



LAW SERVICES NEWS

WINTER 2024 NEWSLETTER OF NASSAU SUFFOLK LAW SERVICES

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Victoria A. Osk, Esq.



Nassau Suffolk Law Services (NSLS) continues to make effective strides by providing free legal services to low-income families across Long Island. Through the combined support of our dedicated staff and supporters, we are able to provide various cooperative programs catered to strengthen our ties to the community.

Our mission is to assist underprivileged families in combating issues involving healthcare, homelessness, consumer debt, disability, family affairs, and other eligible civil legal matters. NSLS encourages families to lead productive lives by ensuring that government benefits and emergency services are provided to those who are eligible.

As we continue to evolve our service areas, several units have been transformed. In light of pervasive homelessness on Long Island, the largest development could be seen within the expansion of our housing unit and the adjustments made in handling each case. With the support of New York State grants, we were able to successfully transition from a volunteer model to a staff model, allowing us to hire several new staff attorneys to match the rising demand for our services. Our vision is to establish NSLS as the go-to legal services resource on housing matters and to be present in courts daily. As our eligibility guidelines have expanded, we encourage all tenants to ask for us in court and be evaluated for services.

Our transformative efforts have also progressed within a unique sector of Legal Services called the Community Legal Help Project (CLHP). Both Nassau and Suffolk counties have added new locations and continue to collaborate with different organizations. Our Suffolk CLHP unit, for example, has welcomed two new locations (Patchogue-Medford Library and Half Hollow Hills Library) and partnered with CARECEN and Touro Law School to provide free legal information and referrals through brief consultations.

These developments couldn't have been possible without our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners, and donors. We would like to extend a huge thanks to our Governor and the New York State Legislature for funding our housing units as well as **Assemblywoman Gina L. Sillitti, NY State Senator Monica R. Martinez, and NY State Senator Kevin Thomas** for all efforts towards funding our Veterans' Rights Project.

In the magnificent tapestry of our success, each accomplishment is a vibrant thread woven with purpose. In our ongoing efforts to develop NSLS, we celebrate each endeavor with our annual Spring Gala. Together, we illuminate the path to a safe and just world. We hope to see you there!

FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING
OUR 2024 GALA, SEE PAGE 22



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Contributors:

Sharon Campo, Esq.
Supervising Attorney of Volunteers and Community Projects

Catherine Lucidi
Director of Community Relations

Hannah Fitzpatrick
Community Relations Paralegal

Michelle Makowski
External Affairs Paralegal



DISABILITY BENEFITS SUCCESS STORIES

In a recent case, our **Disability Advocacy Project (DAP) Staff Attorney Josephine DeLuca Ravindran** assisted a disabled individual who had been denied Disabled Adult Child (DAC) benefits. DAC is a Social Security program for adult children whose benefit is built around the earnings record of the parent, not the disabled adult. This program helps individuals who have been under a continuous disability since before reaching the age of 22.

Our client, who had been receiving SSI, applied for DAC benefits under his parents' earnings record. Despite meeting the criteria, he was denied. In response, the client contacted our DAP unit which could take on the case. **Attorney Ravindran** agreed to represent the disabled adult at a Social Security hearing where all records and applications were reviewed and reassessed. The ultimate legal decision favored our client and all DAC benefits were rewarded. Through the efforts of DAP, the client became eligible for a higher amount of ongoing monthly benefits than he had previously been receiving under the SSI program. **Great work, Josephine!**

In order to be considered for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), an individual must meet certain income and resource criteria in addition to being disabled, blind, or aged 65 or older. In 2020, a claimant filed for SSI benefits and was denied due to excess resources (property). The claimant filed for reconsideration but was ineligible due to failing to provide the property deed without his name. Subsequently, the claimant filed a written request for a hearing, and in 2023 was represented by our **Senior Citizen Law Project Staff Attorney Daniel Okrent**.

In this case, the claimant had to prove that he had never been a shareholder or co-op owner of a residence in Brooklyn. At the hearing, the claimant testified that he had lived in Brooklyn, but never owned an apartment there. After searching through New York City property records, **Attorney Okrent** found that no UCC lien filing statements mentioned the claimant's name indicating that he was not the owner of the property. As a result of Dan's due diligence, the judge found that our claimant was eligible to receive SSI, qualifying him to receive benefits. **Congrats, Dan!**

**New Disability
Advocacy Project
Brochures Available!**
Scan the QR codes below



English



Spanish



**Josephine DeLuca
Ravindran, Esq.**
Staff Attorney
Disability Advocacy Project



Daniel Okrent, Esq.
Staff Attorney
Senior Citizen Law Project

Nassau Suffolk Law Services has many units that advocate for clients to receive disability benefits including: the Disability Advocacy Project, Veterans Law Project, HIV/AIDS Law Project, and Mental Health Law Project. If you or a client are looking for assistance to receive disability, please call our offices to determine eligibility. Suffolk: (631) 232-2400 Nassau: (516) 292-8100



SUFFOLK CIVIL UNIT SUCCESS STORIES

Client Secures New Home: A 73-year-old client applied and had been on a waiting list for Section 8 subsidized housing; however, the town Housing Authority denied the application and removed the client from the waiting list due to missing documents.

Suffolk Civil Unit **Staff Attorney Courtney Spellman** assisted the client in preparing a request for an informal hearing. **Attorney Spellman** also facilitated communications between the client and the Housing Authority. As a result of these efforts, the Housing Authority placed the client back on the waiting list. Within months, an apartment was identified as meeting the client's needs; however, the client faced further financial obstacles in obtaining funds for a security deposit, the first month's rent, and moving costs. **Attorney Spellman** reached out to various organizations and guided the client through the application process to request financial assistance. Following the application process, one resource determined that the client was eligible for funds for the security deposit and first month's rent, and another resource covered the moving costs.

The client has a diagnosis of mental illness and called frequently to express how the situation was overwhelming her. As such, **Attorney Spellman** relied heavily on assistance and guidance from **Eva Jimenez** in NSLS's Social Work Unit. "We are so fortunate to have the Social Work Department available to answer questions and provide advice. Interprofessional collaboration is invaluable in providing a holistic approach to serving our clients," said **Attorney Spellman**.

The client moved into her new apartment recently and expressed to **Attorney Spellman**, "I feel like you are an angel who was sent to help me." A Rental Subsidy Program Assistant from the town Housing Authority confirmed the importance of Nassau Suffolk Law Services' contributions to the process. He wrote: "If you had asked me 6 months ago if we ever would have gotten [the client] through the eligibility process, let alone moved in, I would have laughed at the concept. Your involvement made this happen. You were able to get things back on track and made a great go-between and teammate...So, simply I want you to know that this all only happened successfully because of your care and effort so thank you."

LSCA Training Alert!

March 5, 2024 1:00pm

Join the Legal Support Center for Advocates and Director of Community Relations, Cathy Lucidi, for **"The Role of an Advocate."** This virtual training will review basic tips on how to help your clients using a holistic approach. Additionally, we will discuss our new CARES Membership (page 21) and the trainings we plan on offering in person and virtually in 2024. Sign up today using the QR code below.



Courtney Spellman, Esq.

Staff Attorney
Civil Unit

More about the Suffolk Civil Unit...

The Suffolk Civil Unit provides legal assistance to low-income persons with housing issues, including eviction proceedings, Section 8 termination hearings, and appellate work with respect thereto. The unit also brings affirmative litigation concerning violations of state or federal law on a limited basis. The Islandia office represents clients residing in the towns of Babylon, Smithtown, Brookhaven, Islip, and Huntington. The Riverhead office represents clients residing in Riverhead and all the East End towns. Suffolk Residents can call (631) 232-2400.



PUBLIC BENEFITS CASE SUCCESSES

Law Graduate Arefa Jawadwala of our **Hempstead Public Benefits Unit** recently helped a client avoid an eviction and money judgment by qualifying for a One-Shot Deal application with the Nassau County Department of Social Services ("DSS").

