

# Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut

## Our Mission

*SLS empowers low-income people in Connecticut to obtain justice by providing tools to address their civil legal needs.*



At Statewide Legal Services we believe knowledge is power. We are a legal aid advice and referral center helping low income people solve their legal problems. We believe that everyone should have access to justice.

2016 SUMMER EDITION

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF LEGAL SERVICE

## Successful Paint Night Puts the “Fun” in “Fundraising”



On Wednesday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> SLS teamed up with **Muse Paint Bar**, located in West Hartford, to host a “paint nite” fundraiser in support of our **“I Heart Justice”** Campaign. The **“I Heart Justice”** Campaign promotes community collaboration with social service providers and stakeholders to drive legal aid services into Connecticut’s most vulnerable communities.

SLS assists Connecticut’s frontline community service providers and stakeholders:

- **Educate** program staff about the free legal resources available to low-income people.
- **Empower** program staff to identify potential legal issues when working with low-income community members.
- **Encourage** low-income men, women, and families to empower themselves with the legal tools to reach beyond the rungs of poverty to secure personal and financial stability.

SLS will utilize the donations to continue supporting our legal aid outreach, as we – community of legal aid advocates, community service providers, and community stakeholders—work together to empower Connecticut’s low-income men, women, and families to obtain justice and equal access to our court system.

**SLS extends a heartfelt “THANK YOU” to our legal aid supporters!**

## 2016 CASE SNAPSHOT |

### SLS Advocate & Pro Bono Attorney Help Low-Income Veteran

Victor\* a physically disabled veteran reached out to SLS because he was being evicted from his trailer park for non-payment of rent. Victor was confined to a wheelchair and dependent on his nephew to care for him in his mobile home.

Our SLS advocate advised Victor to file an Appearance and Answer and to negotiate with the Housing Specialist for more time. Recognizing Victor could benefit from the help of a Pro Bono Attorney, our SLS advocate referred this case to the Pro Bono Unit to be referred to SLS Pro Bono Attorney.

Our SLS Pro Bono Attorney filed an Appearance and spent 25+ hours negotiating a settlement with opposing counsel. In the end, the Trailer Park's action was withdrawn and Victor was able to remain in his home. Additionally, the Pro Bono Attorney reached out to a local Veteran's Organization to assist Victor with his arrearage payment of \$2,903.20. The Pro Bono Attorney persuaded the Veteran Organization to pay Victor's entire arrearage amount.

**Every day, SLS advocates partner with SLS Pro Bono Attorneys to achieve positive and lasting results for low-income clients—just like Victor.**

#### SNAPSHOT | Positive Client Outcomes Achieved

"I appreciate the information you guys gave me because I think when people go to court they are scared. SLS gave me advice on how to tell the housing mediator my side of the story and what to expect from the other side's attorney. Her advice let me to stay at my apartment. "

-Hartford Area Mother

\*name changed to respect client confidentiality

## 2016 HEJC SNAPSHOT |

### Hartford Equal Justice Collaborative Trains 20 Pro Bono Attorneys

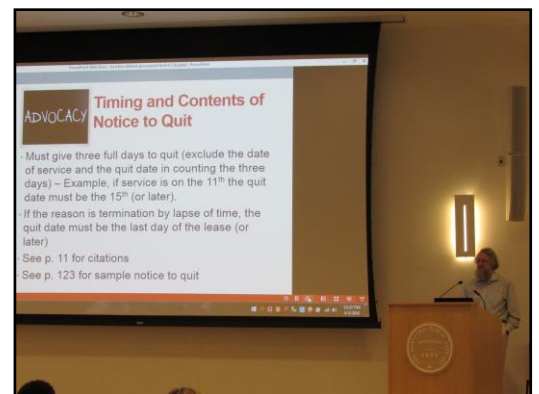
The Hartford Equal Justice Collaborative, a partnership between Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut (SLS), Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF), and the Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs (CABHN), created a three part, pro bono attorney training series: "**Eviction Army**" to shepherd newly-recruited pro bono attorneys through the eviction defense process.

The pro bono training series was created to address the Greater Hartford's most pressing area of need – housing law—which constitutes approximately 41% of our cases. Upon completing the training, 20 Pro Bono Attorneys will provide direct representation eviction defense to eligible low-income families in the Greater Hartford area.

