



Our Mission

The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York fights for fairness, dignity, and justice for those living in poverty and for a society which is inclusive and equitable for all.

We transform lives, build community and empower people by using the law to address individual and systemic wrongs and inequities.

Serving the low-income residents of Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, St. Lawrence, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren and Washington Counties, and the St. Regis Reservation.

Lillian M. Moy
Executive Director



Working with SCAP to Prevent Eviction

For many years, Gary Morant enjoyed a successful career as a chef, even partnering with celebrities on occasion. But in the spring of 2018, he was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and was no longer able to work. He applied for SSD and was approved, but he couldn't expect his first check until the end of a 6-month waiting period. And because he had some private disability insurance, he didn't qualify for much SSI. This tough financial situation caused Mr. Morant to fall behind on his rent and soon he faced eviction proceedings.

Fortunately, Mr. Morant was put in touch with David Crossman, a Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York (LASNNY) attorney,

and with the Schenectady Community Action Program (SCAP). Crossman says, "I went to court with Mr. Morant for two separate non-payment cases. The first time, in August 2018, we put together a payment plan for him and Donna Gonzalez from SCAP was able to provide \$275 towards this plan."

But Mr. Morant's financial issues weren't over yet. A few weeks later, Gary fell behind again. His payment was due on a Friday, but he didn't have the full amount until the following day, Saturday. He called the landlord to let them know he'd be a day late, but by Monday morning, the landlord had already filed for another warrant of eviction.

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Lillian M. Moy
Executive Director

2019 has been great so far. During the first half of the year, we finished our 2018 statistics. Last year we handled 13,731 cases for all clients, providing life changing legal services to meet our clients' essential needs. We reached 360,908 people through other legal assistance avenues including community legal education, outreach presentations, distribution of brochures, and visits to Legal Lifelines on our website. We continue to provide high levels of full representation in courts and before administrative agencies, as well as advice and brief service that allows many clients to make better legal decisions.

We continue to evaluate and improve our full program of legal services. We continue to work with many community partners and are active in Domestic Violence Task Forces and Coalitions in nine counties. 76 pro bono lawyers accepted referrals from us in the first half of the year. One of them, the team of Paul Kietzman and Dave Glasel at Barclay Damon, handled our first case for a group: Nonprofit Incorporation for the ALERT Partnership. Our pro bono volunteers are available to help other low income community groups seeking incorporation or legal advice.

Our lawyers became even more seasoned, winning the cases described in this newsletter and many more. We continue our commitment to high quality

Executive Director's Column

individual representation even as we explore ways to have greater systemic impact in our communities. Tara Glynn, a staff attorney in the Plattsburgh office, helped a group of mobile home tenants create a mobile home co-op. 74% of the families went from tenants to homeowners through her work.

In addition, our Advocacy Coordinator, Victoria Esposito, filed suit against the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, St. Clare's Corporation, St. Clare's Retirement Income Plan, and various individuals tasked with managing these entities on behalf of two eligible clients who were promised pensions from St. Clare's Hospital. Working with a team of lawyers from the AARP Legal Foundation, with Professor David Pratt of the Albany Law School, and with Gary Stone of Brooklyn Legal Services, Victoria is a key part of the legal team.

During this year we also recruited a number of exciting new Board members. This newsletter highlights one of our North Country Board members, Lloyd Grandy II of the Carlisle firm. Also joining us this year are Thomas Adams of Conboy, McKay, Bachman & Kendall, LLP, and Kate Mastaitis of Donnellan and Knussman, PLLC. Our volunteer Board of Directors provides guidance and oversight to all of the work that we do; they are invaluable.

We were blessed with a baby boom and have recently welcomed back several attorneys who were on parental leave. It is very gratifying to see the next generation of Legal Aid babies and parents continuing the fight for equal access to justice.

We welcomed a new Development Associate, Jenifer Whiston, and we formally recognized Deanne Grimaldi as our Director of Development and Communications. If you think our Communications are better, sharper, and edgier this year, you can thank them.

If you got to the end of my column, I'm particularly grateful for you taking the time to read it! Feel free to call me if you ever want to talk about our work, make a suggestion, give me some guiding advice, or enroll in our PAI program. My direct number is 518-689-6304 and truly, I look forward to hearing from you.

Namaste.

Lillian M. Moy
Executive Director

Recent Grant Awards:

Barry Alan Gold Memorial Fund – The Albany Project (TAP)

B'nai B'rith Gideon Foundation – Landlord Tenant Housing

Carl E. Touhey Foundation – The Albany Project (TAP)

Capitalize Albany Corporation – Improvements at 95 Central Ave.

Community Foundation Impact Grant – Children's Law Project

New York State OTDA STEHP Grant - Housing & Homelessness Prevention

Phila, Emma Willard – Domestic Violence Prevention

The New York Bar Foundation – North Country Impact Project

Thank You!

