

Formerly Known As Nassau Suffolk Law Services

WINTER/SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Victoria A. Osk, Esq.



Legal Services of Long Island (LSLI) continues to make significant progress by offering free legal assistance to low-income families throughout Long Island. With the unwavering support of our dedicated staff and supporters, we are able to provide a range of collaborative programs designed to strengthen our connection to the community.

Our mission is to support underprivileged families in addressing issues related to healthcare, homelessness, consumer debt, disability, family matters, and other qualifying civil legal concerns. LSLI empowers families to live productive lives by ensuring they receive the government benefits and emergency services they are entitled to.

A major area of growth continues to be housing, which includes eviction defense for landlord-tenant disputes and foreclosure, driven by the escalating cost of living on Long Island. In response to this critical need, we have been focused on expanding our housing services, making significant strides to meet the rising demand for assistance. This expansion includes not only an increase in the number of cases we handle but also adjustments in how we manage each case to ensure that we are providing the best possible support to those in need.

Our Domestic Violence Unit continues to provide excellent services in Suffolk County and has significantly expanded in Nassau County, as we strive to provide comprehensive support to those in need. We are working to offer services in Family Court, and, when necessary, in Supreme Court for low-income matrimonial cases through volunteers. Additionally, we are addressing related areas of these clients' lives, to ensure holistic support for individuals facing domestic violence.

Our Pro Bono Units and the Community Legal Help Project have made a tremendous impact across both counties of Long Island. We are committed to continuing its growth by hosting a variety of clinics to meet the evolving needs of the community. Past clinics have focused on Advanced Directives, 17A Guardianship, and bankruptcy, and we are excited to introduce foreclosure clinics in the near future. These efforts are part of our ongoing dedication to expanding and enhancing our Pro Bono Unit, ensuring more individuals receive the legal assistance they need.

We are eager to welcome law students to work with us and are planning to hire legal interns throughout the summer. Our goal is to do everything possible to expand our services, provide crucial support to those in need, and work to cultivate the next generation of legal services attorneys.

Each step forward in our journey is a meaningful achievement, and we take pride in the progress we continue to make. To honor our growth and commitment to the community, we host our annual Spring Gala. It's a chance for us to come together, celebrate the strides we've made, and work toward a more just and secure future for all. Please join us!

FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING OUR 2025 GALA, SEE PAGE 14



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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

Jessica Fleischer External Affairs Paralegal





Legal Services of Long Island Winter/Spring 2025 Newsletter



ICAN SUCCESS STORIES

ICAN Unit Staff Attorney Kimberly Bolk and **paralegal Jenni Rivera** recently assisted a chronically ill 77-year-old client who was denied much-needed home care by her Managed Long Term Care (MLTC) Plan.

The client suffers from Multiple Sclerosis, chronic UTIs, and recurrent transient ischemic attacks (ITAs). Despite these chronic conditions, the client's MLTC had only authorized 8 hours per day of Personal Care Services (PCS). The home care program was staffed by an aide from an agency, whom the client happened to know and trust. Unfortunately, the client's trusted Personal Care Aide (PCA), could only provide 17.5 hours per week of the authorized daily PCS hours. As a stop-gap measure, the remaining hours were being filled by one of the client's daughters, who cared for the client overnight and on weekends, creating caregiver fatigue and burnout. This informal arrangement could not be sustained and a permanent solution to the home care problem was required.

The client requested that her daughter be hired by the existing agency for an additional 2 hours per day, in order to fill the daily gap in care, but this was not possible. Alternatively, the client asked the MLTC plan to allow her to hire her daughter as a second aide through a program known as Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Services or "CDPAS". CDPAS allows eligible MLTC participants to hire home care staff of their choosing and also allows them to manage their home care program.

Contrary to state regulations, the client's MLTC plan refused to allow the client to access hours through traditional PCS and also through CDPAS. ICAN intervened and helped

get authorization for the client to access agency-delivered PCS for the majority of the authorized service hours and to supplement those hours with CDPAS hours.

In addition, ICAN also facilitated an increase in the number of daily care hours by helping the client switch to another MLTC Plan which assessed the client services needs more accurately. As a result, the client was able to keep her valued personal care aide, hire her daughter as a CDPAP aide, and also benefit through additional hours, authorized by a different MLTC Plan.

Finally, ICAN Unit is currently assisting the client in her request to her new MLTC plan for 24-hour home care. In a note of thanks, the client's daughter recently stated, "I cannot recommend [ICAN] enough (which I have already done), nor can I thank them enough". **Congratulations Kim and Jenni on a job well done!**

Kimberly Bolk, Esq. of our ICAN Unit, recently assisted a woman in her 80s to obtain additional home care services from her Managed Long Term Care plan (MLTC). This client suffered from Alzheimer's disease, multiple cardiac diagnoses, severe physical limitations, and incontinence. As a result, she needed increased services to remain safely in her home. The client was receiving home care services of 9 hours per day, but she also needed extensive nighttime care with her Activities of Daily Living. The client's family member asked her plan to increase her home care services to 24-hour split-shift care. The additional hours would ensure that the client was not left alone and would allow her to age in her home while avoiding dangerous complications such as skin breakdowns, infections, or falls.