Ms. W is a bedridden mother who faces severe physical and mental health conditions. The household comprises Ms. W's daughter and extended family making them a family of seven. The family was housed in their home through participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program ("Section 8").

The family was facing eviction due to defaulting on a stipulation that included a payment plan with their landlord. The consequences of default were that the family would be evicted, have a money judgment against them, and potentially be terminated from the Section 8 program.

A notice of eviction from the sheriff was issued to the family. In response, the family filed an Order to Show Cause (OSC) to stop the eviction but was unable to reach a new agreement with the landlord. The judge denied the OSC and ordered that no further OSCs could be filed and that the eviction could proceed. Time was of the essence for assistance with preventing an eviction.

First, the family turned to the Department of Social Services (DSS). Ms. W's daughter applied for a one-shot deal application with DSS due to her mother's inability to go to DSS in person. DSS denied the application because Ms. W's daughter was not the head of the household and could not submit the application on her mother's behalf.

Ms. W's daughter reached out to Nassau Suffolk Law Services and spoke with **Ms. Jawadwala** in our Hempstead office. After reviewing the DSS file and the relevant medical and financial information, **Ms. Jawadwala** submitted a reasonable accommodation request to DSS to allow an exception to their policy of requiring the applicant to be in person to process a one-shot deal application. The accommodation request included a complete application for emergency rental assistance.

Through advocacy with the DSS, they successfully presented Ms. W's information and circumstances, rendering her eligible for the assistance program. This enabled DSS to approve the family for a one-shot deal to bring Ms. W current on her rent, avoid eviction and a money judgment as well as preserve the Section 8 voucher. **Congratulations, Arefa!**

Advocacy Tip!

If a debt collector is contacting you by phone, request that they send you whatever they have in writing. It is important to never give personal information, like your social security number, over the phone. Once you receive the letter, you can do more investigation on whether or not you owe the debt alleged. One way of doing this is to request verification of the debt. The debt collector must verify the debt in writing. Whether you agree that you owe the debt or not, you can write what is called a "cease-dunning" letter to the debt collector. This essentially states that you wish for the debt collector to stop contacting you by phone or in writing. For sample verification and cease dunning letters, please visit our website by scanning the QR code.



Arefa Jawadwala

Law Graduate
Public Benefits Unit

More about the Public Benefits Unit

The Public Benefits Unit provides legal assistance to persons who experience problems with public benefits programs that are administered by the local Departments of Social Services, including Welfare (TANF and Safety Net), Medicaid, Food Stamps (SNAP), Child Care Assistance, HEAP, Emergency shelter for the homeless, Unemployment insurance appeals and overpayments, and other emergency assistance programs. We also assist low-income households in establishing Supplemental Needs Trusts to eliminate the Medicaid spend-down and assist homeless families to obtain rent supplements from DSS to enable families to leave the shelters or retain permanent housing. Nassau residents can call 516-292-8100. Suffolk residents can call 631-232-2400.



MENTAL HEALTH LAW PROJECT SUCCESS STORIES

Leisa Rockelein, a Law Graduate in the Hempstead Mental Health Law Project, recently assisted a client in restoring their Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) with CDLI (currently known as Community Development Long Island or CDLI).

Ms. L was a Section 8 voucher holder with the Nassau County Office of Housing (Nassau County). She was issued a voucher to find housing through Nassau County. Unfortunately, she was unable to locate housing within the voucher's allotted time frame due to her disabilities and surgeries. In late 2022, Ms. L applied for an extension of her voucher through a reasonable accommodation request, but she never heard back from Nassau County. Ms. L followed up and was told verbally her extension would be issued but she never heard anything else or received proof of an extension of the voucher.

After this conversation, Nassau County's Section 8 program was transferred to CDLI on December 1, 2022. Ms. L never received notice of the program's transfer. After months of not knowing the status of her voucher, Ms. L contacted Nassau Suffolk Law Services to see if we could assist her with getting any information on her voucher.

When **Ms. Rockelein** investigated the issue for Ms. L, she learned that Ms. L's address was incorrectly put in CDLI's system and that is why she was never informed of the transfer of her voucher. But CDLI had no proof that her voucher was extended and considered her voucher term to be closed.

Ms. Rockelein drafted a reasonable accommodation request to CDLI to reinstate the voucher due to Ms. L's disability and the circumstances surrounding her losing it. After a review, CDLI reinstated Ms. L's voucher and extended her voucher term to find housing. Ms. L was living in a single room with her pregnant daughter and was at risk of homelessness while undergoing medical treatment, but now she will have the opportunity to obtain stable and affordable housing. **Great work, Leisa!**

The more you know: The Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments program is a federal rent and mortgage subsidy program that assists eligible low-income or displaced families, senior citizens, and persons living with disabilities in obtaining housing nationwide. Families receive a rental subsidy, known as a housing assistance payment, or a mortgage subsidy toward payments to purchase a home, equal to the difference between their share of the rent, (based on their income) and the approved rent or mortgage for the unit. Eligible families and individuals are subject to statutory income limits.

Advocacy Tip!

Landlords may not refuse to rent to, renew the lease of, or otherwise discriminate against, any person or group of persons because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, AIDS or HIV status, alcoholism, marital status or familial status. Further, New York State landlords are prohibited from discriminating against tenants based on lawful source of income, which includes income from social security or any form of federal, state, or local public assistance including Section 8 vouchers (Executive Law § 296(5)).



Leisa Rockelein

Law Graduate
Mental Health Law Project

More about Mental Health Law Project...

The Mental Health Law Project is designed to provide legal assistance in civil matters to persons who are severely and persistently mentally ill. This project focuses primarily on issues relating to basic necessities of life, such as housing, public benefits, access to health care and child support. Clients must be at least 18 years of age and functionally disabled by a severe and persistent mental illness. Behavioral problems resulting from developmental disability, head injury, stroke, epilepsy or other organic dysfunction do not qualify. Nassau residents can contact (516) 292-8100 and Suffolk residents can contact (631) 232-2400.

WE HEAR FROM OUR CLIENTS YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

"Our sincere gratitude for your help and support during a challenging time. Your kindness and understanding as well as quick actions helped ease this difficult situation. We couldn't ask for a more compassionate representation."

**- Former client of Maria DeGennaro, Esq.
(Consumer Debt Unit)**

"I would like to thank you for helping me with my case in court. I appreciate you so much."

**- Former client of Judy Slater Hirshon, Esq.
(Civil Unit)**

"Thank you for all your help with my case! You were my point of contact for everything, and a constant stream of info and communication. I hope this shows a little of my appreciation I have for you."

**- Former client of Jacob Buckheit, Paralegal
(Veterans' Rights Project)**

"I am writing this message to express my deepest thanks in handling my case. I could never ask for a better outcome. I have dealt with many attorneys over the past. Not one comes close to you regarding professionalism, advice, which was spot on. Also the compassion, kindness was above and beyond what one could expect. I appreciate the job you performed regarding my case. You are a life saver."

**- Former client of Maria DeGennaro, Esq.
(Consumer Debt Unit)**



Visit our website:
<https://www.nslawservices.org/>

"I would like to thank you for your kindness, patience, professionalism and council to me during crisis. I'm grateful to you. Pat, you are just a kind human being, a nice lady!"

**- Former client of Patricia Caruso, Esq.
(Foreclosure Prevention Unit)**

"Thank you for going above and beyond fighting for us to keep our home. We are very fortunate to have had you in our lives. You will never be forgotten!"

**- Former client of Patricia Caruso, Esq.
(Foreclosure Prevention Unit)**

"I have been a resident for 50 years. I moved here for the school system, but found the library system to be just as important. This again proved true when the services provided by the Community Legal Help Project provided me with a strategy to intervene with a family matter, resulting in the rescue of three neglected children. Rashika Hettiarachchi met with me, listened to my "tale of woe," and...follow the steps she outlined for me. She was supportive, informative and, professional. I am grateful that the library provided her valuable service, which is definitely an asset to the community, considering the cost of legal advice."

