability, Power and Politics: Navigating the Troubled Waters of Domestic Violence Legal Advocacy" by Sarah M. Buel, Clinical Professor of Law, University of Texas at Austin.
11 am, Anheuser-Busch Hall

Thursday 16
Public Interest Law Speakers Series (co-sponsored by the Federalist Society Student Chapter): "The Presumption of Liberty and the Public Interest: Medical Marijuana and Fundamental Rights" by Randy E. Barnett, Austin B. Fletcher Professor of Law, Boston University.
12 pm, Anheuser-Busch Hall

Wednesday 22
Public Interest Law Speaker Series: "Lawyers & Labor: The Role of Law in Organizing Law-Wage Workers" by Jennifer Gordon, Associate Professor of Law, Fordham University.
11 am, Anheuser-Busch Hall

Friday 24
Government & Public Interest Job Fair
12-3 pm, Janite Lee Reading Room

Date & Time TBA
School-Wide Volunteer Activity: Special Olympics

MARCH

Wednesday 1
Public Interest Law Speakers Series (co-sponsored by the American Constitution Society Student Chapter): "The Paradoxical Structure of Constitutional Litigation" by Pamela S. Karlan, Kenneth & Harle Montgomery Professor of Public Interest Law, Stanford University.
11 am, Anheuser-Busch Hall

Wednesday 8
Public Interest Law Speakers Series (co-sponsored by the Department of Philosophy and Center for the Study of Ethics & Human Values): "Who Ought to Decide about Physician-Assisted Hastening of Death?" by Tom L. Beauchamp, Professor of Philosophy & Senior Research Scholar, Georgetown University Kennedy Institute of Ethics.
11 am, Anheuser-Busch Hall

Wednesday 22
Public Interest Law Speakers Series & Distinguished Visiting Scholar (co-sponsored by the Native American Law Student Association): "Indian Givers: What Indigenous People Have Contributed to International Human Rights Law" by James Anaya, James J. Lenoir Professor of Human Rights Law & Policy, University of Arizona.
11 am, Anheuser-Busch Hall

Tuesday 28
Public Service Law Celebration
5-7 pm, Janite Lee Reading Room

Friday 31
Public Interest Speaker Series & Access to Justice Conference
Keynote Speaker: "" by Gerald Lopez, Professor of Clinical Law & Director of the Center for Community Problem Solving, New York University.
9 am, Anheuser-Busch Hall

Date & Time TBA
School-Wide Volunteer Activity

APRIL

Date & Time TBA
School-Wide Volunteer Activity