

# **LASMTC & Nashville Pro Bono Program Take on 8,703 Cases in 2010**

## ***Obtains hundreds of thousands in benefits for low-income Tennesseans***

NASHVILLE, Tenn. July 7, 2011 - In 2010, Legal Aid Society staff helped individuals and their families in 5,671 civil legal cases, according to the firm's year-end statistics released today. Volunteer attorneys, working through the Nashville Pro Bono Program and other local pro bono programs, worked an additional 2,477 cases, plus 555 cases for families affected by the May flood. The total of 8,703 cases represents a four percent increase over 2009.

"More than 70 percent of low-income Tennesseans needed assistance with a civil legal problem at least once during 2010—that's over 280,000 legal problems than required some guidance," said Gary Housepian, executive director. "We continue to strive to bridge this gap and help as many people as possible to make access to justice a reality."

The free legal advice and representation clients received from Legal Aid Society staff during 2010 had a market value of \$127,235,678. Pro bono attorney and paralegal volunteers provided an additional \$1,577,000 in free legal help.

"In response to the economic recession, the Legal Aid Society committed to helping more working Tennesseans qualify for unemployment insurance benefits," said Neil McBride, general counsel and managing attorney of the Oak Ridge office. "In 2010, our staff and pro bono partners gained \$564,436 in unemployment insurance benefits for workers and their families."

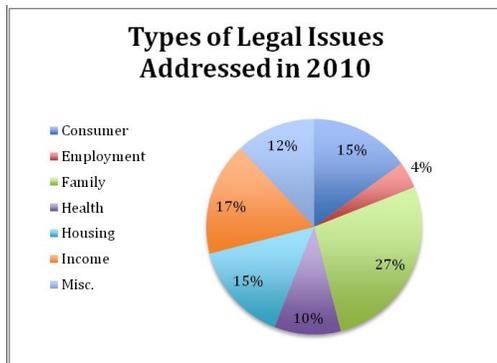
The Legal Aid Society also won \$2,230,891 in benefits for home-bound Tennesseans with severe mental and physical disabilities in 2010. In cases it closed on behalf of Tennesseans seeking social security disability benefits, Legal Aid Society staff and pro bono attorneys gained \$1,780,084 in cash assistance and medical insurance.

Client Jeanette Chatman’s life was changed with the help of a volunteer attorney. She is a 49-year-old single mother. She lost her job as a customer service representative because she forwarded a customer’s call to her supervisor at the customer’s request.

Nashville Pro Bono Program referred her to Charles McCandless of HCA Shared Services. McCandless represented Chatman at her hearing and won her employment benefits.

“I’m filled with overwhelming gratitude towards Mr. McCandless for his help in the recovery of my unemployment,” Chatman said. “His presentation of the facts was that of a confident attorney. Diligent faith and persuasive truth balanced the scales of injustice.”

“More than 804 volunteer lawyers handled cases through the Nashville Pro Bono Program and other local pro bono programs in 2010,” said Nashville Pro Bono Program Director Lucinda Smith. “We were able to recruit new volunteers and



y 12 percent over last year.”

For 41 years, the Legal Aid Society has been a place

for low-income families to find a helping hand with legal issues involving money, housing, health, family, employment and domestic violence cases. The Legal Aid Society provides assistance in 48 counties through eight offices located in Clarksville, Cookeville, Columbia, Gallatin, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Oak Ridge and Tullahoma.

Additional 2010 statistics for the Legal Aid Society and Nashville Pro Bono Program include:

- Received 28,217 requests for assistance.
- Held 79 pro bono clinics in 2010 (seven percent increase over 2009). Pro bono attorneys assisted 1,433 clients at these clinics.

- Obtained \$2,495,072 in federal income tax benefits for 392 low-income families through its Tennessee Taxpayer Project.
- Gave 144 community education presentations on common civil legal issues that were attended by 5,102 people (a two percent increase over 2009).
- Distributed 232,992 self-help brochures on common legal problems.

For more information, contact Jeff Bradford or Erin Gagnon at (615) 515-4888.

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