The first training, "**Nuts & Bolts**," took place at the Hartford Public Library featuring speakers, 2016 Charles J. Parker Legal Services Award honoree **Attorney David Pels** (Greater Hartford Legal Aid), and **Attorney Amy Eppler-Epstein** (New Haven Legal Association). Both speakers introduced attorneys to the fundamentals of eviction defense for low-income people.

The second training, "**What to Expect in Housing Court**," was held in the Hartford Community Court. The **Hon. Glenn Woods, Deputy Chief Clerk Jeffrey Hammer, and Mediation Specialist Leanne Kennedy** clarified Housing Court procedures and provided valuable insight as to how to represent clients effectively and efficiently through the summary process.

The third training discussed "**Lockouts, Repairs & Security Deposits**" while engaging participants in a discussion about the challenges tenants face when there is a breakdown in the landlord-tenant relationship. **Attorney Jane Kinney-Knotek** (SLS) and **Attorney Nilda Havrilla** (Connecticut Legal Services) lead these discussions. **SLS is grateful to each trainer and pro bono attorney for his/her continued commitment and dedication.**



**SLS offers on-demand Eviction Defense trainings to interested Pro Bono Attorneys willing to join our "Eviction Army". For more information, contact: [ssanemeterio@slsct.org](mailto:ssanemeterio@slsct.org).**

## PRO BONO ATTORNEY SPOTLIGHT |

### SLS Pro Bono Attorney Recognized at National Law Day Ceremony



During Connecticut's recognition ceremony of "National Law Day," the Hartford County Bar awarded the **2016 Pro Bono Attorney Award** to SLS Pro Bono Attorney Leslie Shanley.

President Dwight Eisenhower established National Law Day in 1958 to recognize the nation's commitment to the rule of law. In 1961, Congress issued a joint resolution designating May 1 as the official date to celebrate Law Day, which is subsequently codified (U.S. Code, Title 36, Section 113). The American Bar Association encourages each state to celebrate National Law Day by recognizing the significant work of attorneys. This year, the Judicial Branch and the Hartford County Bar Association held a celebration at the Hartford Superior Court celebrating notable attorneys.

SLS is proud to have nominated Attorney Leslie Shanley as a recipient of the Pro Bono Award for her dedication to the representation of low-income individuals. **In 2015, alone, Attorney Shanley donated 30+ hours of pro bono service, as a SLS Call4Law Pro Bono Attorney, assisting people with consumer and bankruptcy concerns.**

The low-income clients who speak with her praise Attorney Shanley for her ability to explain the law in an "easy-to-understand" way; and are grateful she spends her time offering each client his/her legal options.

**Congratulations, Attorney Leslie Shanley!**

**"A day of national dedication to the principles of government under law."  
-Dwight D. Eisenhower**

## PRO BONO ATTORNEY RECOGNITION |

### SLS Nominates Pro Bono Attorney for NLADA Kutak-Dodds Award

SLS has proudly nominated **SLS Pro Bono Attorney Maggie Castinado** (Senior Assistant Public Defender, New Haven Superior Court) for the **National Legal Aid and Defender's 2016 Kutak-Dodds Award**.

The NLADA Kutak-Dodds Award seeks to identify and recognize attorneys who have significantly contributed to the human dignity and quality of life of individuals unable to afford legal representation. This annual award honors longstanding advocates for equal justice; one from the civil legal aid community and another from the public defense community. Each prize carries a cash award of \$10,000.

In her role as a public defender, Attorney Castinado served as a volunteer attorney for the Supreme Court On-Circuit Program, the goal of which is to educate students about the role and responsibility of the CT Supreme Court.

As a volunteer attorney, Ms. Castinado provides legal assistance to Connecticut Veterans at the CT Veteran Affairs' STAND DOWN outreach events. She also actively volunteers with SLS Pro Bono Pardons Program and Pro Bono "Eviction Army" Project.

Attorney Castinado is the Immediate Past President of the Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association (CHBA), and continues to strengthen the CHBA's commitment to pro bono initiatives with an emphasis on improving access to justice for low-income Hispanic individuals and families. **Thank you for your dedication, Attorney Maggie Castinado!**



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**"If we are to keep our democracy, there must be one commandment: Thou shalt not ration justice." – Judge Learned Hand**

# PRO BONO PROGRAM SNAPSHOT |

## CT Justice Online Anytime: Pro Bono in Your PJs



SLS will be launching our **“Connecticut Justice Online Anytime,”** a virtually-based pro bono project on **August 22, 2016**. This online project is the first of its kind in Connecticut, and is a collaboration with the American Bar Association’s “ABA Online Legal Answers” National Pro Bono Initiative.