**- Former client of Rashika Hettiarachchi, Esq.
(Community Legal Help Project)**

"My experience being assisted by Nassau-Suffolk Law Services was nothing short of relieving. All staff that I interacted with were positive and professional and Ellen Hoil and the Civil Rights Project team did their absolute best to assist me and keep me updated on my case the whole way through. I am happy to have discovered them and I would recommend their services to anyone."

**- Former client of Ellen Hoil, Esq.
(Civil Rights Project)**

STAY IN TOUCH WITH LAW SERVICES

**Sign up for our online mailing
list for more resources
including our Law Services'
Newsletter and monthly
Legal Lessons:**

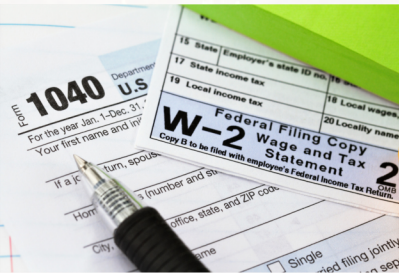
<https://tinyurl.com/NSLSLegalLessons>



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   @nassausuffolklawservices

RESOURCES FOR YOUR CLIENTS



Increase in Preventative Housing Subsidies

The Office of Children and Family Service recently updated Administrative Directive 20 OCFS-ADM-16-R1, to announce that effective January 1, 2024, preventative housing subsidies increased from \$300 per month to \$725 per month, to a maximum of \$26,100 over three years.

This subsidy is an important support for parents or non-parent caregivers who have children, grandchildren, or nieces and nephews in foster care or threatened with foster care placement. Preventative housing subsidies can be used to prevent placement in foster care, to expedite a discharge from foster care, and can be used by parents or relative caregivers who need a bigger space (i.e. more bedrooms) or otherwise "lack adequate housing" to care for the child in foster care or at risk of entering foster care.

New Rental Supplement Program (RSP) To Assist Those Experiencing Homelessness

The Suffolk County Department of Social Services has created a new program to assist single individuals and families who are facing homelessness or currently staying in a shelter. The Rental Supplement Program (RSP) will provide rent supplements to those who are currently in a shelter regardless of their immigration status and temporary assistance status. Rent supplements for individuals start at \$1,306 and may go up to \$1,627. Families' rent supplements start at \$2,509 and may go up to \$2,758. For more information and eligibility criteria, please visit [our website](#) or scan the QR code.



Free Tax Preparation for Low & Middle-Income Wage Earners

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program is a free service provided by the IRS that helps low and middle-income wage earners have their federal and State personal income taxes prepared and filed electronically free of charge.

Many wage earners may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) as well as the Child Tax Credit (CTC). Those eligible for EITC and CTC have a no-cost option as they can have their returns prepared and filed at a VITA site.

Every county in the State has at least one VITA site. Visit the [IRS VITA site locator](#) using the QR code below. Opening and closing dates vary by site as well as hours and days of operation. In addition, many sites do require an appointment.



Heating Equipment Repair & Replacement Benefit

If your client is a homeowner and experiencing issues with their furnace and boiler, or their home's primary heating source, they may be eligible to get the Home Equipment Repair and Replacement Benefit.

Benefit amounts are based on the actual cost incurred to repair or replace your furnace, boiler, and/or other essential heating equipment, \$4,000 for a repair and \$8,000 for a replacement. Your client can call their Local HEAP District Contact to apply. To find your [Local District HEAP Contact](#) scan the QR code.



The Legal Support Center for Advocates (LSCA) has a unique role at Law Services as a legal backup center for advocates from social service agencies, religious organizations, health care facilities, and other community-based agencies. LSCA's Helpline provides phone support to community advocates so they may effectively assist their clients in welfare, housing, access to health care, disability issues, and other legal matters. This partnership with the community is especially valuable as it enables us to exponentially serve more clients than would be possible with our limited resources for direct legal services. When appropriate, LSCA facilitates internal referrals to one of Law Services' many programs. Advocates can reach us at (631) 232-2400.



VOLUNTEER LAWYERS

We need you

Nassau County

Volunteer Lawyers Project

The Volunteer Lawyers Project is an innovative pro bono program to expand the availability of legal services to Nassau County residents in need. The Project provides an opportunity for attorneys to represent clients and volunteer their time and expertise by providing free legal services. The Volunteer Lawyers Project needs pro bono assistance in the areas of Chapter 7 Bankruptcy, Divorce, Article 17A Guardianships, Health Care Proxies, Name Changes, Power of Attorney, and Wills.

Contact: Reisa Brafman, Esq., 516-292-8100 ext. 3380, rbrafman@nsls.legal

Bankruptcy Clinics through the Volunteer Lawyers Project

Currently, clinic appointments are one-on-one with attorneys consulting with clients in person, by phone, or virtually. Volunteer attorneys provide guidance to those considering bankruptcy, screening for referral to pro bono attorneys for filing of Chapter 7 petitions. This is a limited engagement, though participating attorneys may also be referred cases.

Contact: Reisa Brafman, Esq., 516-292-8100 ext. 3380, rbrafman@nsls.legal

Community Legal Help Project

The Community Legal Help Project recently expanded into Nassau County. We are looking for attorneys to provide pro bono half-hour consultations with Nassau County Residents. The areas of law most in need are immigration, family, matrimonial, elder, and bankruptcy.

Contact: Roberta Scoll, Esq., 516-292-8100 ext. 3115, rscoll@nsls.legal

Suffolk County

Pro Bono Project

The Pro Bono Project is an innovative pro bono program to expand the availability of legal services to Suffolk County residents in need. The Project provides an opportunity for attorneys to represent clients and volunteer their time and expertise by providing free legal services. The Pro Bono Project needs pro bono assistance in the areas of Chapter 7 Bankruptcy, Divorce, Article 17A Guardianships, Health Care Proxies, Name Changes, Power of Attorneys, and Wills.

Contact: Sharon Campo, Esq., 631-232-2400 ext. 3368, scampo@nsls.legal

Community Legal Help Project

The Community Legal Help Project's (CLHP) network of non-profit partners and pro bono volunteers currently provides legal information and referrals, and limited-scope representation through a phone line and brief in-person consultations at public libraries. Attorneys with a background in immigration, family, elder and/or matrimonial law are needed to assist the community. Volunteer attorneys can dedicate their time monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, or at their leisure.

Contact: Rashika Hettiarachchi, Esq., 631-232-2400 ext. 3391, rhettiarachchi@nsls.legal

LAW SERVICES IS HONORING OUR PRO BONO ATTORNEYS

Evelyn Kalenscher, Esq.



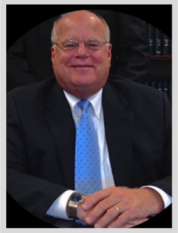
Law Services' Volunteer Attorney Evelyn Kalenscher was honored at the 2023 Pro Bono Award Ceremony on October 19th, 2023 hosted by the New York County Lawyers Association, the New York Bar Association, and the New York State Unified Court System's Office for Justice Initiatives. Evelyn is a retired attorney who is an Attorney Emeritus through the Unified Court System. Since 2009, Evelyn has worked as a pro-bono attorney for Law Services' Volunteer Lawyers Project in the Landlord/Tenant Part of the Nassau County District Court. She is currently volunteering with the Community Legal Help Project. Over the years she has dedicated over 3400 hours and represented hundreds of indigent clients who are at risk of being evicted from their homes. Ms. Kalenscher is a true advocate for disadvantaged clients. Thank you for your dedication, Evelyn!

Jeannie M. Henry, Esq.



