

2008-2009
WLALA Foundation
Annual Report

2008-2009 was a banner board year for the WLALA Foundation. We helped launch the inaugural Los Angeles *Food from the Bar* campaign, which exceeded its goals by nearly four fold and began what we expect will be a permanent tradition here in the Los Angeles legal community. We expanded our financial support of the Harriet Buhai Center for Family Law, co-founded by WLALA over 25 years ago. We presented an MCLE seminar on domestic violence issues, recruiting several new volunteers for the Domestic Violence Clinic and putting into use the Training Manual developed last year with financial assistance from the Rosenthal Trust.

We also continued our longstanding traditions of providing scholarships to deserving law students; a Fran Kandel Public Interest Grant for a law student to complete a summer project designed to help women and children; continuing work on the Jail Project and the History Project; providing twice annual holiday meals and cheer at the Downtown Women's Center; and co-hosting the Lanterns Award Luncheon with Black Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, Inc., and Latina Lawyers Bar Association.

And all this during the most economically difficult year in recent memory.

The vision, energy and commitment of the WLALA Foundation Board took flight this year thanks to donors like you. Without your generosity during Annual Giving, the Foundation would not have been able to expand its service to the local community. This Annual Report summarizes our Annual Giving results and spotlights selected Foundation activities this past year so you can see some of your donation dollars at work.

Thank you once again for your support as the Foundation continues its tradition of service in the coming year and beyond.

With deepest appreciation,

Katherine M. Forster
Immediate Past President, WLALA and the WLALA Foundation

Annual Giving Campaign

History: With only two years of history, the Foundation's Annual Giving Campaign is proving to be a successful arrow in our fundraising quiver. Building on the concept

that “you make a living by what you get; you make a life by what you give,” our members have been overwhelmingly and incrementally more responsive.

- In our first year, 45 donors gave \$7,420; and
- In our second year, 81 donors gave \$23,860. Our revenue more than tripled, thanks in large part to an anonymous matching donation of up to \$15,000, and revenue almost doubled even without the match.
- In our first year, Annual Giving was about 12% of our total Foundation revenue. In our second year, with the match it was almost 50% of our total Foundation revenue, and even without the match, it was over 25% of total revenue.

Use of Funds: Without any need to attend an event and with no overhead, all proceeds from our Annual Giving Campaign go directly to fund our projects and initiatives. As explained in greater detail in this Annual Report, these include our Law School Scholarships, Fran Kandel Public Interest Grants, Domestic Violence Project, Jail Project, History Project, the Downtown Women’s Center, the Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law and more.

Ways to Give: All contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. Contributions from individuals and foundations are welcome. Consider asking your employer about a firm match or a contribution from your firm’s foundation. Contributions are easy to make: just go to www.wlala.org to make a donation by credit card.

Many thanks for your support!



Food From the Bar Comes to Los Angeles

The WLALA Foundation was a founding participant in the introduction of the *Food from the Bar* campaign to the Los Angeles legal community. *Food from the Bar* is a four-week anti-hunger effort among law firms and legal offices in which participants contribute money, donate food, and volunteer time sorting and packing food at the Los Angeles Regional Foodbank. For many years, the *Food from the Bar* program in San Francisco has proven successful to replenish food bank supplies to meet families' increased need for food during the summer months. With the current economic crisis, 2009 proved an apt time to bring *Food from the Bar* to Los Angeles.

The fundraising goal for the inaugural *Food from the Bar* campaign in Los Angeles was \$50,000. The campaign well exceeded expectations, raising a total of \$192,000 and amassing over 1500 volunteer hours at the Foodbank. WLALA received special recognition as one of the top three contributors measured by donations per capita.

The WLALA Foundation is proud of the role it played in mobilizing the Los Angeles legal community as a whole to help alleviate hunger in our community, and looks forward to participating again next year. For more information about *Food from the*

Bar, contact WLALA Foundation board member Kathleen M. McDowell, kathleen.mcdowell@mto.com.