Our program seeks to deliver an innovative approach to helping low-income individuals in crisis who need assistance with their civil legal problem, but are having difficulties accessing service.

Connecticut Justice Online Anytime is a 24/7/365 “counsel on call” approach to providing pro bono services to eligible low-income clients. The process is simple. Clients go to a public computer or use their smartphone to post their civil legal question online; volunteer attorneys go online at anytime and from anywhere –even from home in their pajamas—to anonymously select and answer a client question.

**A goal of this pro bono project is to remove barriers for attorneys who want to provide pro bono services to Connecticut’s low-income clients, but have trouble doing so because of their work schedule, family obligations, geographic location, or other personal factors.**

Previous states, who have piloted this program, have issued CLE credits to their participating volunteer attorneys.

**SLS is evaluating the feasibility of issuing CLE credit hours—in cooperation with Bar Associations—for SLS Pro Bono Attorneys who actively volunteer their time to our Connecticut Justice Online Anytime pro bono opportunity.**

SLS is currently seeking volunteers interested in participating in this innovative program. Please consider volunteering your time – performing “Pro Bono Your Way” – to help Connecticut’s most vulnerable men, women, and families seek answers to their civil legal questions.

For more information about this exciting program, please contact SLS Pro Bono Coordinator Jonathan Caez at: [jcaez@slsct.org](mailto:jcaez@slsct.org) or Attorney Ashleigh Backman at: [abackman@slsct.org](mailto:abackman@slsct.org)

### **SLS PRO BONO PROGRAM NEEDS YOUR HELP:**

The Pro Bono **Call4Law Program** helps significantly more low-income clients seeking consumer collections and bankruptcy advice than other areas of law. **We are seeking Pro Bono Attorneys willing to assist our consumer collections and bankruptcy Call4Law pro bono clients.** SLS offers free On-Demand trainings for those attorneys unfamiliar with this area of law. Please contact:

[Call4Law@slsct.org](mailto:Call4Law@slsct.org)

The **Direct Representation Program**, is seeking **Pro Bono Attorneys willing to help our low-income pro bono clients with Housing and Eviction cases in the New London area.** Please contact:

[abackman@slsct.org](mailto:abackman@slsct.org) &  
[jbozzi@slsct.org](mailto:jbozzi@slsct.org)

### GET INVOLVED : SLS PRO BONO PROGRAM

Partner with SLS Pro Bono Program to bridge Connecticut’s Access to Justice Gap. **Connect with Pro Bono Attorney Manager Ashleigh Backman for more information:**  
[abackman@slsct.org](mailto:abackman@slsct.org)

# SLS BOARD OF DIRECTORS SNAPSHOT |

## SLS Is Excited to Announce New Board Member Involvement

The SLS Board of Directors is excited to announce the appointment of four new SLS Board Members: **Mr. Labib Fasihuddin, Attorney Courtney George, Attorney Hugh F. Murray, III, and Ms. Kathleen Snow.**

**Mr. Labib Fasihuddin** is an undergraduate student at the University of Connecticut majoring in finance. As a first generation Bangladeshi-American, he is motivated to bridge access to justice into Connecticut's underserved Bangladeshi communities. Mr. Labib Fasihuddin volunteers at the UCONN Empower Organization; a philanthropy based UCONN student organization raising money to send its members to Nicaragua to help impoverished villages create sustainable economic plans.

**Attorney Courtney George** is a principal and chair of Cohen and Wolf, P.C.'s Employment & Labor Group. She is also a member of the firm's Physicians Practice, Litigation, Municipal and Appellate Group. Active in our community, Attorney George is on the Board of the Women's Business Development Center and 2013 Chair of the Greater Valley Chamber Women in Networking. She has been recognized by Connecticut Super Lawyers (2013-2015) in the category of Employment Litigation: Defense, and is listed in the Best Lawyers in America (2016) for her work in the area of Labor & Employment Litigation.

