Client Story: Legal Aid Society Helps Family Scammed by Fake Landlord

“Joseph” and his wife and three children rented an apartment in the basement of a single family home. There were many problems with the apartment, and the landlord went months without fixing them. Joseph reported the issue to Nashville’s Metro Codes Administration and to the Metro Public Health Department.

When Joseph received the agencies’ reports, he learned that the person he thought was his landlord didn’t actually own the property. When the real owner was alerted to the scam, he tried to evict everyone living on the property and sought approximately $2,000 in unpaid rent.

A Legal Aid Society attorney was able to work with the property owner and the tenants to mutually terminate the tenancy. The attorney avoided an eviction on the family’s record as well as any liability for rent owed to the property owner. Finally, the “fake” landlord agreed to make payments toward a $1,500 settlement to Joseph’s family.

Legal Aid Society Adds Three New Staff Attorneys
Paige Barbeauld joined our Clarksville office as a staff attorney. She has been volunteering in that office for over a year, providing invaluable service to our clients. Prior to volunteering with Legal Aid Society, she was in-house counsel for Environmental Research Center in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. Paige received her law degree from the University of Louisville Brandeis School of Law and is a graduate of the University of Tennessee, majoring in History and Political Science.

Edward Baylor joined our Nashville office as staff attorney in the Family Law section. He most recently worked for Child Support Services of Tennessee and previously was in private practice, specializing in family law. Ed received law degree from Nashville School of Law and his undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice from Tennessee State University.

Sonya Bellafant joined our Columbia office as a third staff attorney. She will manage a general caseload with a concentration on health and benefits issues. Sonya brings experience from several legal aid programs in Michigan and has served as Counsel on Call in Tennessee. She has a law degree from Michigan State University College of Law and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from Oakland University.

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**Mark Your Calendars for the Big Payback**

We’re counting down to Middle Tennessee’s largest online giving day, The Big Payback, on May 3! The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee challenges you to donate to area non-profits that raise awareness and aid for various causes in our community. Last year, more than $2.65 million was raised in just 24 hours, and we hope to see the same charity this year.

For more information, go to The Big Payback’s [website](http://thebigpayback.org). We hope you’ll consider Legal Aid Society as you plan your gift!

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**New Educational Materials**
Legal Aid Society has published a new legal self-help brochure on "Have to testify in court? Here are some tips." Please use and share our brochure to answer common questions regarding this concept.

We have also updated brochures on Lifeline (under the Money Problems button), What you need to know about divorce and Parenting Plans (both under the Family Problems button). These revised brochures can be downloaded for free here.

2015 Campaign a Huge Success

Thanks to the generosity of over 1,400 donors, our 2015 annual campaign brought in $820,924. We are grateful to the 2015 campaign committee for their tireless work in making this campaign the most successful ever.

- Margaret Behm, 2015 Campaign Chair
- Jeanne and Steve Thomas, Community Campaign co-chairs
- Mike Abelow and Andrea Perry, Large Firm Co-chairs
- Kristen Amonette and Dudley West, Small Firm Co-chairs
- Judge Rachel Bell and Judge Philip Smith, Judges co-chairs
- Laura Tidwell, Government attorneys chair
- Reggie Hill and Meg Mazzone, Corporate attorneys co-chairs
- Joanie Abernathy and Virginia Story, Williamson County co-chair
- Judge Jill Ayers and Kate Klinghard, Clarksville co-chairs
- Patrick Carter, Columbia chair
- Tessa Lawson, Cookeville chair
- Walter Stubbs, Gallatin chair
- Ted Goodman, Murfreesboro chair
- James Normand, Oak Ridge chair
- Tom Parsons, Tullahoma chair
2016 Campaign Kick-Off Set

The 2016 campaign is well underway thanks to the 48 commitments to our Leadership Cabinet as well as some early individual donations. Our annual kick-off event will be held on Wednesday, March 16 at the DoubleTree by Hilton – Downtown Nashville.

We are excited to have Lucinda Smith, director of our Volunteer Lawyers Program, moderate a panel of dynamic women who formerly worked for Legal Aid Society and have gone on to diverse legal careers. The panel will include:

- Margaret Behm, principal at Dodson, Parker, Behm & Capparella
- Judy Bond-McKissack, executive director of the Tennessee Commission on Continuing Education
- Judge Juliet Griffin, retired from the U.S. District Court, Middle District
- Chancellor Carol McCoy, 20th Judicial Dist., Part II

If you are interested in attending please contact Cindy Durham, director of development, at cdurham@las.org or 615-780-7125.

Shop With Amazon or Kroger? Support Legal Aid Society!

Looking for an easy way to support our work? When you shop at Amazon or Kroger, a portion of your purchases can go to support Legal Aid Society. To participate, sign up for Amazon Smile or Kroger Rewards (NPO # 98149), select Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands as your charity of choice and start shopping. A percentage of your eligible purchases will be donated to the organization at no extra cost to you!

Upcoming Clinics

We are pleased to host many clinics across Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland Plateau. These clinics are staffed by both Legal Aid Society and pro bono attorneys. If you would like to volunteer at one of the clinics, please contact Jarod Word at jword@las.org (or 615-780-7131) or call your local Legal Aid Society office.

You can see the list of upcoming clinics, hosted by Legal Aid Society and offered by partners, here.
Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands advocates for fairness and justice under the law. We offer free civil legal representation, educational programs and advice to ensure people in our region are able to protect their livelihoods, health and families. We serve 48 Tennessee counties from offices in Clarksville, Columbia, Cookeville, Gallatin, Nashville, Murfreesboro, Oak Ridge and Tullahoma. We are funded by Legal Services Corporation, the Tennessee Bar Foundation, United Way in 16 counties, the State of Tennessee, foundations and donors. For more information about our services or how to donate and to download information about common legal issues, visit us online at www.las.org.