Unfortunately, the plan denied the request for increased hours. **Attorney Bolk** assisted the client and her family by reviewing medical documents, answering their questions about the appeals process, and drafting an external appeal that was submitted to an independent medical reviewer. The reviewer determined that the plan's denial of the request for 24-hour split shift was incorrect and granted the 24-hour care. Due to the assistance of **Attorney Bolk**, the client continues to live in her home with all the care necessary to meet her needs. **Nice work, Kim!**

request for 24-hour split shift was incorrect and granted the 24-hour care. Due to the assistance of **Attorney Bolk**, the client continues to live in her home with all the care necessary to meet her needs. **Nice work, Kim!**The Independent Consumer Advocacy Network (ICAN) is a program of the Community Service Society of New York, a non-profit organization in New York City, and is funded by the State of New York. Legal Services of Long Island receives funding through the Community Service Society of New York to participate in ICAN. The ICAN unit assists consumers in both Nassau and Suffolk counties with: NYS Managed Long-Term Care (MLTC); Health and Recovery Plan (HARP) program; Long-Term Support Services (LTSS) in Mainstream Managed Care (MMC) programs; Transitioning into MLTC plan; and FIDA-IDD Plans. ICAN is able to: Provide education to stakeholder groups; Provide information and advice to



Kimberly Bolk
Staff Attorney
ICAN Unit



Jenni Rivera Paralegal ICAN UNIT

participants, caregivers, and their advocates; Provide navigational assistance; and Provide advocacy when needed.

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to be best in any point of view.

Foreclosure [foreclosing a mortgaged profession from a loan from a l



FORECLOSURE PREVENTION SUCCESS STORIES

Mr. P lived in his mother's house to help her with everyday tasks because she was suffering from dementia. The house was subject to a reverse mortgage. Mr. P maintains that his mother was fraudulently induced into signing the reverse mortgage because she was told that she would not have to pay any taxes; however, that is not true—under a reverse mortgage, the borrower is usually still responsible for paying property taxes. Due to this misrepresentation, the house went immediately into foreclosure because the next quarter's property taxes were not paid. The foreclosure case was commenced in 2013, and an attorney was hired on the mother's behalf to fight the foreclosure. This attorney successfully warded off foreclosure until the mother died in 2019.

In 2023, Mr. P called LSLI for assistance because the Plaintiff in his mother's foreclosure case had just filed a motion for summary judgment. Mr. P was in a bad financial position at that time and needed time to save up so he could find a place to live. **Staff Attorney, Carolyn Lander, of the Foreclosure Prevention Unit** agreed to oppose the Plaintiff's motion to get him time; however, as **Attorney Lander** reviewed the foreclosure case she realized that the court did not have personal jurisdiction over Mr. P. **Attorney Lander** made these arguments and the court initially denied both the plaintiff's motion for summary judgment and the cross-motion to dismiss in order to try to settle the matter. The Court suggested that the Plaintiff offer Mr. P \$20,000 to consent to the foreclosure. **Attorney Lander** believed Mr. P was entitled to far more so the Plaintiff's offer was rejected. The Plaintiff would not consent to offer a higher amount, so **Attorney Lander** was directed to refile our motions. As a result, **Attorney Lander** was able to get the entire foreclosure action dismissed for lack of personal jurisdiction over Mr. P. As such, the entire mortgage is no longer enforceable because the statute of limitations expired on the entire debt (due to how long it took the plaintiff to litigate the matter). Mr. P intends to sell the house and relocate to be near family. Perseverence pays off. **Congratulations, Carolyn!**



Carolyn Lander
Staff Attorney
Foreclosure Prevention Unit

Advocacy Tip!

90 Day Pre-Foreclosure Filing Notice: Under New York State law, the lender must send the borrower a special notice at least 90 days before filing a foreclosure summons and complaint. The notice must have specific language and must attach a list of at least 5 nonprofit housing counseling agencies located near the borrower.

M's grandmother owned a Nassau County property subject to a reverse mortgage. The grandmother held a life estate in the property, while her daughter (M's mother) would inherit the remainder upon the grandmother's death. Under a reverse mortgage, the death of the borrower is an immediate default. It subjects the property to foreclosure if the deceased borrower's heirs cannot immediately pay off the entire reverse mortgage balance. M was living in her grandmother's house with her grandmother, mother, children, and fiancé. M's grandmother passed away in 2022, and within 6 months of that death, M's mother, unfortunately, passed away, "with only three-quarters in her pocket." Reeling from these two deaths, M, who receives Social Security Disability (SSD) and whose fiancé was not working at the time, was facing foreclosure because her family could not afford to pay off the \$400,000 reverse mortgage balance. The Court referred M to LSLI's Foreclosure Prevention Unit.

M agreed that she had to sell the house because she could not afford it, but this would require a proceeding in surrogate's court for letters of administration over her mother's estate. M could not afford an attorney to assist with this. M struggled to gather enough funds for the \$1250 filing fee in surrogate's court. Further, she could not figure out how to fill out the pro se forms to represent herself. **Staff Attorney Carolyn Lander of the Foreclosure Prevention Unit** stepped in and was able to successfully have the \$1250 filing fee waived and filed for and was granted letters of administration naming M as the administrator of her mother's estate. After Attorney Lander evaluated the case, it became obvious that selling the property rather than letting it go to foreclosure would give this family facing homelessness and poverty significant funds to restart their lives. Now, having the letters of administration, M was able to list the house for sale and is set to receive over \$200,000 from the sale to start her life over. **Great work, Carolyn!**

The Foreclosure Prevention Unit provides free legal services to homeowners hoping to prevent foreclosure of their homes. Services provided include: Legal representation at the various stages of the foreclosure process, including at mandatory court settlement conferences, drafting pleadings, and drafting and opposing motions; Assist borrowers pursuing loss mitigation options, including loan modifications; Advice and Counsel. The Project is part of the HOPP network, a Statewide coalition that includes HUD-certified housing counseling agencies. As such, we will make referrals to and collaborate with HOPP funded, non-profit housing counseling agencies. Clients must reside in the homes subject to foreclosure and have low to moderate-income for Long Island as annually set by HUD. Nassau residents call 516-292-8100. Suffolk residents call 631-232-2400.

