



A history of helping. A future of hope.

## VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROGRAM

# July 2007

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### Awards & Recognition

On June 28<sup>th</sup>, the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education honored seventeen of Southern Arizona Legal Aid's (SALA) Volunteer Lawyers Program (VLP) attorneys as part of the **Top 50 Pro Bono Attorneys in Arizona**. Many of those nominated by the VLP were recognized by the Foundation for their work with victims of domestic violence. Building upon the proud work of the past Top 50 Pro Bono Attorneys, first named in 2001, the 2007 honorees were chosen for giving tirelessly to provide legal services to low-income clients. Their selection was based on such factors as the number of pro bono cases accepted and hours donated, indicators of overall commitment to pro bono work. SALA VLP attorneys honored from Pima County included **Ron Allen, Don Awerkamp, Thomas Bayham, Bryan Daum, Rob Ferrier, Les Gilbertson, Johnny Helenbolt, Tom Hippert, Kurt Kroese, Lisa Schriener Lewis** (pictured lower right), **Jim Penny, Denneen Peterson, Bill Porten, Steve Portell and Heather Strickland**. SALA VLP attorneys in Cochise and Navajo Counties were also recognized by the Foundation. These attorneys include **F. Morgan Brown and Ed Matchett**.

In addition to the Top 50 awards, the Foundation also honored **Cary Inabinet** (pictured at right), a SALA VLP attorney, as the recipient of the **William E. Morris Pro Bono Service Award**. Cary was selected for this award because of his career-long commitment and devotion to advancing the delivery of legal services to the poor. Cary's involvement in pro bono work spans more than 20 years and two Arizona counties. Originally volunteering with Community Legal Services' VLP program in Maricopa County, Cary moved to Cochise County in 2001, and began to work for SALA's VLP. He has launched several clinics meant to assist domestic violence victims and the elders. Two of Cary's piloted programs have assisted 432 rural clients over the last six years.



### helping clients

During the first six months of 2007, the VLP opened 1,285 new cases and closed 981. Currently, the VLP has 1,218 active cases.

[VLPArizona.org](http://VLPArizona.org)



In addition to directly serving indigent clients, Cary has volunteered for the past six years as a member of the VLP Advisory Board in Cochise County. Cary's service to the Board has ranged from participating in new volunteer attorney recruitment to training other volunteer lawyers. Jeanne Benda Whitney, who has served with Cary on the VLP Advisory Board, commended Cary's efforts, saying, "He brings a sincere concern for those in need of court services, a willingness to address people as individuals with individual needs, and a breadth of experience in a variety of civil matters."



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## Client Success Story » VLP Attorney Gloria Goldman

The client, a thirty-two year old mother of four, contacted a rural SALA office seeking assistance with an immigration matter. Specifically, the client, a victim of domestic violence was in need of help when she was threatened with the possibility of reopening her cancellation of removal proceedings. The staff attorneys in the rural office reviewed the case and referred the client to the VLP. The VLP referred the client to volunteer attorney Gloria Goldman who represented the client and, after dedicating **one hundred and forty hours** to the matter, was able to persuade the court to cancel the removal proceedings.

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## Student Update

In the fall of 1999, the Volunteer Lawyers Program and the University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law formed a partnership, VLP Advocates, to attempt to empower and assist those members of the community most in need of civil legal assistance. VLP Advocates gives UA law students the opportunity to gain first-hand experience working with volunteer attorneys while helping to resolve a myriad of civil legal issues for VLP clients. Beyond the apparent advantages to both the clients and the students, the program's ultimate goal is to cultivate a lasting appreciation for service within the volunteer students in the hopes that they will continue to volunteer throughout their careers as practicing attorneys.

To date, more than 300 law students have volunteered with the VLP, and students will work on over 1,332 cases in 2007 alone. Aside from the immediate impact that this makes in the lives of those 1,332 clients, we expect the long-term consequences to make a lasting impression on the Southern Arizona community. Though our program is relatively new and unique nationwide, tracking of our former volunteers has shown that 50% of our law student volunteers who remain in Southern Arizona subsequently return to assist the VLP within 5 years of admission to the State Bar. However, it is our hope that with recent increased participation, 100% of our VLP Advocates who remain in the area will join the VLP, and that their volunteer efforts will be extensive – far exceeding the fifty pro bono hours per year suggested by the Arizona Supreme Court.

**The VLP recruited and trained 20 law students in May.** The students will volunteer in the VLP Advocates program during June, July and August. The students will participate in a variety of clinics that include the Domestic Relations Follow-Up Clinic, the Intake Clinic and the Child Support Clinic. Over the course of the summer, it is expected that the students, supervised by volunteer attorneys, will assist several hundred clients.

**Child Support Project »** Through the project, volunteer attorneys supervise law students as they meet with unrepresented litigants prior to final divorce hearings in Superior Court. The students review documents and calculate child support to ensure that children receive the support to which they are legally entitled. Students also work to ensure that children have access to safe shelter, education and medical care. The students prepare new and accurate documents if the child support amount calculated by the client is incorrect.

