

Howard and Howard lawyer recognized for his volunteerism

Community Legal Resources recently recognized the extraordinary volunteerism of Paul Green, a partner with the Bloomfield Hills law firm of Howard and Howard.

Paul has volunteered to take on two difficult pro bono cases so far this year. The first client Paul agreed to assist was Emmanuel Community House, Inc., an organization providing after-school programming and other social services for its Detroit neighborhood since 1976. A number of years ago, Emmanuel Community House made the decision to build nine new affordable homes in its target area between Six and Seven Mile Roads and between John R and Brush Street. As the organization entered its final stage of completing construction of these homes, it found that it needed additional advice from an expert in Real Estate law. Paul graciously offered to lend his expertise.

Paul is also currently working with Detroit Central City Community Mental Health, Inc. Established more than thirty years ago, Detroit Central City provides mental health treatment, substance abuse counseling, housing and supportive services to over 3,300 low-income and disadvantaged people each year. The organization owns its building and recently received funding to make improvements to it. Detroit Central City requested advice from a real estate attorney to help implement the needed improvements. Paul, once again, agreed to offer his services.

Paul Green not only volunteered to work on both of these difficult matters, but has taken on each case with great enthusiasm, professionalism and vigor. In addition, he has done all of this while continuing his work with Sacred Heart/St. Elizabeth Community Development Corporation, an organization he has been assisting since June 2002. As a result, Community Legal Resources was pleased to recognize Paul Green of Howard and Howard as Volunteer of the Quarter for the second quarter of 2003.

Volunteerism must run in the Green family. Paul's brother Nino was recently awarded the prestigious John W. Cummiskey award which is given annually by the State Bar of Michigan to a Michigan lawyer making significant pro bono contributions.



New housing built by Emmanuel Community House

Sessions on Title Manual a success

To roll out our latest publication, "Clearing Clouded Title for the Redevelopment of Urban Land: A Guide for Nonprofit Organizations," Community Legal Resources held two panel discussions over the summer. The first session, led by Rochelle Lento, Clinical Law Professor at University of Michigan Law School; Mitchell Meisner, real estate attorney and partner at Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn LLP; and J. Taylor Teasdale, an associate and real estate attorney at Lewis and Munday, was held in Detroit

at Focus:Hope and was attended by over fifty representatives of the nonprofit development community, lawyers, and financial institutions supporting the work of community development. A second session was held in Pontiac at Lighthouse of Oakland County for a roomful of nonprofit developers, attorneys and public officials. The Pontiac session was led by Erika Butler-Akinyemi, an associate at Jaffe, Raitt, Heuer and Weiss; Catharine LaMont, president of LaMont Title

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Steve Tobocman, Erika Butler-Akinyemi and Catherine LaMont discuss title issues at Lighthouse of Oakland County

Company; and Steve Tobocman, CLR's founder and now a legislator in the Michigan House of Representatives. The panelists—all of whom are familiar with the intricacies of complex title issues in Michigan and contributed to the production of the manual—gave an overview of the manual and fielded questions from both novice and more experienced developers in attendance.

“Clearing Clouded Title for the Redevelopment of Urban Land: A Guide for Nonprofit Organizations” is designed to assist nonprofit developers navigate the complex web of liens, notice problems and other issues associated with acquiring clear title to property acquired through tax-reversion, donation or private sale. If your organization missed either of these sessions, or you are an attorney interested in learning more, please contact Alan Reiter at areiter@michiganlegal.org to request a free copy of the manual.

Thank you to new contributors

Community Legal Resources thanks three new contributors who are helping to make our work possible. A substantial gift of operating support was recently made by the Birmingham-based turnaround company **Conway MacKenzie & Dunleavy**. The law firm of **Miro Weiner & Kramer** made a contribution to our endowment fund in September, and lawyers in the Birmingham office of **Howard and Howard** designated a portion of their annual firm-wide Access to Justice contribution to Community Legal Resources. These new contributors join the following organizations and individuals in making gifts this calendar year to our program. Thank you for the work you enable us to do!

City of Detroit
Power of Attorney
Minority Corporation Counsel Conference
Equal Justice Works
Equal Justice America
Michigan State Bar Foundation
Comerica Bank
Bank One
Standard Federal Bank
General Motors
Business Law Section, State Bar of MI
Real Property Law Section, State Bar of MI
Detroit Local Initiatives Support Corp.
Michigan State Housing Development Authority
Great Lakes Capital Fund
Johnson Controls
MASCO Corporation
Fannie Mae Detroit Partnership Office
Law firm of Jaffe Raitt Heuer & Weiss
Law firm of Simon & Galasso
Detroit Catholic Pastoral Alliance
HP Devco/ Highland Park Business Assoc.
Imagine Kids' Impact
Bagley Community Council
Franklin St. Community Housing Corp.
Bridging Communities
Mich. Self Help for Hard of Hearing People
Community Development Corp. of Warren
Alison Benjamin
Deborah Schwartz
Rita Fuerst Adams
Sam Smith
Leonard Grossman

You can designate ATJ gifts to Community Legal Resources

(and please do!)

Community Legal Resources relies on charitable gifts from individuals, law firms, and corporations. Last year we received about 10% of our operating support from individual lawyers contributing through Access to Justice. **Help us raise this to 25%** this year by designating your \$300 contribution (or whatever amount you give) “for Community Legal Resources.” You’ll receive the same tax-deduction and recognition by the State Bar of Michigan, and the dollars come directly to us to serve more nonprofit organizations building neighborhoods in Detroit and across Michigan. To make a gift, download a pledge form at www.clronline.org/contributions or call us at (313) 964-4130. To pay by credit card, visit the State Bar’s website at www.michbar.org and click on Access to Justice.