Dedicated to Pro Bono Work

Marc Ehrlich received the American Bar Association's (ABA) Pro Bono Publico Award, presented by the Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service. The Committee works to ensure access to justice through the expansion and enhancement of the delivery of legal and other law-related services to the underserved through volunteer efforts of legal professionals nationwide.

A dedicated pro bono attorney for over three decades, Marc is a perfect fit for this accolade. The Legal Aid Society of Northern New York (LASNNY) nominated Marc for the award for his dedication to the Private Attorney Involvement (PAI) program. Marc says, "I started taking pro bono cases from legal aid in the mid 1980s and I took my first referral from LASNNY simply because they called me and asked." He continues, "It goes to show that if you pick up the phone and ask someone to volunteer, sometimes they'll say yes."

Marc estimates that in the past three decades, he's taken on about 500 pro bono cases, spending multiple hours on each case. Marc says, "I do everything from preparing the petition to going to court to answering follow-up questions." And when it comes to accepting pro bono clients, Marc wants them to be as local as possible. He explains, "I want the clients to be within easy driving distance or on bus routes." Marc continues, "If you're doing pro bono work, you really need to look at the geographic location of your client, you don't want them to be spending an inordinate amount of time trying to get to your office."

One of Marc's previous clients says, "Had he not been able to take the case, I don't know what I would have done." Ramona is the mom to 3 children, including a son on the autism spectrum, and a few years ago she was going through a divorce. She says, "I had a lot of debt and filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy. But because of the kids, it was important to keep my

home and my car." Thankfully, Marc was able to help her do exactly that. Ramona says Marc made the legal process easy to understand. She says, "If I had questions, I was always able to speak directly with Marc, rather than having information relayed through a middle person." Ramona's bankruptcy was discharged in June 2014 and she is still her home to this day. Thanks to Marc's dedication to pro bono work, Marc has helped hundreds of clients just like Ramona.

Marc owns a private practice in Troy, New York and is Board Certified in Consumer Bankruptcy Law. In addition, he has served as a Chapter 7 panel Trustee for the Northern District of New York since 1991. Marc is a three-time winner of the Distinguished Service Award for Private Attorney Involvement for pro bono work by the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, and was awarded the President's Pro Bono Service Attorney Award by the New York State Bar Association in 2001 and its Small Firm Pro Bono Award in 2013. He was awarded the Barry A. Gold Law Firm Leadership Award by The Legal Project of the Capital District Women's Bar Association in 2004.

LASNNY is thrilled that Marc was selected for this honor and was glad to be there when he received the award at the ABA's Annual Meeting on August 10, 2019 in San Francisco, California. Lillian Moy, LASNNY's Executive Director says, "Marc's commitment to assuring fairness to those who cannot afford representation is outstanding. LASNNY and his clients are fortunate to have him as a volunteer."



Ramona Grugnale and PAI Attorney March Ehrlich



Justice For All Campaign Leadership



Ronald Orlando and Erica Ludwick



JFA Co-Chair David Cost addresses the group with LASNNY Board President Sanjeeve DeSoyza



Kadeem Wollaston, Raisi Mobebe, Melody Harkness, Serena White-Lake, and Ajele Randolph



JFA Co-Chair David Cost with LASNNY Attorney Victoria Esposito and Ryan Keleher



Kenneth Gellhaus and F. Michael Tucker



Tim Morrison and LASNNY Executive Director Lillian Moy



LASNNY Board President Sanjeeve DeSoyza talking with Peter V. Coffey



Patricia Rodriguez and Gina Wisniewski



John Maxwell and Nadene Zeigler

2019 Justice For All Annual Campaign Kick-off

September 19, 2019
Fort Orange Club
Albany, New York

How Can You Support LASNNY?

- Volunteer with our Private Attorney Involvement Program (PAI)
- Support our Annual Justice For All Campaign at the leadership level
- Become a Guardian of Justice. Make a gift to the LASNNY Endowment Fund

Client Story: (cont. from front)

Crossman explains, "Instead of picking up the payment a day late, the landlord filed for a warrant of eviction on Monday based on Mr. Morant's 'default' under the stipulation. I filed an order to show cause arguing that the landlord was supposed to notify me that they were seeking a warrant and citing a case that says payment a day late and a dollar (actually \$1.56) short should not result in forfeiting a tenancy. In Gary's case, he wasn't even a dollar short, just a day late. At the court appearance, Judge Frost ordered the landlord to accept the payment." Crossman was happy with the successful outcome but acknowledges the gravity of the situation. He recalls, "As Gary signed a retainer for me to represent him in court, he looked into my eyes and said, 'My life is in your hands.'"