Legal Services of Long Island Winter/Spring 2025 Newsletter



EDUCATION DISABILITY RIGHTS SUCCESS STORIES

Kim Curran, Education Disability Rights Project (EDRP) Staff Attorney, successfully helped her client regain OPWDD eligibility after it was lost in 2023. New York State's OPWDD (Office for People with Developmental Disabilities) provides many needed services for eligible individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. One such service is a housing subsidy offered through OPWDD's Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver, making it easier for many eligible individuals to live independently in the community in their own apartment or housing. OPWDD will pay a portion of the individual's rent through the HCBS waiver and will also provide other necessary services that an individual may require.

Due to a missed Medicaid recertification deadline, our client lost OPWDD eligibility in 2023, which then resulted in losing his eligibility for a housing subsidy. As such, he could not pay his rent and was on the verge of being evicted from his apartment. **Attorney Curran** worked with the client to get the documentation needed to keep his OPWDD and HCBS waiver eligibility. **Kim** worked closely with OPWDD so that the agency would continue to provide him with his housing subsidy while we worked on regaining his eligibility. Lastly, **Kim** connected this client with our Civil unit to help prevent his eviction. Ultimately, our client regained his OPWDD eligibility and now has full access to HCBS waiver services and all of his other necessary OPWDD services. **Congratulations, Kim!**

The EDRP recently assisted a 4-year-old preschool student with Autism when the local school district failed to provide him with special education services over the course of 2 successive school years. The Committee on Preschool Special Education ("CPSE") had



Kim Curran
Staff Attorney
EDRP Unit



Danielle Leake
Staff Attorney
EDRP Unit

developed Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for the student in September 2022 and February 2023, which mandated that the student be placed in a 12:1+4 special class with related services of Speech/Language Therapy. While the student did receive some speech services, the student did not have a placement in a special education preschool and did not receive *any* academic services during the 2022-2023 school year. Although the school district had sent out placement packets to different special education preschools, the majority of these programs had no available space. During the search process, the District failed to provide any interim services to the student, either academic or behavioral, such as Special Education Itinerant Teacher ("SEIT") or 1:1 Applied Behavior Analysis services ("ABA") in the home/community setting. In fact, the District ignored multiple requests from the parent and the student's developmental pediatrician which urged the District to provide these vital services.

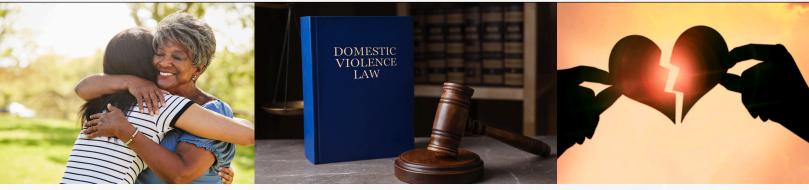
The District's failure to provide mandated services continued through the 2023-2024 school year. Not only was the student deprived of appropriate special education services, but he was also placed in a general education preschool that could not meet his needs. In fact, the student had to be removed from this general education preschool due to his behaviors and the school's inability to deliver special education services.

At that point, **the EDRP** assisted the parent in obtaining an independent educational evaluation ("IEE") by a clinical psychologist of the parent's choosing, at District expense. The IEE made a strong recommendation for ABA services. Efforts to discuss the implementation of the IEP and/or ABA services were unproductive, and **Staff Attorney Danielle Leake** filed a Due Process Complaint on the student's behalf. The Due Process Complaint included a request for a special education preschool program and compensatory services for the almost 2-year period in which the student received 1) no academic services; 2) no ABA services; and 3) only a portion of Speech/Language services owed to him.

Ultimately, the District agreed to place the student, now a Kindergartener, in an in-district ABA program. The District is also incorporating many hours of compensatory ABA services into the existing program to make up for all past missed services. In addition, the District agreed to provide compensatory group speech services for past missed Speech/Language services to promote the student's social growth. We are happy to report that this student is becoming very social with his same-age peers, his academic and communication skills have improved, and negative behaviors have decreased. **Amazing work, Danielle!**

The Education and Disability Rights Project (EDRP) is a bi-county project that represents students with disabilities between the ages of 5-21 in Special Education matters, including attendance at Committee on Special Education (CSE) meetings, Resolution Sessions, and Impartial Hearings. In addition, the EDRP assists students in issues pertaining to residency and homelessness and helps adults with developmental disabilities to secure eligibility and services through the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD).

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NASSAU CIVIL UNIT SUCCESS STORIES

The Civil Unit in Nassau County assisted client J, who is the recent widow of a veteran who was caring for her seriously ill daughter. After her daughter moved to a nursing home, J became depressed due to living by herself in an apartment with severe maintenance problems and painful memories of the life she had shared with her husband. Dealing with all of these problematic issues, J's health continually deteriorated. Things worsened when J's landlord started a nonpayment eviction proceeding claiming thousands of dollars in unpaid rent.

Staff Attorney Dylan Reid, Supervising Attorney Vivian Storm, and the Director of Social Work, Liz Wolf, worked together to refer J to a senior case management program. Working with the senior case manager, J decided she needed to move to an assisted living facility. Attorneys Reid and Storm determined that the eviction proceeding had not been properly commenced and threatened to move to dismiss if it was not withdrawn. Now, with the eviction proceeding withdrawn, the case managers quickly began to assist with collecting documentation to apply for Medicaid, which was necessary to help J transition to assisted living.

