

Legal Aid Link

Volume 8, Issue 3

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Want to see your news in *Legal Aid Link*? Send it to the person responsible for communications and development at your organization. The next issue will be published in November 2014.

[Visit our website](#) to read previous issues.



MLAC

MLAC Welcomes Summer Students and New Staff Members

This summer saw MLAC and the Massachusetts IOLTA Committee participate once again in the Boston Bar Association's Summer Jobs Program. Sarah Vuong, a rising senior at John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science, joined the staff in June to work on a wide range of projects, from improving manuals to tracking legal services news stories. Sarah's position was generously funded by the law firm of Hemenway and Barnes. Find out more about the [BBA Summer Jobs Program](#). Also this summer, Catherine Rizos joined MLAC as the Communications Manager, replacing Tom Brant. In July, Anna Chatillon left MLAC to work with a reproductive rights organization in Austin, Texas. She was replaced by Sarah Blair as Executive/Legislative Campaign Assistant. You can reach Catherine at crizos@mlac.org, and Sarah at sblair@mlac.org.

MLAC Bids Farewell to Tom Brant

Communications Specialist Tom Brant left MLAC in August to pursue a graduate degree in Journalism at NYU. Tom was an AmeriCorps member in Western Massachusetts before coming to MLAC in 2011. He appreciated collaborating with communication-responsible staff in legal services programs throughout the state and enjoyed taking case vignettes sent by them and program attorneys and giving those clients' stories prominence in the media.

Correction

In our May newsletter update about MLAC board changes, we incorrectly stated that Worcester attorney Michael Badger was replacing Martha Koster as Vice Chair. Badger replaced Marijane Benner Browne of Ropes and Gray, who is now Board Chair.

Equal Justice Coalition

Stay Involved

Your voice helps make sure that Governor Patrick and the Massachusetts Legislature understand the importance of legal aid funding. You can follow the EJC on Twitter ([@EqualJusticeMA](#)), like the [EJC Facebook page](#) and sign up for action alerts at www.equaljusticecoalition.org.

People

Two Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) attorneys have been selected as 2014 Top Women of Law by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly. **Cynthia (Cyndi) Mark**, GBLS Asian Outreach Unit Managing Attorney, was named a Top Woman of Law. **Pauline Quirion**, GBLS CORI & Re-entry Project Lead Attorney, is being inducted into the Top Women of Law Circle of Excellence. Also honored was **Rachel Brown**, a Staff Attorney in Community Legal Aid's Elder Unit. Among Rachel's most recent accomplishments is a wholesale examination of the health care proxy system, highlighting her commitment to protecting the rights of elders and of individuals with disabilities. The Top event that "celebrates outstanding achievements made by exceptional women" will take place on October 23.



Pauline
Quirion



Cyndi Mark

Women of Law

Community Legal Services and Counseling Center's Immigration Supervisor, **Valerie Fisk**, was honored with the Dr. Joseph H. Brenner Award and received a Citation from the City of Cambridge at the program's Annual Volunteer Appreciation event on April 28th. The award was given to Valerie for her unwavering commitment to serving immigrants and refugees throughout her career and for her dedication to mentoring new attorneys and volunteers who take these cases.

Senior Attorney **Deb Filler** of GBLS' Cambridge and Somerville office was asked to join the Board of Directors of the Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee (MHLAC). As MHLAC is a Supreme Judicial Court agency, the SJC had to approve her appointment.

GBLS' Immigration Law Unit was awarded the Ubuntu Award by the Boston Center for Refugee Health & Human Rights (BCRHHR) at Boston Medical Center in June 2014. When it announced its award recipient, BCRHHR stated, "Ubuntu speaks of humaneness, hospitality and sacrificing for the benefit of others, and we feel that [GBLS is] more than deserving of recognition for your commitment and good work on behalf of survivors of human rights violation."