As for Mr. Morant, the 61-year-old is still battling cancer. He is thankful for the company of his three children and life partner. "She's been by my side throughout everything." And he can't say enough good things about LASNNY and SCAP. "I don't know where I'd be without them," he says. "David helped me out numerous times with landlord negotiations as well as giving referrals for other types of assistance." While Mr. Morant navigates his very serious health issues, he can at least rest easy when it comes to his housing.



PAI Program Update



Melody Harkness
PAI Paralegal

attorneys and interns throughout the summer and implementing the much needed expansion of our housing programs.

In April, we celebrated Sharon Couch Debonis and Amanda Rose at NYSBA's President's Service Awards. Sharon and Amanda were NYSBA's Third and Fourth Judicial recipients. Sharon Debonis, a Troy solo practitioner, was nominated as the Third Judicial recipient for her active involvement in our Attorney for the Day program, both as a mentor and volunteer. Sharon has participated in all three locations – Albany, Troy and Glens Falls for our Attorney for the Day program. Amanda Rose, also a solo practitioner, was nominated as the Fourth Judicial recipient for her active participation in our Fulton, Montgomery and Schoharie county pro se divorce clinics.

In May, we celebrated Marc Ehrlich on the American Bar Association Pro Bono Publico nomination at the Rensselaer County Bar Association Annual Dinner. Marc Ehrlich of Ehrlich & Acordia PC is

it was a very busy summer with the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York Private Attorney Involvement department. We have been celebrating the many accomplishments of our pro bono

a longstanding and active contributor of our Bankruptcy Referral program, assisting low-income debtors by providing them Chapter 7 discharges. Ehrlich assists some clients who are at risk of immediate garnishment and subject to enforcement of liens. He will be formally recognized at the American Bar Association Annual Meeting in August, held in San Francisco, CA.

In June, we celebrated Jellisa Joseph at the Capital District Women's Bar Association's Annual Dinner on her New Outstanding Attorney nomination! Joseph, Associate Counsel with the NYS Senate Democratic Conference, has been an active volunteer with our Closing the Gap program since 2018. Closing the Gap is a pro se program that assists unrepresented litigants with attorneys, remotely, for limited, brief services in their consumer debt and housing matters. Joseph has eagerly utilized the Private Attorney Involvement office space available for pro bono attorneys at the new Center for Civil Legal Services at 95 Central Ave in Albany.

Attorney for the Day Expansion:

More recently the surge of new tenant protection laws passed in June.

It has been an exciting and overwhelming time applying the new laws that have been implemented for stronger tenant protections.

Attorney for the Day (AFTD) is a collaborative effort with participating courts, pro bono attorneys, Legal Aid

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Society of Northeastern New York and Albany Law School student volunteers to assist tenants facing eviction in the cities of Albany, Troy, and Glens Falls. Private firms such as Whiteman, Osterman and Hanna, LLP have been sending associates on a monthly for several years. Whiteman associates gain valuable negotiation and litigation experience participating in this program.

Attorney for the Day's goal is to sustain or assist low-income tenants with transitioning to new affordable housing, to address concerns with inhabitable properties, and/or to provide tenants with the information and advice that they need to advocate for their housing rights. It has been very exciting to hit the ground running putting the new tenant protections into practice.

Increase in Name Change Referrals:

There is a rise of persons who identify themselves using other nontraditional gender terms, research suggests. Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, In Our Own Voices, Inc. and private firms like Nixon Peabody, LLP respond to the needs of gender nonconforming persons, meaning that they don't always self-identify as the sex they were assigned at birth, who wish to change their name and gender.

LASNNY offers these services through our Private Attorney Involvement - Name and Gender Marker Change referral project. Persons contact us directly or are referred by community organization, such as, In Our Own Voices, Inc. to connect with pro bono leaders such as Tina Sciochetti and Dan Hurteau, partners at Nixon Peabody, LLP (see pictured). Petitions are filed in the Supreme Court of the applicant's jurisdiction to change their name.

Some may not understand how important it is to be addressed and identified in a manner that is consistent with their own self-identification. Our pro bono attorneys at Nixon Peabody, LLP get it. Discrimination and fear of rejection in employment, healthcare and educational institutions add an additional barrier for the LGBTQ community to overcome.