Congratulations to Nassau Suffolk Law Services Pro Bono Volunteer Jeannie Henry, Esq. on being honored for the prestigious New York State Bar Association President's Pro Bono Service Award in May 2023. Ms. Henry became a lawyer in 2017, and in that short time, has put in 1,000 pro bono hours taking cases involving domestic violence and families at risk. Ms. Henry's passionate professionalism makes her a perfect candidate for this award. Congratulations, Jeannie!

Richard L. Stern, Esq.



Law Services' volunteer attorney Richard L. Stern was awarded the Legal Services Corporation 2023 Pro Bono Award in July 2023 for his enduring leadership and assistance provided in the NSLS Bankruptcy Clinic. Stern began his pro bono work with the Suffolk County Pro Bono Bankruptcy Clinic at its inception. He was one of the originators of the Clinic in 1990 until 2020 when the Coronavirus pandemic hit and bankruptcies dwindled. As the lead attorney, Stern was the backbone of the clinic and served as a mentor to law students and less experienced volunteer bankruptcy lawyers. Although the bankruptcy clinic is currently paused due to the smaller number of bankruptcies, he remains loyal to pro bono work by working with our Community Legal Help Project. Thank you for your years of service, Rick!

Advocate, Law Services, and Pro Bono Attorney **Sheryl Randazzo, Esq.**
Race Against Time To Help a Client in Need: An Advocate's Perspective

“Let me begin by saying: not all heroes wear capes. Sometimes, they wear suits, pumps, carry briefcases with special pens. A young mother with a minor child was admitted to our hospice program with a life-limiting diagnosis and a desperate wish to complete her last will and testament with guardianship needs. I reached out to Cathy Lucidi, Director of Community Relations in hopes of securing legal assistance for our young mom. Cathy swung into action and alerted her pro-bono department of our young mother's need. Six days later, I was in the home of mom with Carolyn McQuade, NSLS Pro-Bono coordinator, Sheryl Randazzo, Esq. ready and able to execute her will. I wish I could put into words how mom felt in her darkest hour as these amazing women were present to support her in her last wishes. It was powerful and emotional moment for the family and I. After the visit ended, mom said to me "my prayers were answered by angels." Sadly, 2 days later mom passed away. We like to think executing her will, and documenting her last wishes allowed her to transition peacefully. Some things in life are priceless and this is one of them. We can not thank you enough and are truly grateful for your support.

Cristal Jimenez, LMSW, Good Shepherd Hospice

**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS WHO
TIRELESSLY WORK FOR OUR CLIENTS.**

"Doing What's Legally Possible to Create a Just World Since 1966."

2023 Commitment to Justice Reception

Spring Into Action For Justice

On May 10, 2023, this year's Commitment to Justice Reception was held at Villa Lombardis in Holbrook. A great time was had by all as we celebrated the work of NSLS and toasted this year's amazing honorees.

As we are currently seeing a vast number of post-pandemic legal issues faced by Long Island's most vulnerable populations, our staff of attorneys, paralegals, social workers, and support staff are working tirelessly to assist those in need.

We are extremely grateful to all of our supporters who continued to be by NSLS' side during such a challenging time. We are Long Islanders assisting Long Islanders to ensure our communities are provided equal justice under the law.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the special support from Bond, Schoeneck, & King PLLC, Esquire Bank, USI Insurance Services, PSEG LI, Salenger, Sack, Kimmel and Bavaro LLP, and Satty & Partners as well as all of our generous sponsors and donors. All funds raised assist us in providing the critical legal programs that NSLS provides free of charge to low-income and disabled individuals in the Long Island community. The fundraiser is organized by dedicated volunteers, the NSLS Advisory Council and Cathy Lucidi, NSLS Director of Community Relations, who led the NSLS staff of volunteers.

Please see page 22 for information about this year's Commitment to Justice Reception.



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CONGRATULATIONS TO NSLS COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE HONOREES:



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RYAN HODGETTS
NSLS CLIENT OF THE VETERANS
RIGHTS .

**LAW SERVICES THANKS YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS AND ONGOING SUPPORT.
YOUR DONATION HELPS US TO CONTINUE TO DO WHAT'S LEGALLY POSSIBLE TO CREATE A JUST WORLD.**

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Nassau County Bar Association

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Gina Pirozzi

John Campo Law Office

Leslie Tayne, Esq.

Lucidi Technical Solutions

Mark Peterson, Esq.

Martha Cabellaro

MRG Marketing

Nancy Green

Paola Arango, Esq.

Regina Brandow, Esq.

Retro Fitness Ronkonkoma

Robin Abramowitz, Esq.

Scott Wiss, Esq.

Susan West

Wendy Hodor, Esq.

Law Services Gratefully Acknowledges the Special Support Received From:

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Nassau Suffolk Law Services Winter 2024 Newsletter



2023 Commitment to Justice Reception

Speech from NSLS Client Ryan Hodgetts:

Growing up here on Long Island, I would idolize anything that was associated with the military. I would watch all the classic war movies and fantasize what their life was like, have my GI Joe dolls reenact scenes I would watch with my friends, and even wear fake dog tag chains from the mall. It got to the point that I was so internally committed to joining the Marine Corps that I would call the recruiter at 13, 14, and 15 only for them to consistently tell me I was too young and frankly overweight. Finally, when I turned 18 on July 3, 2008, I enlisted by the 28th and given my date I would be leaving for boot camp.

The story of my time in service really began after training when I entered what we call the fleet, which is the unit I was stationed in. We lived in barracks on base in Camp Lejeune and we were then first placed into rooms by alphabetical order. I had two roommates named Hopson and Hart, and after several weeks we really started to get along and became fast friends. Unfortunately on our first 3 day weekend off, Hart had gone home and tragically taken his own life. This was harder for me to deal with than I thought at the time, and the fact that everyone in my chain of command had seemingly moved on made dealing with it even harder. What followed this incident was my first Non-Judicial Punishment, or NJP, for underage drinking, in which I bought beer for my roommates to drink, and when a room inspection happened the next day, the empty beer cans were found with me to blame for paying someone to buy it. This gave me not only the punishment of what comes with an NJP, but animosity from everyone for being labeled a "snitch" in confessing who was involved.



***Pictured: Ryan Hodgetts,
NSLS Veterans Rights Project Client***



***Pictured: Ryan Hodgetts, NSLS
Veterans Rights Project Client,
during his time in the Marines***

My deployment in Afghanistan consisted of standing guard on post 6 hours on and off for 7 months, with rest time including both vehicle and foot patrols into town, night and day. While on deployment, I had experienced several vehicle bound Improvised Explosive Device explosions, directly and indirectly at various times. This had a significant effect on my abilities to stand post, and soon after my first explosion, I had been caught sleeping on post twice and given an additional 2 NJP's. Along with seeing combat, there is also emotional trauma that's caused with losing some very close friends of mine, something I was aware could happen but not prepared for when it actually did. After returning home, aside from brief post deployment check ups, there was no real process for me to be able to cope with everything I had just been through.

While in front of the barracks in an argument with a friend I had deployed with, I was seen pushing him by his shoulders. This incident is what led to my 4th and final Non-Judicial Punishment, and would begin the process to separate me from service with an Other Than Honorable discharge. After getting out in 2012, I had moved on from my time in service. Honestly, I was scared and traumatized that even talking about it would be painful, let alone look for any benefits or any effort to get a discharge overturn because it would just go wrong and crush me even further. However, I was truly blessed to have someone in my life who cared about me, so much that it gave me the motivation to care again.

In 2017, my fiancé, Taisha Thomas...found Law Services, and their specialized unit, the Veterans' Rights Project. After...calling several places, it was Catherine Mendolia from Law Services who returned her call, letting us know she could help with my case. In that first meeting, I still remember after talking about everything that happened to me, I asked Catherine if I should just accept what was given originally and move on. But it was her reassurance that I have the opportunity to try and overturn it, that we're going to give the best effort to make my case, and that honestly there are other appeals to make in the worst-case scenario, so it's still not over regardless.