Attorneys Reid and Storm ultimately helped J negotiate a settlement in which J's landlord waived the alleged rent arrears and agreed to return J's security deposit in full.

J is relieved to be in a healthier living environment. LSLI's team effort made a huge impact on this client's life for the better. Congratulations to all!

Nassau Civil Unit Staff Attorney Judy Hirshon recently assisted a 77-year-old client who was at risk of eviction. The client and her brother live in an Emergency Tenant Protection Act (EPTA) apartment which means that it is regulated under rent stabilization laws. The landlord was apparently unaware of the regulations of rent stabilized apartments under the EPTA. As a result, the landlord provided yearly lease renewals that were never in compliance with the EPTA regulations. The forms were incorrect, the rent increases did not comply with the ETPA Rent Guidelines, and the renewal was never served under ETPA requirements. Based on these errors, Attorney Hirshon was able to roll the rent back six (6) years in accordance with the new housing laws. The rent went from \$1795 a month to \$1375 a month. Based on the new rent guidelines, the rent will only increase to \$1396.63. The original rent was unaffordable to the client and her occupant brother, and they now have a rent amount they can afford. The landlord had commenced a nonpayment proceeding in June for rent arrears of \$12,565. The client ended up owing only \$440 through August 2024. Fantastic work, Judy! See Judy's Profile in Committment on page 10.



Dylan Reid Staff Attorney Civil Unit



Vivian Storm Supervising Attorney Civil Unit



Elizabeth Wolf Director of Social Work



Judy Hirshon Staff Attorney Civil Unit

Nassau Civil Unit assists tenants with low-income in summary eviction proceedings, in administrative hearings challenging termination or denial of participation in the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program, and in grievance hearings contesting proposed terminations from public housing. We will consider bringing affirmative litigation in State Supreme or Federal District Court to assert rights under the United States Housing Act of 1937, the Fair Housing Act, NY State Human Rights Law, and other Civil Rights statutes. Nassau residents can call 516-292-8100 to be screened for eligibility.

WE HEAR FROM OUR CLIENTS



YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE





"Thank you John Ferro and the entire [Legal Services of Long Island] team for your assistance and successful resolution of the reasonable accommodation issue I have encountered. I am forever grateful for your services."

- Former client of John Ferro, Esq. (Senior Citizen Law Project)



"On behalf of my mother, we want to express our sincerest gratitude and appreciation for your support and services. You made this process as seamless as possible and alleviated our anxieties regarding the situation. We wouldn't have been able to win the case without you! We will definitely be recommending your services."

- Daughter of former client of Maria DeGennaro, Esq. (Consumer Debt Unit)

"Thank you so much for all your caring legal work that you did for me and for everyone you help. God bless you all."

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



"I want to thank you for all your help with my four cases being successfully discontinued. I honestly don't know what I would've done, had I not found you. Becoming disabled permanently with lupus has been a challenge on its own. Your expertise, keeping me informed & gentle reminders to return required documents is greatly appreciated!"

- Former client of Helen Wrobel, Esq. (Consumer Debt Unit)



"My family and I greatly appreciate the high quality of service we have received from Luz Cartagena-Collado at [Legal Services of Long Island]. She is an outstanding paralegal. Her genuine personality, kind compassionate nature, and patience in helping to serve us has truly been very heartwarming for us.

My family had been so overwhelmed, stressed, and anxious when we found out our house has been threatened by foreclosure by our mortgage company. Everywhere we looked, we found lawyers with super expensive rates, without knowing which one to trust best with your case. [Legal Services of Long Island] gave us hope, strength, relief, and optimism.

In addition, Luz's compassion and altruistic nature means so much to us. She was very understanding and supportive. She really took the time to listen to our problem, and answer any questions we had. She was very informative and helpful. She also referred our case to an excellent attorney, Mr. Chris Santoro, who has been a tremendous asset to my family. We are highly satisfied with our experience, and would highly recommend [Legal Services of Long Island] to anyone who needs help with legal services and is struggling on Long Island."

- Former client of Luz Cartagena-Collado (Foreclosure Prevention Unit)



"I want to thank you so much for forwarding this information to me. It is beyond helpful and you are beyond helpful - so knowledgeable and nice too!"

- Advocate call for Cathy Lucidi (Legal Support Center for Advocates)

STAY IN TOUCH WITH LSLI



Visit our website:

https://www.legalservicesli.org/

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in Co @legalservicesli

Sign up for our online mailing list for more resources including our LSLI Newsletter and monthly Legal Lessons:

https://tinyurl.com/LSLILegalLessons





RESOURCES FOR YOUR CLIENTS



Free Tax Preparation for Low & Middle-Income Wage Earners

The IRS' Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program is offering free tax preparation through Bethpage Federal Credit Union. Services will be offered through appointment only.

If your 2024 household income was below \$67,000, Bethpage Federal Credit Union will provide in-person and virtual VITA services starting on January 25, 2025. To access these services, complete the Bethpage Virtual VITA Application at

www.bethpagefcu.com/vita. For updates or more information, you may contact Community Development at community@bethpagefcu.com or (516) 349-4288.

You can also visit the IRS website for free tax preparation locations.

Find out more and see what documents you need to have your taxes prepared.