During April, May and June the Project assisted thirty-six clients with seventy-eight children.

**The average increase in the client's child support award during this period was \$282.48 per family.** More than one-third of the clients assisted by the project were victims of domestic violence.

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## New Grants & Funding

During the last quarter the VLP received notice of the following continued funding as well as new funding:

**In May, the VLP received the donations collected by the Pima County Bar Association through their Membership Renewal Program.** This year the VLP received \$8,100. One hundred and seventy-eight individual members contributed to the VLP. The VLP is grateful for all of the support it has received from the PCBA, but would especially like to acknowledge Jim Dyer, the Association's President during the last year, for his leadership and support of the VLP. For more information about the PCBA's contribution to the VLP please view the program's website at [www.vlparizona.org/VLPNewsPCBADonations2007.htm](http://www.vlparizona.org/VLPNewsPCBADonations2007.htm).



**Benefit Concert »** In May, the musical talents of the employees of Rainbow Guitars joined forces with the VLP to coordinate a concert to benefit the VLP. The lineup included AOG Speedwagon, All in Vein, The IODS, Queen Anne's Revenge, Whole Lotta Zep, and Gat Rot. Rainbow also donated a Gibson Epiphone Les Paul guitar signed by Joe Walsh of the Eagles

that was auctioned at the event. The concert raised more than \$2200 and generated publicity for the Program with articles running in both the Tucson Weekly and the Tucson Citizen. The Citizen article can be found at <http://www.tucsoncitizen.com/ss/entertainment/51061.php/>. The staff also gained valuable experience with fundraising activities. The funds raised from the event will go towards helping those most in need in our community with their civil legal issues.

**The Community Foundation for Southern Arizona** granted the VLP \$12,000 to assist with the Program's student programs. The Foundation promised to continue seeking funds from private donors to increase the award given to the VLP.

In June, the **Arizona Superior Court in Pima County** agreed to fund the VLP Child Support Project. The VLP will receive \$14,312.79 from the Court to support the Project. For more information about the project, please see Student Section above.

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## Staff News

### **SALA Welcomes New Executive Director**

**Anthony Young** has been selected as the new Executive Director for Southern Arizona Legal Aid (SALA). He was selected following an extensive nationwide search by the SALA Executive Director Search Committee and began his work with the Program on June 4<sup>th</sup>. Originally from Illinois, Anthony attended college and law school at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. After graduating from law school, Anthony worked as a staff attorney, pro bono coordinator and managing attorney at Western Nebraska Legal Services. In 1996, he was recruited to serve as the Managing Attorney of the Community Legal Services office in Yuma.

Anthony is looking forward to working with SALA staff and being a partner in the statewide legal aid community. He hopes to serve a greater role in the community by working with the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education and the other legal aid organizations in Arizona. Anthony's goals for SALA are to help maintain the quality of services already being provided, increase the support for and funding for SALA, and to enhance access to justice throughout southern Arizona.

### **The VLP welcomes the following new staff and volunteers:**

**Krystal Duran**, the VLP's new Rural Pro Bono Coordinator began her work with the VLP in June. Krystal comes to the Program with legal training and experience. She is very enthusiastic and eager to work with both clients and volunteers.

**Collin Wedel**, an undergraduate student at Pepperdine University, has dedicated his entire summer to volunteering with the VLP. Collin has spearheaded many projects and participated in several clinics and workshops. Collin has brought a standard of excellence to all that he has done for the VLP. He'll be with the Program until August 1. The staff and clients of the VLP are grateful to Collin for all of his hard work and dedication to our clients.

**Dick McKenna** joined the VLP earlier this month. A retired investigator from the east coast, Dick is dedicating one day a week to helping the VLP with database projects. The staff is thrilled to have Dick on board.

## The VLP says good-bye to Catherine Yarnes....

It is with mixed emotions that the VLP says good-bye to the program's long-time rural coordinator, Catherine Yarnes. Catherine leaves the VLP this month to begin her law school career at Gonzaga University. Staff, volunteers and clients will miss Catherine terribly, but we are very proud of her decision to attend law school. Catherine has been a dedicated advocate for the poor and working poor across Arizona. We know that she will continue her commitment to improving the lives of others once she obtains her degree. We all look forward to working with her in the future. Of course, Catherine's much loved canine companion Lucy (pictured at right) will remain with the VLP as 'of counsel' in Cathy's absence.



## Congratulations!

Annie Barrett, the VLP's Student Coordinator, and her husband John welcomed a new baby girl into their family last week. Elizabeth "Lily" Emerson Barrett (pictured at left) was born on Tuesday, July 10<sup>th</sup>. Mom and baby are doing well.

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Questions or comments? E-mail Michele Mirto at [mmirto@sazlegalaid.org](mailto:mmirto@sazlegalaid.org) or call 520.623.9465, ext. 4171.

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The VLP is a joint program of Southern Arizona Legal Aid and the Pima County Bar Association.

**25** years | volunteer  
lawyers  
program

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