Thanks to the Following Attorneys who took cases:

January 1, 2019 through August 31, 2019

Alhasan Anas Alzarari

Luke Babbi

Paula Barbaruolo

Ira Bloom

Leah Bojnowski

Michal J. Boxley

Stephen Buckley

Brandi Burns

Paul Callahan

John Casey

Ryan Cooke

Jo Ann Coughtry

Taylor Cuomo

Marc Ehrlich

Sharon Couch Debonis

James Della Porta

Mariah Dolce

John Dormin

Alexander Dunshee

Christian Dribusch

Christine Carsky

Kelly Curro

Christopher DiSanto

Fiona Farrell

Brent Frary

Meg Gilmartin

Dave Glasel

Kasey Hildonen

Rebecca Janes

Jellisa Joseph

Joseph Kay

Thomas Keefe

Paul Kietzman

Ronald Kim

Christopher Kenyon

Chelsey Lester

Theresa Levine

Erin Lynch

Tara MacNeill

R.P. Andrew Mcnee

David Meyers

Kelly Mikullitz

Lisa Mills

Justin Myers

Jill Nagy

Michael O'Brien

Michael O'Connor

Lynn Papazian

Joel Peller

Jeff Pohl

Lianne Pinchuk

Vicki Prager

Joseph Pinto

Erica Rangel

Kenneth Ritzenberg

Amanda Rose

Morgan Ruthman

Alexander Sanchez

Dana Salazar

Lawrence Schillinger

Bethany Schumann-

McGhee

Adrian Scantlebury

Tina Sciochetti

Nicole Helmer-Simon

Suzanne Smith

Breanna Staffon

Bruce Steves

Christina Suits

Maria Tebano

Kevin Theimann

Michael Toomey

Alex Turnello

Raysheea Turner

Christiaan Van Niekerk

Debra Verni

Jessica Vinson

Kathy Walter

Eric Weinhold

Stephan Weiss

Jon Whalen

Marissa Wiley

G. Kimball Williams

Joseph Williams

James Wisiewski

Mia Wolfe

Christina Zawisza

Upcoming Training & Events

Special Education Task Force January 2020 Training - Pathways to Graduation - FREE

Friday, Jan. 17 10:00 am - 12:30 pm @ Colonie Public Library, 629 Albany-Shaker Rd., Albany, NY

This presentation will breakdown the various diploma options and corresponding pathways to high school graduation, simplifying the requirements for students, parents, and school district personnel alike.

Register at <https://www.lasnny.org/event>

For additional information or accommodations contact Helen Charland at helen.charland@drny.org or 518.512.4927

ACBA Court of Appeals Dinner - Wednesday, Feb. 12 at 6:00 pm @ Albany Capital Center.

Register at AlbanyCountyBar.org or by calling 518-445-7691 x116



Legal Aid Society

NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK

95 Central Avenue
Albany, NY 12206

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED



Board Profile: Lloyd G. Grandy II

The Legal Aid Society of Northern New York (LASNNY) recently welcomed a new board member to its roster. Lloyd G. Grandy II, the recent addition, spent the first few months of his life in Massachusetts, but after his father retired from the U.S. Air Force, the family returned to their ancestral home in St. Lawrence County. The family has strong ties to the area, dating back as far as seven generations. Lloyd spent his childhood and early adulthood near the family farm, eventually earning his B.A. and M.Ed. from St. Lawrence University.

Lloyd says that he had always been interested in law, but didn't make the decision to begin law school until his early 30's. He attended an accelerated program at Thomas M. Cooley Law School where he received his Juris Doctor cum laude. Upon graduation, he practiced law in Lansing, Michigan, but eventually Lloyd returned home to St. Lawrence County.

In January 2014, Lloyd joined his current firm, The Carlisle Law Firm, P.C., where he is a shareholder. Lloyd focuses mainly on

social security disability cases, but he says he is involved in a little bit of everything that his firm does – from personal injury to workers' compensation cases.

Lloyd joined the LASNNY board in early 2019, but he's no stranger to the organization's work. He says, "LASNNY has been a great resource for my entire career and I've been touting the benefits for years." Lloyd entered into his new role on the LASNNY board with plenty of leadership experience. He is past President of the St. Lawrence County Bar Association and recently joined the National Aluminum Production Heritage Association as a member of their Board of Directors.

When he's not working or giving back to the community, Lloyd says he relishes the chance to spend time with his family. He and his wife, Dorothy, have three children and they enjoy getting outside as much as possible. Lloyd says, "We live in such a beautiful part of the state – the St. Lawrence River is in our backyard, Lake Placid is not far away, and Montreal and

Ottawa are within easy driving distance."

Lloyd says that living in a rural area like St. Lawrence County means he sees people struggling to make ends meet everyday. He says that the need for legal aid has always been apparent and abundant and he hopes to be seen as "the local boy who came back and is happy to be home serving his neighbors." As he wraps up his first year in the position, Lloyd says, "Being on the board for LASNNY is an amazing opportunity and I'm looking forward to giving advice and being available first hand."

LASNNY's Executive Director, Lillian Moy, is thrilled to welcome Lloyd to the team. She says, "It's exciting to have Lloyd Grandy join our Board. Legal Aid needs new Board members who will be strong representatives for St. Lawrence County and all of the North Country. Lloyd has great ideas and I look forward to working with him."