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. An eligibility interview is required for all HERR applications but may be completed with applicants in person or by telephone. Your local district contact will decide if you meet all the eligibility conditions, including the income and resource requirements. The district will provide more information on how to submit the application and required documentation.

NOTE: Before work is started it must be approved and authorized by a HEAP Local District Contact. Payment is made directly to the vendor after all the work is completed.

Medicaid Application Assistance

Nassau Suffolk Hospital Council offers application assistance for Medicaid is available to help adults and children who are blind or disabled, anyone over the age of 65, and their families in need of the following Medicaid programs offered through New York State:

- Community Medicaid (including those with excess income and/or resources)
- Medicaid for home care services
- · Medicaid for nursing home care or other services in an in-patient setting
- Medicaid for adults and children in need of waiver services (OPWDD, Traumatic Brain Injury, Bridges to Health, and other HCBS programs, etc.)
- Medicaid for working people with disabilities who want to buy into the program
- Medicare Savings Program for those with Medicare who need help paying Part A, Part B, and/or prescription drugs
- Medicare enrollment assistance for those also eligible for Medicaid

Call 631-656-9783 for more information.

The Legal Support Center for Advocates (LSCA) has a unique role at LSLI 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 serve exponentially more clients than would be possible with our limited resources for direct legal services. When appropriate, LSCA facilitates internal referrals to one of LSLI's many programs. Advocates can reach us at (631) 232-2400.



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@legalservicesli.org

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@legalservicesli.org

Community Legal Help Project

The Community Legal Help Project in Nassau County is looking for attorneys to provide probono 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@legalservicesli.org

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, Uncontested Divorce, Article 17A Guardianships, Health Care Proxies, Power of Attorneys, and Wills.

Contact: Kiersten Bartolotta, Esq., 631-232-2400 ext. 3311, kbartolotta@legalservicesli.org

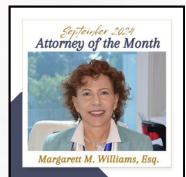
Community Legal Help Project

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@legalservicesli.org

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR PRO BONO ATTORNEYS OF THE MONTH

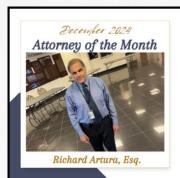
SEPTEMBER-FEBRUARY



SEPTEMBER 2024

Margarett M. Williams, Esq.

Ms. Williams is being recognized for her exceptional pro bono work in 2023 and 2024, particularly for her dedicated efforts in helping numerous low-income women on Long Island navigate and finalize their divorces. Her commitment has made a significant impact on these women's lives, providing them with the legal support they need.



DECEMBER 2024

Richard Artura, Esq.

Richard Artura, a graduate of St. John's University School of Law, is a partner at Phillips, Artura, and Cox in Lindenhurst, NY, specializing in Consumer Bankruptcy, Real Estate, and Estates. A dedicated volunteer attorney for Legal Services of Long Island since 2000, Richard is being recognized for his exceptional pro bono work in 2024.





OCTOBER 2024

Alexandra N. Getsos, Esq.

Alexandra is being recognized for her exceptional pro bono work in 2024, where she helped a client finalize a complex legal stipulation that had stalled. Her thoughtful and empathetic assistance played a key role in achieving a positive outcome, with the client expressing deep gratitude for her support during a challenging time.



JANUARY 2025

Denise Snow, Esq.

Denise Snow is a solo practitioner specializing in health-related legal needs and pioneered the Medical Legal Partnership with Stony Brook University Hospital. She continues to volunteer with Legal Services of Long Island and the Suffolk County Pro Bono Project, offering legal support to those in need.





NOVEMBER 2024

Nikki L. Prasad, Esq.

Nikki is being recognized for her exceptional pro bono work in 2024, demonstrating a deep commitment to underserved communities. She consistently handles pro bono matrimonial cases for low-income residents with limited access to essential legal assistance, helping to ensure they receive the legal support they need.



FEBRUARY 2025

Vahagn Krmoyan, Esq.

Vahagn Krmoyan, originally from Yerevan, Armenia, moved to the U.S. in 1999 and spent 15 years with the NYPD before transitioning to law, focusing on bankruptcy, real estate, and immigration. He is dedicated to volunteering, offering probono services and supporting Legal Services of Long Island's Bankruptcy Clinic for lowincome individuals.



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



LEGAL SERVICES OF LONG ISLAND PROFILES IN COMMITMENT

LSLI employees show their commitment to Legal Services of Long Island by choosing a clear career path from the sstart, and never wavering their decision. We hope you enjoy this new feature in our newsletter as much as we enjoy sharing it.



Judy Hirshon, Esq.

40 Year Career in Non-Profit Law Firm: In 1984 Judy began her career as a non-profit attorney when she started working for Legal Services of Long Island formerly known as Nassau Suffolk Law Services in the Nassau County Civil Unit. The Civil Unit is a unit dedicated to assisting with eviction defense for low-income and disabled residents/tenants of Long Island. Helping clients maintain their housing has been and continues to be a top priority of Judy's. Judy states "I went to law school to work for a legal services organization. I wanted to represent people who could never afford to appear in court with an "attorney. Most cases involve quality of life issues."

In 1989, only five years after she became employed at Legal Services of Long Island, hard work, dedication, amazing work ethics, over-flowing knowledge of the law, and trial skills quickly earned her a promotion to supervisor of the Nassau County Civil Unit. She was in the position for 16 years. In 2005, due to illness, Judy took a brief leave of absence and returned to work in 2006. After returning to work she came back to Legal Services of Long Island as a Staff Attorney in the Nassau Civil Unit.