The months and weeks leading up to the hearing were incredibly nerve-racking. It was during this time that the meetings I had with Paola Arango, Catherine's supervisor, who truly put me at ease, making me the most...prepared for my hearing. I would sit in the offices in the Islandia office with both of them and talk for hours, discussing things I never was able to, and this made being able to explain my story in detail with a clear and confident tone a lot easier.

The hearing itself seems like a blur to me now. I tried my best to just stay calm, answer any questions, elaborate, and remain focused. What I can't forget is when one of the officers conducting the review towards the end of my hearing noted how well Paola knew my case and how it was clear they were dedicated to me by how quickly specific information was recited.

Waiting to hear back the decision...a time of tension for me. One thought that worried me was that because both Catherine and Paola had done such a thorough job in making my case, that there was never going to be a better shot than this review. It was just a couple months ago in March, when I had gotten that letter I've been waiting so long for. Nothing can describe what it was like to read those words, and I quote "The final decision is that the discharge shall change to HONORABLE". This meant that my Character Of Service was upgraded from Other Than Honorable, to a full Honorable status.

To be honest, it's something I'm still processing and taking in to this day. But it does feel like I can breath again, and like I'm myself again. Currently, I'm in the process of applying and figuring out all the benefits and entitlements I'm eligible for including V.A. Healthcare, disability, and educational. And even though that can be challenging in and of itself, I am so hopeful for everything to come.

LAW SERVICES PROFILE IN COMMITMENT

NSLS employees show their commitment to Law Services by "Doing What's Legally Possible to Create a Just World" every day but, for many, it doesn't stop there. Many staff members continue to show their commitment to helping others in their personal lives as well. We hope you enjoy this new feature in our newsletter as much as we enjoy sharing it.



Amanda Davis, Esq.

Amanda has been a Staff Attorney in the Independent Consumer Advocacy Network (ICAN) unit at Nassau Suffolk Law Services Committee since March 2016. The ICAN Unit assists clients who qualify for Medicaid community-based care and need nursing home-level care. The unit assists clients by providing information about the program, troubleshooting obstacles that they encounter, appealing denials of requests for new or additional services as well as appealing proposed changes to their services, and assisting with filing grievances with insurance plans or with the New York State Department of Health.

Amanda's clients have been at the highest risk during the Covid-19 pandemic. Their underlying conditions make them particularly vulnerable to serious illness from COVID-19, and their need for care exposes them to close contact with homecare providers who may also work with a number of other patients or in a variety of higher-risk settings. Other patients have struggled to find aides who were willing to continue to provide essential care during the public health crisis. Community-based care is also often an alternative to care in a congregate setting like a nursing home, where the death rate from COVID-19 has been high, particularly in New York.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Amanda has worked with clients and their families to obtain discharges home from nursing homes. To make returning home a viable option, Amanda helps clients establish viable personal care or private-duty nursing services. Amanda has also worked with clients to obtain and maintain community-based care as an alternative to initial nursing home placement due to concerns about COVID-19. In addition, Amanda has worked with clients and their families to address issues related to COVID-19, such as issues with PPE, voluntary suspension of services to limit exposure to COVID-19, and aide shortages. She has also assisted patients recovering from Covid-19 to obtain community-based care upon discharge home from the hospital or nursing home.

Amanda earned her Bachelor of Arts in Political Sciences from the University of Tampa in 2008. She graduated from New York Law School in 2012 where she focused on public interest law and was an affiliate of the Justice Action Center. During law school, Amanda had the opportunity to intern with the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in NYC and with the NYC Department of Consumer Affairs. Amanda, who is visually impaired, has volunteered with the Helen Keller Services for the Blind "job and education re-entry program," helping counsel those with vision loss on successful interview techniques that help address their disability in the workplace.

"Doing What's Legally Possible to Create a Just World Since 1966."

LAW SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY



Suffolk County Women's Bar Association dinner held on March 2, 2023



Several NSLS staff members attended the Suffolk County Women's Bar Association dinner celebrating 100 years of women's right to vote.

Golden Gathering Senior Resource Fair in Freeport on October 11, 2023

Nassau Suffolk Law Services staff members **Roberta Scoll, Esq.** (CLHP) and **Erika Verrill, Esq.** (Adult Care Facility) representing NSLS at the Golden Gathering.



Immigration Resource Fair held on October 2nd, 2023

Nassau Suffolk Law Services, CARECEN, Safe Center Long Island, Health & Welfare Council of Long Island, Family Service League, and Long Island Cares hosted their first Immigration Resource Fair.



Easter egg hunt sponsored by NY State Senator Monica Martinez on April 8, 2023

NSLS Staff **Yveline Dalmacy** (Civil Unit), **Paula Velasquez** (Consumer Debt Unit) **Rashika Hettiarachchi, Esq.** (CLHP) joined **State Senator Monica Martinez** at the event.

Non-Profit Job Fair hosted by Health & Welfare Council of Long Island on March 22, 2023

Consumer Debt Project Staff Attorney **Maria DeGennaro, Esq.**, with Veterans Right's Project paralegal, **Dolores Sclafani**.



Long Island Imagine Awards on April 25, 2023

Nassau Suffolk Law Services **Rezwanul Islam, Esq.** (Deputy Executive Director), **Cathy Lucidi** (Director of Community Relations), and **Sharon Campo, Esq.** (Supervising Attorney for Volunteers and Community Projects) proudly attended the Long Island Imagine Awards.

Smart Growth Awards on June 16, 2023

NSLS Staff gratefully attended the Smart Growth Awards, hosted by Vision Long Island. Pictured staff: **Cathy Lucidi** (Director of Community Relations), and **Sharon Campo, Esq.** (Supervising Attorney for Volunteers and Community Projects).



Law Services was honored as a finalist in the non-profit category at the 2023 HIA on September 21st.

LI Business Achievement Awards were held at the Crest Hollow Country Club. We are grateful to be acknowledged for our achievements along with the other stellar group of businesses and non-profit organizations. It was a spectacular event; even Barbie and Ken showed up.



Senior Wellness Fair at the Rockville Centre Recreation Center on October 20, 2023

Staff Attorneys **Roberta Scoll, Esq.** and **Daniel Okrent, Esq.** representing NSLS at the Senior Wellness Fair.



Law Services was once again very happy to participate in PSEG's annual Energy Forum held on October 24, 2023

Sharon Campo, Esq. (Supervising Attorney for Volunteers & Community Projects), presented on Utility Shut Offs. Thank you PSEG for holding this special and informative forum and for always including Law Services as a participant.

LAW SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY



Staff Attorney Roberta Scoll, Esq. along with the Access to Justice Committee



NSLS Pro Bono Attorney Volunteer Harold Somer, Esq. receiving a certificate of appreciation with Madeline Mullane, Esq. from NCBA.

Nassau County Bar Association hosted its 7th Annual Pro Bono Recognition Reception on March 13, 2023.

NSLS pro bono attorneys were recognized for their amazing pro bono work. We are grateful for all attorneys who generously offer their legal services or take on pro bono cases.



Touro PAC center grand opening on May 18, 2023

The Public Advocacy Center (PAC) now houses Nassau Suffolk Law Services and 6 other agencies. Thank you Touro Law for accommodating our Community Legal Help Project! NSLS Attorney **Sharon Campo, Esq.** was joined by Community Legal Help Project Coordinator, **Rashika Hettiarachchi, Esq.**



Leadership in Law Awards

Congratulations to **Larry Tuthill**, Supervising Attorney of the Domestic Violence Project, and **Hannah Abrams**, Staff Attorney of the Civil Unit, on being honored at Long Island Business News' Leadership in Law Award held on November 16, 2023.

Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15, 2023

Staff Attorney **Erika Verrill, Esq.** (Adult Care Facility Project) represented NSLS by presenting on the topic "Power of Attorney: What to do when the power for good goes bad". Great job Erika!



Overdose Awareness Rally hosted by Senator Martinez on August 31st, 2023 at Geiger Park.

NSLS staff members **Heather Davis, Esq.** (Civil Unit) and Law Graduate **Mahnoor Mirza** (Disability & Health Unit) joined by **Senator Monica Martinez** at the tabling event!



Senator Martinez's Veterans Appreciation Breakfast

Senator Monica Martinez' Veterans Appreciation Breakfast was held on November 16, 2023. We thank Senator Martinez for inviting NSLS. Pictured: Paralegal **Jacob Buckheit**, Staff Attorney **Erika Verrill, Esq.**, Senator Martinez, and Legal Secretary **Nancy Rangel**.



Suffolk County Bar Association Installation Dinner on June 9, 2023 at Cold Spring Harbor Country Club.

Pictured: **Rashika Hettiarachchi, Esq.** (Community Legal Help Project), **Honorable Stephen L. Ukeiley**, **Robin Abramowitz, Esq.** (Member, Board of Directors), **Sharon Campo, Esq.** (Supervising Attorney for Volunteers and Community Projects), **Christina Rosas, Esq.** (Chair, Board of Directors), **Victoria Osk, Esq.** (Executive Director).



Legal Services Corporation Pro Bono Service Award Ceremony on July 26, 2023

Our long-time pro bono attorney, **Richard Stern, Esq.** was presented with a certificate of recognition at the Legal Services Corporation Pro Bono Award ceremony. Pictured: **John Levy** (LSC Chair of Board), **Victoria Osk, Esq.** (NSLS Executive Director), **Richard Stern, Esq.** (NSLS pro bono attorney), **Rezwanul Islam, Esq.** (Deputy Executive Director), **John G. Malcolm** (LSC Board Members), **Carolyn McQuade, Esq.** (Pro Bono Coordinator), **Ronald Flaggs** (LSC President).

LAW SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS

HAPPY MILESTONE EMPLOYMENT ANNIVERSARY

Milestones celebrated in January - December 2023. Law Services would like to congratulate and thank the following staff for their years of dedicated service:



NSLS WELCOMES NEW EMPLOYEES IN 2023 (JANUARY - DECEMBER)

Joseph Abergel Law Graduate; Consumer Debt Project (Hempstead)

Charles Barriere Staff Attorney; Civil Unit (Hempstead)

Letta Belle Staff Attorney; Civil Unit (Hempstead)

Miguelangel Briceno Receptionist; Administration (Hempstead)

Stephanie Buckheit Human Resources Manager; Administration (Islandia)

Donna Ciampa Staff Attorney; Education Debt Consumer Assistance Project (Hempstead)

Virginia Conroy Staff Attorney; Civil Unit (Hempstead)

Kimberly Curran Law Graduate; Education and Disability Rights Project (Hempstead)

Whitney Dei Staff Attorney; Disability and Health Related Units (Islandia)

Myrrah Dubey Staff Attorney; Civil Unit (Hempstead)

Brianna Francis Law Graduate; Civil Unit (Hempstead)

Anupriya Gautam Paralegal; Civil Unit (Hempstead)

Stephanie Gerland Paralegal; Volunteer Lawyers Project (Hempstead)

Amanda Gordon Staff Attorney; Civil Unit (Islandia)

Danny Hernandez Law Graduate; Disability and Health Related Units (Islandia)

Ellen Hoil Staff Attorney; Civil Rights Project (Islandia)

Arefa Jawadwala Staff Attorney; Public Benefits Unit (Hempstead)

Dakota King Paralegal; Adult Care Facility Project (Islandia)

Carolyn Lander Staff Attorney; Foreclosure Prevention Project (Hempstead)

David Lawler Staff Attorney; Civil Unit (Islandia)

Susan Lee Staff Attorney; Disability and Health Related Units (Hempstead)

Marina Lopez Paralegal; Consumer Debt Unit (Hempstead)

Douglas Macias Staff Attorney; Civil Unit (Hempstead)

Michelle Makowski External Relations Paralegal; Administration (Islandia)

Joshua Margulies Staff Attorney; Civil Unit (Hempstead)

Constantine Markotsis Staff Attorney; Civil Unit (Hempstead)

Jacob Mortenson Law Graduate; Public Benefits Unit (Hempstead)

Jesus Padilla Paralegal; Civil Unit (Riverhead)

Josue Rios Help Desk Support; Administration (Hempstead)

Jennifer Rivera Paralegal; Disability and Health Related Units (Hempstead)

Leisa Rockelein Law Graduate; Adult Care Facility Project (Hempstead)

Andrew Rodriguez Paralegal; Public Benefits Unit (Hempstead)

Diana Roldan Paralegal; Domestic Violence Unit (Riverhead)

Jonathan Ruiz Paralegal; Civil Unit (Islandia)

Cruz Maria Sanchez Paralegal; Community Legal Help Project (Hempstead)

Blanca Saravia Paralegal; Disability and Health Related Units (Islandia)

Robert Scanlon Law Graduate; Civil Rights Project (Hempstead)

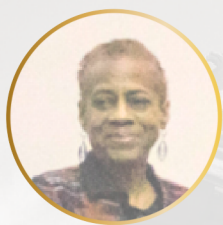
Sarah Schlenker Social Worker; Social Work Unit (Hempstead)

Marie Elizabeth Villefranche Staff Attorney; Disability and Health Related Units (Hempstead)

Anya White Executive Assistant; Administration (Hempstead)

LAW SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS

2023 STAFF NEWS



— HAPPY — Retirement

Sheila Johnson, J.D., NSLS Director of Development and Government Affairs retired in early 2023 after 15 years of dedicated service. One of Sheila's roles included working closely with NSLS Advisory Council members to promote our agency and bring awareness to the work of NSLS. Sheila also formed the Government Affairs Committee within the council. She oversaw this specialized group as well as the council itself. In her Government Affairs role, Sheila worked closely with the Committee and led them in building relationships with local and state-level elected officials, to make certain the elected officials were aware of the free legal services NSLS provides so they may be better able to assist their constituents.

During the majority of her career at Law Services, Sheila was instrumental in planning many successful fundraisers, specifically our annual gala, The Commitment to Justice Reception. We wish Sheila a happy, healthy, and long retirement. She will be missed. NSLS held a Retirement Luncheon for Sheila at the Suffolk County Bar Association. Special thanks to **Jane LaCova**, the former SCBA Executive Director for welcoming us into the Grand Hall to hold this special retirement luncheon for Sheila.



Sheila Johnson, J.D. receiving a proclamation from Suffolk County Legislator Jason Richberg.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the following employees on their recent promotions:

Daniel Strafer, Esq.
Supervising Attorney
Nassau Civil Unit

Vivian Storm, Esq.
Supervising Attorney
Nassau Civil Unit

We would like to wish the following former employees good luck with their future endeavors:

Caithlin Appleby, Esq.
Kelsey Benavides
Kaylan Geiger
Kerry Giovanniello, Esq.
Petrushka Khiamal, Esq.
Sydney Maiman
Thomas McElhinney, Esq.

Alison Noonan, Esq.
Jennifer Pacheco-Villalobos
Regan Serlin, Esq.
Kiana Sinclair
Randy Smith, Esq.
Elijah Vaillancourt
Eric vonCzerniewicz
Paula Velasquez

*Best
of
Luck*



Congratulations to NSLS Civil Unit **Staff Attorney Charlene D. Rogers** for being honored in February 2023 as a Black History Month Honoree in the NY State Senator Monica Martinez's Fourth Senatorial District! Thank you, Charlie, for your life-long dedication to making "good trouble."