**Attorney Hugh F. Murray, III,** is a partner at McCarter & English, LLP providing advice and representation to management clients on all aspects of employment relationships. He handles claims of wrongful discharge, discrimination, unpaid wages, breach of contract, breach of non-compete or non-solicitation agreements and other disputes before judges, juries and administrative agencies throughout New England, and has represented clients at all levels of the state and federal court system. Active in our community, Attorney Murray is a member of the Advisory Board of the WALKS Foundation. He is listed in Chambers USA for Labor & Employment.

**Ms. Kathleen Snow** is an educator who values the importance of a safe, comfortable learning community. Education has always been her career and passion. Her teaching experience ranges from Pre-K through instructing Early Childhood college courses. Each experience has brought her amazing learning opportunities and cherished memories. Although her passion for education is strong, she is just as passionate about advocating for equality and social justice. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, cooking and spending time with her family.

**SLS is thrilled our newly appointed members bring diverse experiences and community leadership skills to our Board!**



# SLS STAFF SNAPSHOT |

## SLS Hires Financial Officer and Public Benefits/Health Advocate

SLS recently hired **Linda Spada, SLS Financial Officer**, to support SLS administrative and financial management – including overall financial oversight and grant compliance. Linda Spada comes to SLS with previous non-profit compliance experience, including 35 years of legal aid experience preparing organizational financials, budgets, reports, and grant compliance.

Additionally, SLS welcomed **Attorney Elizabeth (Eliza) Heins** to our **SLS Public Benefits/Health Advocate Unit**. Eliza graduated from SUNY Buffalo Law School with a dual Juris Doctorate and Master's in Urban Planning. Eliza was the Editor-in-Chief of the Buffalo Human Rights Law Review and legal intern with the United Nations Development Programme in Pristina, Kosovo. Attorney Heins has previous legal experience as an associate conducting land use and municipal law in Connecticut.

**SLS is thrilled Linda Spada and Eliza Heins have joined the SLS Team!**



# LEGAL AID PARTNERSHIP SNAPSHOT |

## What's New on CTLawHelp.org?



We are very excited about our latest project for the website. We've built a new section, [FamiliesChange.org](http://FamiliesChange.org), to provide age-appropriate information to help kids, teens, and parents dealing with a family breakup. Its content was authored with input from family counselors, guidance counselors, psychologists, lawyers, parents, teens, and kids. The website also provides general information about the law.

We partnered with the Justice Education Society of British Columbia, Pine Tree Legal Assistance in Maine and the Legal Services Law Line of Vermont to replicate the work done in British Columbia for families in each of the three states.

**Later this summer we will be adding an interactive game for the kids section.**



Connecticut's Legal Aid programs created the CTLawHelp.org website to help people with very low income find help for their legal problems. This website will give you legal information and tools to help you represent yourself.

### CTLawHelp.org Monthly Web Traffic

337,743 people visited the website  
517,708 pages were viewed.

### CTLawHelp.org Most-Viewed Topics:

- Tenants' Rights.
- Evictions.
- Security Deposits & Rent Increase.
- Medicaid May Pay for Nursing Home Care.

CTLawHelp.org and our web projects are funded by LSC Technology Initiative Grants Program and the CT Bar Foundation.



## Save the Date!

### Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup> :

Pro Bono Attorney Registration Opens for SLS online program "CT Justice Online Anytime."

### Tuesday, Sept 20<sup>th</sup> 6-8pm:

SLS is teaming up with Muse Paint Bar to host a "paint nite" Fundraiser in Glastonbury.

<https://events.musepaintbar.com/index.php/welcome/edit/17965>

### October 23<sup>rd</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>:

National Pro Bono Week!

SLS is coordinating & hosting a Pro Bono "Advice-a-thon."

### On-going Community Legal Outreach Events:

Hartford Equal Justice Collaborative hosts community-based client outreach support.

- ❖ Hartford Public Library  
500 Main St., Hartford  
Every Tuesday, 4-6pm.
  
- ❖ Hartford Community Court  
80 Washington St., Hartford  
Every 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday,  
9-11am.

Postage  
Stamp  
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### Statewide Legal Services of CT

Our call-in hours are:

Monday – Friday

9 am to 12 noon and 1 to 2 pm

Toll-free: 1-800-453-3320

From Middletown and  
Hartford:

860-344-0380

→ APPLY ONLINE

### FUNDED BY:

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