Over the years Judy has handled over 5,500 landlord/tenant cases; whether it be through advice and council, direct court representation, filing appeals and/or a brief legal service. In total over 16,000 individuals (this number represents individuals and family members combined) benefited from Judy's assistance, which in turn prevented homelessness for so many Nassau County low-income and disabled residents. She also represented tenants in matters pertaining to dangerous/habitability conditions, resulting in these conditions being repaired and/or corrected. She has also represented clients with a discrimination cases against HUD, one of which resulted in damages for the client and attorney's fees for Legal Services of Long Island. Judy has also filed numerous Constructive Trust Cases in Supreme Court. She was also involved in conducting programs for tenants on landlord/tenant laws and also a presenter on many landlord tenant seminars for the Nassau County Bar Association.

In 2018, Judy played a crucial role on the committee that enacted legislation requiring evicted tenants' property to be placed in storage facilities rather than left at the curb. Recognizing her for this contribution, the Maurice A. Deane School of Law honored her with the Outstanding Women in Law Award. The Nassau County Bar Association also recognized Judy with a Pro Bono Award. Judy also received recognition and an award for her assistance to tenants by organization which was formerly known as Acorn. It's also no surprise that in 2024 Judy received Long Island Business News Leaders in Law's Lifetime Achievement Award. We congratulate and commend Judy for her 40- year commitment and dedication to legal services for Long Island's most vulnerable individuals and families.











LEGAL SERVICES OF LONG ISLAND IN THE COMMUNITY



December 2024 Holiday Toy Distribution

LSLI staff member Maria Sanchez (Paralegal) with State Senator Monica Martinez at the 2024 Holiday Toy Distribution. The event was held at Central Islip High school and had a fantastic turnout!

Brentwood Back to School Backpack and Supply Distribution on August 10th.

LSLI staff **Kimberly Curran, Esq.** (EDRP) and **Maria Sanchez** (Paralegal- CLHP) alongside **Senator Monica R. Martinez** providing activities for the kids and information for the parents.





Partnership Conference in Albany from September 24-26

The Legal Services of Long Island staff at the conference held by the New York State Bar Association. Thank you so much to Eunice Bencke and the entire staff of the New York State Bar Association for their efforts on holding an incredible conference. We look forward to attending again in 2026!



Suffolk County Bar Association hosted a Veterans Clinic on November 7th.

LSLI Veterans' Right Project at the SCBA including Janna Poretsky (Law Graduate), Marie-France Auguste (Paralegal), Carolyn McQuade, Esq. (Staff Attorney), and Erika Verrill, Esq. (Supervising Attorney).

Judge Sloan and Staff Attorney Roberta Scoll, Esq. in Supreme Court on July 15th, 2024.

Roberta Scoll (Staff Attorney), along with Judge Solages, his Court Clerk, Commissioner of Jurors, Court Officer, and various other court staff, introduced high school and college interns to various features and functions of court personnel.





Wiseman with Long Island's Big Hits 98.1 comes to LSLI!

We won FUN Office of the Week! A big thank you to THE WISEMAN from Long Island's Big Hits 98.1 for the recognition, and to our Consumer Debt Staff Attorney, **Maria DeGennaro**, for nominating us.

2024 Leadership in Law Honorees from Legal Servies of Long Island.

The winners of the 2024 LI Business News Awards include **Judy Slater** Hirshon, Esq (Civil Unit) who received the Lifetime Achievement Award, and **Donna Famiglietti**, Executive Assistant, honored in the Law Firm Support Staff category. These recognitions celebrate their outstanding contributions in their respective fields.





National Consumer Law Center Conference in Orlando, Florida October 2024.

Pictured left to right: Helen Wrobel, Esq., Consumer Debt Unit; Kathleen Maher, Esq., Foreclosure Prevention Unit; and Ankit Mehta, Esq., Foreclosure Prevention Unit.

Senator Thomas' Senior Fair at St. Paul's School in Garden City on October 1st, 2024.

Staff Attorneys **Daniel Okrent, Esq.** (Senior Citzen Law Project) and **Jennifer Park, Esq.** (Audlt Care Facility Project) representing LSLI at the Senior Fair.





LSLI, CARECEN, and Brentwood Public Library co-hosted the Legal Resource Fair on October 22, 2024.

LSLI provided "Know Your Rights" presentations on common tenant problems and domestic violence, offering invaluable insights and resources to the community. Thank you so much to the Brentwood Library for hosting such a fantastic event and providing a space to empower individuals to take informed action.



LSLI was once again very happy to participate in PSEG's annual Energy Forum held on October 24, 2024

Sharon Campo, Esq. (Supervising Attorney for Volunteers & Community Projects) presented on Legal Advocacy. Thank you PSEG for holding this special and informative forum and always including LSLI as a participant.