GBLS Executive Director **Jacquelynne Bowman** was selected to serve as a member of the Boston Bar Association Council for the 2014-2015 program year starting on September 1, 2014. For more details please visit the Boston Bar Association 2014-2015 [council election results](#).

Community Legal Aid has numerous staff updates to share: **Courtney Clemente** joins the HomeCorps team to work on foreclosure matters out of CLA's Springfield office; she previously worked on housing issues as an AmeriCorps member in CLA's Northampton office. **Rebekah Provost** will be working on housing matters in CLA's Worcester office while Amy Romero is on maternity leave; she previously worked on employment issues as an AmeriCorps member in Central West Justice Center's Worcester office. **Anita Conte** is CLA's new Pro Bono Coordinator based in the Worcester office; she will work on Volunteer Lawyers Service and Worcester-based pro bono initiatives. **Chelsea Taylor** is CLA's new HR Officer. She will work out of CLA's Worcester office and support the entire program. **Devlin Farmer** will work in the elder unit in CLA's Worcester office (under a new grant to assist elder victims of violence). Devlin has been a lawyer for over 10

years and has substantial experience working on family law and elder matters.

Monica Halas, GBLS Employment Law Unit Lead Attorney, is one of two recipients of the Women's Bar Association (WBA) 2014 Lelia J. Robinson Award. Ms. Robinson was the first woman admitted to the Massachusetts bar, and the award named in her honor recognizes women who, like her, have "captured the spirit of pioneering in the legal profession and have made a difference in the community." Monica will be honored at the WBA's Annual Gala on November 18, 2014. She is an employment law expert and has worked at GBLS for 36 years. Upon learning that Monica had been selected for this WBA award, GBLS Executive Director Jacquelynne Bowman stated, "This is great and a reflection of the wonderful work that Monica does not only for our clients but in mentoring and supporting others to take on leadership roles."

Save the Date

Register Now for NCLC's 23rd Consumer Rights Litigation Conference

With over 50 cutting-edge breakout sessions and a Consumer Class Action Symposium, NCLC's Consumer Rights Litigation Conference is a great place to build powerful connections, earn CLE credits, learn new skills, meet accomplished lawyers and experts, and network with over 800 attorneys. With an average of 361 days of sunshine a year, Tampa is your escape to white sand Florida beaches, exceptional shopping, and delicious local eateries. Orlando and its family-friendly theme parks are just a 90-minute drive away. Watch for your conference brochure this summer or visit www.NCLC.org to learn more.

November 6-9, 2014. Tampa Marriot Waterside Hotel and Marina, Tampa, Florida

Second Chances: A Celebration of Civil and Human Rights

Prisoners' Legal Services annual "Second Chances" event will take place at 5:30 pm on Thursday, November 6th, in space donated by Bingham McCutchen LLP, at One Federal Street in Boston.

Advocacy & Program Updates

Governor Patrick signs law to raise minimum wage, improve access to unemployment benefits

On June 26, Governor Deval Patrick signed Senate Bill 2195, An Act Restoring the Minimum Wage and Providing Unemployment Insurance Reforms, into law. GBLS Employment Law Unit Lead Attorney Monica Halas and Senior Attorney Elizabeth Toulon, along with several advocacy coalitions (including lead coalition Raise Up Massachusetts and GBLS client group the Coalition for Social Justice), Governor Patrick, individual legislators, the House Speaker and Senate President, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, and Attorney General Martha Coakley, worked tirelessly to get this bill passed. It is the highest minimum wage law in the country and will benefit over 600,000 low-wage earners. The bill also improves access to unemployment benefits and offers protections against retaliation for participating in the unemployment system including testifying at an unemployment hearing.

GBLS' Asian Outreach Unit helps achieve huge victory for voting rights in Boston



Pictured with Gov. Patrick at the bill signing are AOU Fellow Attorney Tram Nguyen (left) and Paralegal Huong Phan (right) with Asian-American voters and community activists.