Congratulations **Supervising Attorney Daniel Strafer** for being honored in October 2023 with a Proclamation for "Outstanding Legal Service to the State of New York" by State Senator Kevin Thomas!



2023 NITA Training

NSLS Staff welcomed National Institute of Trial Advocacy (NITA) professionals to provide a "Trial Skills Program" between November 1-3, 2023. The training enhanced our staff's skills through lectures and role-playing on Direct Examination, Cross Examination, Admitting Evidence, Objections, Opening and Closing Arguments.

LAW SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL NEWS

Congratulations

New Advisory Council Officers Elected

On June 23, 2023 at the annual Advisory Council Thank You Luncheon, new officers were voted in. Congratulations to:



Chair: Donna DeVita

Donna is the founder and owner of **ESquire Brand Management** in Hauppauge, NY, and the Director of Marketing at **Lewis Johs Avallone Aviles, LLP**, in Islandia, NY.



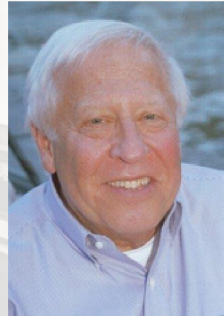
Vice Chair: Shannon Quinn

Shannon is a marketing manager at **Hansen & Rosasco, LLP** in Hauppauge, NY.



Secretary: Lidia Szczepanowski, Esq.

Lidia is the founder and owner of **Lidia Szczepanowski, Esq. – Attorney at Law** (AskLidiaTheLawyer.com) in Commack, NY, and is a senior counsel attorney at **Brown, Altman & DiLeo LLP** in Melville, NY.



In January 2023, Advisory Council Emeritus member, **A. Thomas Levin, Esq.** of **Meyer, Suozzi, English & Klein** was re-elected to a one-year term as Counsel to the Historical Society of the New York Courts, where he is also a trustee. Congratulations to Tom for being listed as a New York Metro area Superlawyer. This is Tom's 12th time being listed on this very prestigious list. More congrats to Tom for once again being listed as Long Island Herald's 2023 Top Lawyer.



Advisory Council member, **Leslie H. Tayne, Esq.**, founder of **The Tayne Law Group, P.C.**, was recently honored with the prestigious Leadership Excellence For Profit Award at the Long Island Business News Corporate Citizenship Awards in September of 2023.



In September 2023, Advisory Council Chair Emeritus **Bradley Seigel, Esq.**, founder of **The Seigel Law Firm, P.C.**, was installed as the President of the Brandeis Bar Association.



Long-time Advisory Council member **Cheryl Fratello, Esq.**, owner and founder of **Fratello Law, P.C.**, was honored in October 2023 as one of Long Island Business News' 50 Top Women in Business. In 2023, Cheryl also received an award of recognition from the Suffolk County Bar Association and was appointed as Officer and Vice President of Membership of the Suffolk County Women's Bar Association. Congrats to Cheryl on having one busy and stellar 2023.

Thank you to Advisory Council Member Laurie Bloom & her Public Relations students

Long-time NSLS Advisory Council member **Laurie Bloom**, Director of Marketing and Public Relations at **Rivkin Radler** and adjunct professor at Hofstra University recently had her public relations students assist Law Services with creating a public relations plan as part of the capstone course, Public Relations Campaigns. The public relations team worked under the guidance of **Sharon Campo**, **Rez Islam**, and **Cathy Lucidi**. Their plan included an executive summary, goals, and objectives for NSLS to implement. NSLS staff learned so much from the students and we are excited to implement their suggestions going forward. Many thanks to Laurie and her amazing students for their commitment to Law Services, and their time, talent, and incredible knowledge.



In photo (L to R): Prof. Laurie Bloom, Juliet Bryce, Zachary Oestreicher, Rez Islam (Deputy Executive Director), Sharon Campo (Supervising Attorney for Volunteers and Community Projects), Katharine Gallati, Emily Raissis, Nicole Crisafulli, and Elena Distefano

Thank you to Advisory Council Member Gina Pirozzi

Long-time NSLS Advisory Council Member, **Gina Pirozzi** of **G. Pirozzi Consulting** was instrumental in obtaining recurring monthly donations for Law Services from the following attorneys below:



Michael Ettinger, Esq.
Frank Maffei, Esq.
Brian Picarello, Esq.
Dana Walsh Sivak, Esq.
Jayson Wolfe, Esq.

Special Thanks to Gina and the attorneys for your very generous recurring monthly donations. Please consider making your donation to Law Services a recurring monthly one. It's very easy to do and no amount is too small for an NSLS "Just" cause. Gina is also this year's **Barbara J. Mehrman Commitment to Justice Honoree**, a well-deserved recognition. Congrats to Gina!! See page 22 to purchase a virtual journal ad to congratulate Gina.

Donations for Raffles Needed

Promote Your Business While Supporting Long Islanders In Need 2024 Commitment to Justice Reception



Do you own a business on Long Island that you'd like to promote? Why not consider donating a raffle basket with a gift card and/or items from your business? Over the years, basket raffles have become such an exciting part of our Gala. Also, please consider purchasing a virtual journal ad. Promote your business, support equal justice under the law, and allow for one happy winner!!! It's All Good!

Contact Cathy Lucidi, Director of Community Relations at (631) 232-2400 or clucidi@nsls.legal for more information.



Law Services CARES Membership

Community Agencies Resources, Education & Support



We have some great news - Nassau Suffolk Law Services is back to in-person trainings. We value the in-person face-to-face seminars as they allow us to meet and connect with all the advocates we speak to regularly. The in-person trainings also allow for more questions and in-depth discussions on the challenges our clients are facing. However, going forward we'll be charging a \$40 fee for each in-person training. We will have 4 in-person trainings per year. We will also continue to have virtual trainings throughout the year for a \$20 fee. Please review the following CARES membership fees and all the perks that go along with each membership level. The Legal Support Center for Advocates will also begin on-site trainings where an attorney/paralegal will come to your agency location and give your staff a training of choice. On-site trainings are valued at \$400-\$600 per training. When you become an NSLS CARES member, you'll be showing your support for Law Services, saving your agency some money, and educating your staff with the proper resources and tools needed to assist your clients. All Community Agency and Advocate supporters CARES members will be acknowledged on our website. For more information, please contact Cathy Lucidi at (631)232-2400 ext. 3324.



Scan QR code to access form

- ☐ **Gold CARES Member** \$500 annually: 2 on-site trainings from Law Services Staff per year, 5 employees' admittance per training per year, All virtual trainings included
- ☐ **Silver CARES Member** \$300 annually: 1 on-site training from Law Services Staff per year, 3 employees' admittance per training per year, 3 employees' admittance per virtual training per year
- ☐ **Bronze CARES Member** \$200 annually: 2 employees' admittance per training per year, 2 employees' admittance per virtual training per year.
- ☐ **Advocate CARES Member** \$100 annually: 1 employee admittance to each training per year, 1 employee admittance per training per year.



Our Agency Would Love to Become a NSLS CARES Member

Name/Billing Contact: _____ Phone : _____

Agency Name _____

Address: _____

Email : _____

Enclosed, please find our check made out to "Nassau Suffolk Law Services" in the amount of \$ _____ for the annual NSLS _____ Care Membership Fee. Date _____

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

Name on Credit Card: _____ Please circle CC AMEX VISA MC
Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____ CVV _____

Please bill my card annually when the fee is due and send me a receipt to the above address. ☐

Please call me prior to billing my card annually before the payment is due. ☐

Please make a copy of this form for your records and return this form to Nassau Suffolk Law Services, 1757 Veterans Highway, Suite 50, Islandia, NY 11749. Attn: Cathy Lucidi, Director of Community Relations. You may also email this form to Cathy Lucidi at clucidi@nsls.legal.



Thank you for your support!

If you prefer, you can call us to process your credit card. Please contact Hannah Fitzpatrick, Paralegal at (631) 232-2400, ext. 3343.