LEGAL SERVICES LI HIGHLIGHTS

HAPPY MILESTONE EMPLOYMENT ANNIVERSARY

Milestones celebrated in July 2024 - March 2025. LSLI would like to congratulate and thank the following staff for their years of dedicated service:











LSLI WELCOMES

NEW EMPLOYEES IN (JULY 2024-MARCH 2025)

Marie-France Auguste Paralegal; Veterans Rights Project (Islandia)

Eva Bonilla Receptionist; *Administration* (Hempstead)

Jack Burke Law Graduate; Civil Unit (Hempstead)
Kiana Calandra Law Graduate; Civil Unit
(Hempstead)

Emily Cisneros Paralegal; *Domestic Violence Unit* (Hempstead)

Sean Collins Staff Attorney; Disability and Health Related Units (Hempstead)

Isabel Cruz Paralegal (Islandia)

Daniel Diaz Law Graduate (Islandia & Hempstead) **Brendle DiGioia** Staff Attorney; Public Benefits
Unit (Hempstead)

Jessica Fleischer External Relations Paralegal; *Administration (Islandia)*

Marc Gull Law Graduate; *Disability and Health Related Units (Islandia)*

Jonas Kerner Law Graduate; *Consumer Debt Law Project (Hempstead)*

Dulce Medina Rodas Paralegal; *Foreclosure Prevention Unit (Islandia*)

Nicole Moss Staff Attorney; Foreclosure Prevention Unit (Islandia)

Ifeoma Okorie Paralegal; *Volunteer Lawyers Project (Hempstead)*

Tania Parker Staff Attorney; *Senior Citizen Law Project (Hempstead)*

Janna Poretsky Law Graduate; *Veterans Rights Project (Islandia)*

Caroline Sturken Social Worker (Islandia)
Ingrid Villagran Staff Attorney; Domestic Violence
Unit(Hempstead)

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

Elizabeth Berkowitz, Esq. Teresa Butler, Esq. Donna Ciampa, Esq. Stephanie Gerland

Eva Jiminez Michelle Makowski Farzana Urme, Esq.



LEGAL SERVICES OF LONG ISLAND ADVISORY COUNCIL NEWS



Congratulations to Advisory
Council member, **Leslie H. Tayne, Esq.**, founder of **The Tayne Law Group, P.C.**, who was recently
honored with a Leaders in Law
award from Long Island Business
News.



Congratulations to Advisory Council member **Marvin Smith**, who was recently honored by NAACP Islip/Smithtown Branch with the Lifetime Achievement Award - a well-deserved honor.



Congratulations to Advisory Council Member **A. Thomas Levin, Esq.** In January Tom was elected as a Trustee Emeritus of the Historical Society of the New York Courts and was also elected to a one year term as Counsel.

At the NY State Bar Annual Meeting, Tom was re-elected as a member of the Executive Committees of the Local Government Law Section, the International Section and the 50+ Section.



Congratulations to Advisory
Council Member **Bradley Siegel, Esq.,** who was recently reelected for a second term as the
President of Brandies Bar
Association.

Now Accepting Basket Donations for Raffles LSLI's Commitment to Justice Reception

Do you own a business on Long Island that you'd like to promote while supporting our mission?

Why not consider donating a raffle basket with a gift card and/or items from your business? Over the years, baskets to raffle off have become such an exciting part of our Gala. Also, please consider purchasing a virtual journal ad. Promote your business, support our mission, and allow for one happy winner!!! It's all good!



Please contact **Cathy Lucidi,** Director of Community Relations at (631) 232-2400 or clucidi@legalservicesli.org for more info.

\$1,500 Entertainment Sponsor

With this sponsorship package, your name and firm/business name will be acknowledged on signage, table cards, and the event's program. You will also receive a ticket to the gala and a full-page virtual journal ad.



\$900 Favor Sponsor

With this sponsorship package, your name and firm/business name will be acknowledged on signage, table cards, the event's program, and favor tags. You will also receive a half-page virtual journal ad.

Interested in becoming a Legal Services of Long Island Advisory Council Member?

LSLI's Advisory Council is made up of volunteers who support our mission. For more information please contact Cathy Lucidi, Director of Community Relations, 631 232-2400.

2025 SPRING COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE RECEPTION

Illuminating Lathways to Justice

Wednesday, May 7, 2025, 6-10 pm Cold Spring Country Club 22 E. Gate Drive, Huntington, NY 11743

Please Support Legal Services of Long Island's Mission

For over 55 years, Legal Services of Long Island, formerly known as Nassau Suffolk Law Services has been committed to ensuring that vulnerable populations—such as low-income individuals, families, senior citizens, victims of domestic violence, veterans, and individuals with disabilities—receive the legal representation they need to protect their basic rights and life necessities. Our services include helping our clients maintain their housing, and maintain access to public benefits and health care. We provide essential education advocacy and legal representation for special needs children, and support for those facing domestic violence. We also assist individuals with consumer debt issues, social security appeals, and more. Our clients often have nowhere else to turn, and our work is critical in helping them overcome legal challenges and secure their futures.

We invite you to support our upcoming Commitment to Justice Reception, a crucial event that brings together our community to champion free legal assistance for Long Islanders in need.

As you know, our mission to provide essential legal services is more important now than ever. Many individuals across Long Island are facing serious civil legal challenges but have nowhere else to turn. Your sponsorship can directly contribute to ensuring that these individuals receive the legal help they desperately need to stay on their feet and remain in our community.

We have various levels of sponsorship opportunities, and we are hopeful that you will consider supporting this vital cause. Every level of sponsorship will help us expand our efforts, enabling us to reach more Long Islanders with much-needed legal assistance.

With your help, we can continue our critical work to ensure that those who are most vulnerable in our community are not left without support. The Commitment to Justice Reception serves as an important reminder of how vital our services are in keeping Long Islanders safe, secure, and in a position to thrive.

Please let us know if you would be willing to support this event, and feel free to reach out to Cathy Lucidi, Director of Community Relations, 631 232-2400 ext 3324 with any questions about sponsorship levels or other ways to get involved. Your sponsorship would be a vital contribution to the success of this initiative and our mission and would help fund direct legal representation. All proceeds raised above the cost go directly to supporting our legal programs. Your sponsorship would help fund direct legal representation, counsel and advice, and providing general legal information to those in need. Your support would help ensure that vulnerable Long Islanders have access to the legal assistance they need to maintain basic life necessities and safeguard their rights. Thank you for your consideration and for being a key part of our mission.