Downtown Women's Center *Holiday Dinner and Spring Brunch*

Each year for well over a decade, WLALA has provided two holiday meals and good cheer at the Downtown Women's Center. The Downtown Women's Center is a nonprofit organization that provides supportive services to over 2,000 homeless women annually in the Los Angeles Skid Row area. Since 1978, the Downtown Women's Center has remained the only organization in the Skid Row area exclusively serving the needs of homeless women, in particular the mentally ill.

During the 2008-09 year, WLALA again hosted two special meals at the Downtown Women's Center, each serving approximately 75 women. WLALA members took advantage of these visits to bring donations of much needed clothing and food items as well.

The first meal, held in December 2008, was a festive winter holiday meal replete with group caroling led by the Honorable Diana Wheatley. Judge Wheatley also generously provided gift bags for all of the ladies. Volunteers served the meal, catered by El Pollo Loco, and donated the beverages, desserts and paper goods.

In May 2009, WLALA hosted a Spring Brunch at the DWC. Member Nancy Yaffe and her significant other, Jeff Miller, outdid themselves once again by personally

cooking gourmet vegetarian frittatas, sausage frittatas, home fries and fruit salad. Nancy and Jeff generously donated the meal. Inspired by the warm and welcoming brunch atmosphere, WLALA volunteers sat and visited with the ladies in addition to serving the meal and providing the beverages, desserts and paper goods.

Domestic Violence Clinic

WLALA's Domestic Violence Clinic (the "Legal Clinic") is organized solely by WLALA and is in session every Monday from 6-7 p.m., excluding holidays. The clients are women referred by Sojourn; they are not necessarily residents in the shelter itself, and they come from every socio-economic and ethnic background imaginable, from executives at large entertainment industry corporations to stay-at-home immigrants who do not speak English. Often they are being abused or have just left their batterer and have no idea what their legal rights are or where to go for help. Of course, once they leave their batterer, their legal issues do not simply end. The Legal Clinic provides legal advice, guidance and support, and clients are welcome to return as often as necessary until their legal issues are resolved. Sojourn keeps track of the clinic's clients and monitors feedback, which indicates immense gratitude from the women and confirms that the Clinic serves an under-represented portion of the community.

Volunteer attorneys dispense general legal advice, mainly advising women on their general rights, how to prepare their case and where to go for further information: non-profits, self-help websites, how to research in a law library, how to find an attorney, etc. The Legal Clinic does not represent clients in matters and does not prepare paperwork, although volunteers will check over a client's paperwork that she filled out herself. Training is provided to volunteers on FAQs such as dissolution and restraining orders, as well as the cycle of domestic violence and how it commonly manifests. Each consultation with a client is brief, about 10-15 minutes, depending upon how many clients are waiting to be seen.

In 2009, thanks to a 2008 grant from the Rosenthal Trust, the Domestic Violence Project was able to design a training program for volunteers that will be offered semi-annually. Training manuals were created and distributed to existing and new volunteers, and the training program offered free CLE credit to persons who pledged to volunteer. The first program took place on May 13, 2009, where more than 20 new volunteers showed up and enlisted, greatly helping the dwindling number with which the Clinic previously operated.

For more information, please contact co-chairs Adrienne Hahn, Adrienne@vsblp.com, 310-306-0515, or Susan E. Hill, s.hill@hillpvlaw.com, 213-622-8775.



Fran Kandel Public Interest Grant

Each year, the WLALA Foundation awards the Fran Kandel Public Interest Grant to a law student to fund summer public interest projects that make governmental and social institutions and agencies more accessible and responsive to members of society whose interests are not otherwise adequately recognized or asserted.

In November 2008, we began our publicity efforts by sending out the applications to California law schools. We also publicized the grant at WLALA law student outreach events, which began in late fall and lasted through winter 2009.

In February 2009, grant committee members attended the Southern California Public Interest Career Day. The Public Interest Career Day is held at UCLA School of Law every year and is attended by law students from all of the law schools in Southern California. We spoke with students and provided information about the grant, distributed applications and also generally promoted WLALA, its student memberships, mentoring opportunities and the scholarships.

The Grant committee received four applications this year. Grant committee members completed an initial review of the applications received and conducted phone

interviews with each of the applicants. The committee recommended, and the WLALA Foundation Board approved, a grant in the amount of \$3,000 to Beatriz Espinoza.