2024 Spring Commitment to Justice Reception

Compassion and Justice for All

Barbara J. Mehrman
Commitment to
Justice Honoree



Gina Pirozzi
NSLS Advisory Council Member
G. Pirozzi Consulting

Community Partner
in Justice Honoree



Theresa Regnante
President & CEO
United Way of Long Island

Wednesday, May 22, 2024, 6-10 pm
Cold Spring Country Club
22 E. Gate Drive, Huntington, NY 11743

Support Law Services and Our Mission

Civil legal services are essential to making sure our neighbors in need have access to justice in cases affecting their basic needs — shelter, food, education, and health care. Since 1966, our organization has helped many indigent and disabled Long Islanders navigate their toughest legal and financial challenges. This would not be possible if it weren't for the support from people like you. Be that change in the world you want to see by supporting Compassion and Justice for All and consider purchasing a sponsorship package, virtual journal ad, and/or tickets to our gala, so with your help, we can continue to "Do What's Legally Possible to Create a Just World." Your donation will support the critical civil legal services for Long Islanders in need. Please visit our website at www.nslawservices.org for more information about the services we provide. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of Long Island's most vulnerable residents.

Thank you,

Victoria Osk, Esq., NSLS Executive Director

"The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others."
- Albert Schweitzer

SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

☐ Compassion & Justice for All Long Islanders Supporter* - \$15,000

With this donation, a digital version of your logo, three full-page ads, and a banner will be displayed on our Commitment to Justice webpage and all NSLS social media outlets, as well as a digital display at the reception. You may also submit a 30 second video about why you support NSLS. You will also receive 20 tickets to our gala on May 22, 2024.

☐ Changing The World Together Supporter* - \$10,000

With this donation, a digital version of your logo, two full-page ads, and a banner will be displayed on our Commitment to Justice webpage and all NSLS social media outlets, as well as a digital display at the reception. You may also submit a 30 second video about why you support NSLS. You will also receive 15 tickets to our gala on May 22, 2024.

☐ All about Equal Justice Supporter* - \$7,500

With this donation, a full-page ad will be displayed on our website, all NSLS social media outlets and NSLS Commitment to Justice webpage, as well as a digital display at the reception. You may also submit a 30 second video about why you support NSLS. You will also receive 10 tickets to our gala on May 22, 2024.

*Sponsorship commitment for top 3 levels due by **March 4, 2024** to ensure proper acknowledgement on the invitation. NSLS will continue to accept top 3 levels after the March 4th deadline with a new deadline of **May 1st** to ensure proper acknowledgment on gala program and signage.

Board of Directors

Chair: Christina Rosas, Esq.
Chair Emeritus: Douglas J. Good, Esq.
Vice-Chair: Scott M. Karson, Esq.
Treasurer: Peter H. Levy, Esq.
Secretary: Susan McParland-Leisen

Robin S. Abramowitz, Esq.
Arthur Brown
Ricky Burnett
Christopher J. Clarke, Esq.
Kathleen Denezzo
Steven G. Leventhal, Esq.
Roosevelt Morring, Jr.
Mark A. Peterson, Esq.
Debra L. Rubin, Esq.
Cherice P. Vanderhall, Esq.

Advisory Council

Chair: Donna DeVita
Vice-Chair: Shannon Quinn
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SPONSORSHIP LEVELS (continued...)

☐ For the Love of Equal Justice Supporter - \$5,000

With this donation, a half page ad will be displayed on our Commitment to Justice webpage and all NSLS social media outlets, as well as a digital display at the reception. You will also receive 8 tickets to our gala on May 22, 2024.

☐ Employee Appreciation Supporter - \$3,500 - 20 Employees

With this donation, a half page ad will be displayed on our Commitment to Justice webpage and all NSLS social media outlets, as well as a digital display at the reception. You will also receive 6 tickets to our gala on May 22, 2024. Additionally, this donation will allow 20 NSLS employees to attend our event. 3 Sponsorships available for this special package.

☐ Heal The World Supporter - \$2,000

With this donation, a quarter page ad will be displayed on our Commitment to Justice webpage and all NSLS social media outlets, as well as a digital display at the reception. You will also receive 4 tickets to our gala on May 22, 2024.

☐ Caring Hearts for Justice supporter- \$1,000

With this donation, a large business card ad will be displayed on our Commitment to Justice webpage and all NSLS social media outlets, as well as on a digital display at the reception. You will also receive 3 tickets to our gala on May 22, 2024.

☐ Lead With Compassion Supporter- \$500

With this donation, an actual size business card ad will be displayed on our Commitment to Justice webpage and all NSLS social media outlets, as well as a digital display at the reception. You will also receive 2 tickets to our gala on May 22, 2024.

☐ Friends of Justice - \$300

With this donation, your name will be listed in our virtual journal, and you will be acknowledged on all NSLS social media outlets, as well as through a digital display at the reception. You will also receive 1 ticket to our gala on May 22, 2024.

***Sponsorship commitment for top 3 levels due by March 4, 2024 to ensure proper invitation acknowledgment*. NSLS will continue to accept top 3 levels after the March 4th deadline with a new deadline of May 1st to ensure proper acknowledgment on gala program and signage**

Please complete and mail with payment to Nassau Suffolk Law Services, 1757 Veterans Highway, Suite 50, Islandia, NY 11749
Attn: Cathy Lucidi, Director of Community Relations. For your convenience you can also make all purchases online at our website

By Email: Send artwork and form with credit card payment to fundraising@nsls.legal. Email artwork as high-res PDF or JPG, or send copy with congratulatory message. All ads due by May 1, 2024.

All advertisements and videos will be on NSLS website, all NSLS social media outlets, and digitally displayed at the reception.

JOURNAL ADS (deadline: May 1, 2024)

<input type="checkbox"/> Journal Ad	Rates	Size (w x h)
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Page	\$750	10 * 7.5
<input type="checkbox"/> Half Page	\$500	5 * 7.5
<input type="checkbox"/> Quarter Page	\$300	5 * 3.5
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Card	\$200	Actual Size
<input type="checkbox"/> Friend List	\$100	Listed

DINNER TICKETS

I am purchasing dinner tickets.

Dinner Tickets are \$200 per person.

Total Tickets: _____

Total Amount : _____

GENERAL DONATIONS

Sorry, I am unable to attend, please accept this donation in the amount of \$_____ on my behalf.

Name: _____

Business/Firm/Agency: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Name/business name to appear on all virtual materials _____

Email: _____

Donation Amount: \$ _____

Payment: ☐ CHECK ENCLOSED ☐ AMEX* ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ VISA ☐ DISCOVER

Credit Card No.: _____ Exp. ____/____ CVV _____

For your convenience, you can also make a donation or purchase a sponsorship package, journal ad, tickets and more at www.nslawservices.org

For more information, please contact Cathy Lucidi, Director of Community Relations, at 631-232-2400 ext.3324

Thank you for your support!

Nassau Suffolk Law Services
1757 Veterans Memorial Hwy #50,
Islandia, New York 11749

Save the Date

2024 SPRING COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE RECEPTION

Compassion and Justice for All

BARBARA J. MEHRMAN
COMMITMENT TO
JUSTICE HONOREE



Gina Pirozzi
NSLS Advisory Council Member
G. Pirozzi Consulting

WEDNESDAY

COMMUNITY PARTNER
IN JUSTICE HONOREE



Theresa Regnante
President & CEO
United Way of Long Island

Ways to support our annual fundraiser:

- Purchase a Sponsorship Package
- Purchase a Virtual Journal Ad
- Purchase a Ticket
- Donate a Basket from your firm, company/business.

Please contact Cathy Lucidi for more info -
631-232-2400 ext. 3324.

22
MAY

6:00PM - 10:00PM

COLD SPRING COUNTRY CLUB
22 E. GATE DRIVE, HUNTINGTON, NY 11743