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& Communications Rivkin Radler LLP

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Judge Fern A. Fisher

Executive Director of Legal Hand, Inc.

SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

□Illuminating Pathways to Justice Sponsorship *-\$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 LSLI social media outlets, as well as a digital display at the reception. You may also submit a 30 second video about why you support LSLI. You will also receive 20 tickets to our Gala on May 7, 2025.

☐ JUSTICE LANTERNS FOR LONG ISLAND SPONSORSHIP * - 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 LSLI social media outlets, as well as a digital display at the reception. You may also submit a 30 second video about why you support LSLI. You will also receive 12 tickets to our Gala on May 7, 2025.

☐ RAYS OF EQUAL JUSTICE SPONSORSHIP* - \$7,500

With this donation, a full-page ad will be displayed on our website, all LSLI social media outlets and LSLI 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 LSLI, which will be featured on all of social media outlets. You will also receive 10 tickets to our Gala on May 7, 2025.

*Sponsorship commitment for top 3 levels due by February 28, 2025 to ensure proper acknowledgement on the invitation. LSLI will continue to accept top 3 levels after the February 28th deadline with a new deadline of April 23, 2025 to ensure proper acknowledgment on gala program and signage.

"Where Dignity Meets Justice

2025 SPRING COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE RECEPTION

Alluminating Lathways to Justice

With this donation, a half page ad will be displayed on our Commitment to Justice webpage and all LSLI social media outlets, as well as a digital display at the reception. You will also receive 8 tickets to our Gala on May 7, 2025.								
With this donation display at the rec	n, a 1/3 page	SPONSORSHIP - \$4,50 ge ad will be display his donation will a ceive 5 tickets to our	vebpage and all LSLI social media o our Gala. 3 Sponsorships available available	utlets, as well as a digital for this special package.				
With this donation	ı, a quarter		DNSORSHIP - \$3,000 played on our Commitment to Justice ckets to our gala on May 7, 2025.	webpage and all LSLI social media	outlets, as well as a digital			
With this donation	☐ SHINING HEARTS FOR JUSTICE SPONSORSHIP- \$2,000 With this donation, a large business card ad will be displayed on our Commitment to Justice webpage and all LSLI social media outlets, as well as of a digital display at the reception. You will also receive 3 tickets to our Gala on May 7, 2025.							
☐ EQUAL JUSTICE LANTERNS SPONSORSHIP-\$1,000 With this donation, a large business card ad will be displayed on our Commitment to Justice webpage and all LSLI social media outlets, as well as on a digital display at the reception. You will also receive 3 tickets to our Gala on May 7, 2025.								
☐ BEACONS OF HOPE FOR JUSTICE SPONSORSHIP - \$500 With this donation, an actual size business card ad will be displayed on our Commitment to Justice webpage and all LSLI social media outlets, as well as a digital display at the reception. You will also receive 2 tickets to our Gala on May 7, 2025.								
GLOWING FRIENDS OF JUSTICE SPONSORSHIP-\$300 With this donation, your name will be friend listed in our virtual journal, and you will be acknowledged on all LSLI social media outlets, as well as through a digital display at the reception. You will also receive 1 ticket to our Gala on May 7, 2025.								
Sponsorship commitment for top 3 levels due by february 28, 2025 to ensure proper invitation acknowledgment. LSLI will continue to accept top 3 levels after the February 28th deadline with a new deadline of April 25th, 2025 to ensure proper acknowledgment on gala program and signage.								
Attn: Cathy Lucidi, Director of Community Relations. For your convenience, you can also make all purchases online at our website. Email: Send artwork and form with credit card payment to fundraising@legalservicesli.org. Email artwork as high-res PDF or JPG, or send copy with congratulatory message. All ads due by April 28, 2025. All advertisements and videos will be on LSLI website, all LSLI social media outlets, and digitally displayed at the reception.								
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☐ Journal Ad	Rates	Size (w x h)	tickets.	tickets for a reserved table . \$1,800	attend, please accept this			
☐ Full Page ☐ Half Page	\$800 \$500	10 *7.5 5 * 7.5	Dinner Tickets are \$200 per person.	☐ I am purchasing 12 dinner tickets for a reserved table	donation in the amount of \$ on my behal			
☐ Quarter Page		5 * 3.5	Total Tickets:	\$2,200				
☐ Business Card ☐ Friend List ame:	\$100	Actual Size Listed	Total Amount :	Total Amount:				
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ione:				www.legalservicesli.org				
ame/business name to appear on all virtual materials				You can also show your support by donating a basket to be raffled off for this event. For more information, please contact				
mail:		Do	nation Amount: \$	Cathy Lucidi, Director of at 631-232-24				
				Thank you for	your support!			
			MASTERCARD □ VISA □ DISCOV Exp/ CVV	*AMEX can only be processed by completion of form or over the phone				
cuit Caru No.:			LAP/ CVV	or over t	ne phone			

Legal Services of Long Island 1757 Veterans Memorial Hwy #50 Islandia, New York 11749



SAVE THE DATE

Illuminate pathways to justice with LSLI as we prepare for our highly anticipated Annual Gala!
Join us on Wednesday, May 7th, 2025, at the Cold Spring Country Club for an unforgettable evening. Secure your sponsorship packages, virtual journal ads, and tickets today by scanning the QR code below. We look forward to celebrating with you!

With special support from