Beatriz Espinoza



Ms. Espinoza has finished her first year as student at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law. She is an alumna of San Francisco State University, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice and Raza Studies in 2007. While at SFSU, she interned with La Raza Centro Legal and while at USC, she has been a volunteer with The Wage Justice Center.

In connection with her summer work with the Harriet Buhai Center for Family Law, Ms. Espinoza will produce a “know your rights” booklet about dependency law directed to mothers in jail. The guide, to be published in English and Spanish, will be an easy-to-understand guide that incarcerated mothers can use as a resource for information about custody and dependency issues for their children. The booklet will be distributed in connection with The Harriet Buhai Center’s regular outreach program for incarcerated women.



Law Student Scholarships

The WLALA Foundation offers tuition scholarships to law students who have demonstrated a commitment to issues affecting women and/or children. To be eligible for 2009 scholarships, students had to be enrolled for the 2009-2010 academic year in a law school that is accredited by the Committee of Bar Examiners of the State

of California and located in Los Angeles County; upon graduation from law school, planned to practice law in southern California; and have been in the top fifty percent of their class. Women and men were eligible to apply.

For 2009, the WLALA Foundation was delighted to award \$3,500 scholarships to each of the following deserving law students:

Catalina Rodas



Ms. Rodas will graduate from Southwestern School of Law, where she currently has a 3.5 GPA and is ranked in the top 20% of her class, in the Spring of 2011. After graduating from the University of Florida, Ms. Rodas began working at Peaceful Paths, a shelter for victims of domestic violence, where she actively worked to change domestic violence laws in Florida. In an effort to learn from other state's laws she moved to California to work at Sojourn, a domestic violence shelter in Santa Monica.

Ms. Rodas planned to stay for one year but her passion for helping others kept her at Sojourn for four years. Along with her many duties she was also the coordinator for WLALA's weekly legal clinic at Sojourn. Ms. Rodas still works two nights per week at Sojourn, and along with pursuing a career helping victims of domestic violence through direct services and improved legislation, she also plans to continue working or at least volunteering at Sojourn forever.

Julia Vasquez



Ms. Vasquez will graduate from the University of California Los Angeles School of Law in the Spring of 2010. Prior to attending law school, Ms. Vasquez served the South Central Los Angeles community as a kindergarten teacher. Her personal experiences and those of her students propelled her to a career in law so that she could be an advocate for underrepresented communities. Ms. Vasquez is active at her school and sits as Co-Chair of the La Raza Law Students Association, as Articles Editor of the Chicana/o Latina/o Law

Review, Board Member of the Immigration Law Society and as a Writing Advisor for the First-Year Lawyering Skills Course. In addition, Ms. Vasquez will serve this next year as chair of the El Centro Legal Clinic, which provides free immigration advice to detainees. Along with her numerous activities Ms. Vasquez has been able to maintain a 3.1 GPA. Ms. Vasquez spent this past Summer working as a law clerk for MALDEF. Ms. Vasquez is dedicated to challenging the mistrust of the legal system

which is pervasive in underrepresented communities and plans to serve as an advocate for the rights of immigrants and other underrepresented persons.

Alicia Virani



Ms. Virani will graduate from the joint J.D. and Masters in Urban Planning program at University of California Los Angeles School of Law in the Spring of 2011. Ms. Virani occupies her free time as the Education Co-Chair for OUTlaw, the Co-chair for SHAREJD, and Co-Chair of the Teen Court Clinic at UCLA. In addition, Ms. Virani co-founded the Los Angeles chapter of INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence and initiated a youth anti-violence summer program that began this past Summer. Ms. Virani spent this Summer working at the Alliance for Children's rights as an advocate for foster care youth. Along with her busy work and volunteer schedule Ms. Virani found time this last year to pursue her studies aggressively and obtain a 3.2 GPA. Last year Ms. Virani worked at the National Center for Lesbian Rights where she assisted in preparing an educational manual on LGBT youth in juvenile detention. Ms. Virani is passionate about providing alternative sentencing to LGBT juvenile offenders and upon graduation plans to start her own non-profit to provide a model alternative sentencing program here in Los Angeles.

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