On July 15, in Boston's Chinatown, Governor Deval Patrick signed into law [House Bill 4089](#), "An Act Relative to the Preparation of Certain Bilingual Ballots in the City of Boston." The law permanently mandates that Chinese and Vietnamese ballots be available for all elections in the City of Boston. GBL's Asian Outreach Unit (AOU), along with a coalition of community organizations including the Chinese Progressive Association (CPA) and Chinatown Resident Association (CRA), worked for years to implement and maintain bilingual ballots.

"It has been an honor for Greater Boston Legal Services to represent Chinese American and Vietnamese American voters who are passionate about exercising their right to vote in our American democracy." said Cynthia Mark, Managing Attorney of GBL's Asian Outreach Unit.

Boston College Legal Assistance Bureau has moved

[BCLAB](#) has moved from its office in Waltham to the Boston College Law School Campus at 885 Centre Street in Newton. It will continue to provide free legal services to financially eligible clients residing in Waltham, Watertown, and Newton. With the move, BCLAB will become part of BC Law's new Center for Experiential Learning, combining their practice with BC Law's Immigration and Juvenile Rights clinics.

GBLS and partners' efforts lead to passage of Massachusetts Domestic Workers Bill of Rights

On July 2, 2014, Governor Deval Patrick signed into law Senate 2132, A Bill Establishing the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights. This is a huge victory for Massachusetts domestic workers, who are now afforded basic labor protections. The signing was an emotional one for the many domestic workers, who were there with their children and, in some cases, with the children in their care. This achievement is due to the campaign efforts of GBL's Employment Law Unit Lead Attorney Monica Halas on behalf of her client, Massachusetts Coalition for Domestic Workers (MCDW), and campaign cofounders Natalicia Tracy, Executive Director of the Brazilian Immigrant Center and GBL's Board Member, Monique Nguyen, Executive Director of Matahari, Magalis Troncoso, Executive Director of the Dominican Development Center and GBL's Board Member, Heloisa Galvao, Executive Director of the Brazilian Women's Group, and campaign coordinator Lydia Edwards (who will be joining GBL as an Equal Justice Works Fellow in fall 2014). Read more about this landmark accomplishment in the [Boston Globe article](#) featuring quotes from Monica Halas and Lydia Edwards. For more information on the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, please [click here](#) to read the fact sheet.

Request for Nominations: 2014 Servant of Justice Award

South Coastal Counties Legal Services requests nominations for the 2014 Servant of Justice Award. The award is presented to extraordinary individuals who are role models in the legal field and have exhibited a willingness to stand up for those most vulnerable. Recipients have a true commitment to equality and fairness in our society. Past honorees include Ret. Judge George N. Leighton and Attorney General Martha Coakley. If you have questions or would like further information please contact Michelle DuBois at SCCLS (mdubois@sccls.org or 774-488-5948).

Community Legal Aid launches new website

CLA has built a vastly improved platform to serve its clients, volunteers, donors and staff, with state-of-the-art design and features, including 'responsive design' to custom-fit page content and display to the size of your screen - whether it's a computer, tablet or phone. Visit the new website at www.communitylegal.org



Media Highlights

These are just a few highlights of recent media coverage. For a full list, visit the [News](#) section of MLAC's website.

No empathy for disabled on Beacon Hill (Boston Globe)

Christine Griffin, executive director of the Disability Law Center, explains some of the challenges faced by the disabled in navigating the streets of Boston's Beacon Hill neighborhood and why the local civic association's opposition to construction of sidewalk ramps is so frustrating.

Honduran man waits for asylum after 12-year fight (Associated Press)

A chronicle of the long and often complex fight for asylum waged by 22-year-old Celvyn Mejia Romero, represented by GBLS attorneys John Willshire Carrera and Nancy Kelly.

"People Pages"

[CLICK HERE](#) to print "People Pages," an alphabetical directory of Massachusetts Legal Services staff members and their contact information (NOTE: You must log in to MassLegalServices.org in order to access the list). You can also look up staff individually by last name using the search function on MassLegalServices.org.

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