Thank you.

Former Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer, first African American to lead the American Bar Association, encourages pro bono

Back in the Fall of 1999, then-Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer spoke at Community Legal Resources' first annual recognition event where he called pro bono work "good for the lawyer, good for the profession, and definitely good for the community." Now President of the American Bar Association, Archer was recently asked whether lawyers are doing enough pro bono work. His response, reprinted here with permission, appeared in the August 2003 issue of the Michigan Bar Journal.

I've been traveling around the country now for over a year. I started my traveling by way of invitation to different bar associations and law schools shortly after becoming president-elect nominee in February of 2002. I will tell you that I am just amazed and enormously proud at the contributions that lawyers of America make to their respective communities. You ask about pro bono work—let me start internationally. We have a program in the ABA...where lawyers, judges, and law professors, over 5,000 pro bono since 1991, have gone to Central Europe, Bosnia, and other countries at the request of those governments to help them to develop new criminal law procedures, new environmental law issues in setting up courts and laws. The same thing is true as it relates to the international law section of the American Bar working with the United Nations going into countries like Rwanda and others to help, at their request, to develop new constitutions, new areas of the law where they want to implement what we have by way of a democracy here. When you come back

I would say to you that the lawyers are doing a very fine job in giving back to their community.

home, I don't believe there is a non profit or volunteer organization—whether its trying to find a cure for Alzheimer's, Aids, kidney disease, March of Dimes, etc. that does not have a lawyer sitting on the board. You go into any children's organization—Boys and Girls Clubs, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, you'll find a lawyer there. You go to your place of worship, whether it's a mosque, synagogue, or church, and if they have some kind of entity to promote or to work within for its betterment you'll find the lawyer sitting on its board. Then of course you've got law firms all across America including our law firm that believes in giving back and we have a pro bono lawyer—a lawyer dedicated to pro bono that causes all of us to get involved. For those of us who are too busy, we write a check to Access to Justice here in Michigan. I would say to you that the lawyers are doing a very fine job in giving back to their community.

Having said that, despite all the work that they're doing, 80 percent of the legal needs are unmet and that's the reason why I also believe that it is important for lawyers to continue to give back. We've got 1,050,000 licensed lawyers in the United States but everybody doesn't practice. I think it would be very helpful if lawyers whether they

practice or not, would give of their time to engage in pro bono work because a lawyer that helps a person whether it's to deal with an issue of eviction from where they live, or foreclosure on a house that they were buying, or trying to deal with a car that is in the process of almost being repossessed, what you do is you deal with that person's frustration, anxiety, perhaps anger and worst yet, rage. I suggest to you that lawyers of America engaged in pro bono work have reduced the number of scenes that we watch on television periodically where somebody is going to their place of employment because of their anger, rage, because they've been fired, laid off, or whatever. If they have seen a lawyer to find out what their rights are, the lawyer can walk them through and talk to them and let them know whether or not what has occurred is right or wrong. And even when they go into court and, sometimes when they lose, by explaining to them what occurred they uplift the rule of law and when they do that they reduce the rage and they reduce the likelihood of people committing acts of rage. So, I'm very proud of our profession, there's more yet we can do but I want to say this, I know of no other profession that takes an oath that says we will help and represent the oppressed and defenseless. As I drive down the streets of America, I don't see anybody saying if you can't afford to have health services or get your hair cut or whatever we'll do it free—lawyers do that.

What do CLR clients do, anyway?

Community Legal Resources receives requests for legal assistance from nonprofit organizations providing important services throughout Michigan's neighborhoods. Recently we assisted the Housing Development Corporation build affordable housing in Van Buren and Allegan counties; the Monroe County Opportunity Program provide important social and community economic development services throughout Monroe County; Cass Community Social Services house the homeless, operate a soup kitchen and offer transitional housing opportunities to Detroiters; Hillsdale County Senior Services Center provide senior citizen social services in Hillsdale County; and the Church of the Messiah Housing Corporation build affordable housing in Detroit.

Save the Date!!

Community Legal Resources celebrates our fifth birthday November 18

Please mark your calendars and join us as we celebrate five years of providing free legal services to nonprofit organizations building communities in Detroit and throughout Michigan. Enjoy complimentary appetizers and cocktails as we recognize outstanding volunteers and law firms, financial supporters, and the nonprofit organizations working to improve our communities. Governor Jennifer Granholm has been invited to make remarks.

Tuesday, November 18, 2003

5:30 – 7:30 pm

"The Hall of Legends" at Ford Field

St. Antoine @ Madison, Detroit • Free parking in Lot 6

Please RSVP to Karinda Washington at kwashington@michiganlegal.org or (313) 964-4130 by November 10.

A special thanks to the evening's Presenting Sponsors: Johnson Controls, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority and Great Lakes Capital Fund. Also sponsoring are the Fannie Mae Detroit Partnership Office and Detroit Local Initiatives Support Corporation.

Community Legal Resources is a joint project of Michigan Legal Services and the Pro Bono Committee of the Business Law Section of the American Bar Association working in conjunction with the Michigan Litigation Assistance Partnership Program.

Our mission is to foster pro bono legal representation for unfulfilled legal needs of nonprofit community organizations in Michigan that serve low-income individuals and communities, with an emphasis on community economic development activities.

Contact us at:

**220 Bagley Avenue
Suite 900
Detroit, MI 48226
313.964.4130 fax: 313.964.1192
www.clronline.org
clr@michiganlegal.org**

Who we are...



Connecting Lawyers and Communities

Michigan Legal Services
220 Bagley Avenue
Suite 900
Detroit, MI 48226

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
DETROIT, MI
PERMIT NO. 2607