Happy Holidays!

Thank you for your ongoing support of Legal Aid Society. Your generosity and compassion fuel our efforts across the 48 counties we serve. We hope that you and yours enjoy safe and happy holidays. We look forward to continuing our partnership with you in 2017!

Legal Aid Society Restores Benefits so New Citizens Can Live the American Dream
Hernandez Chovil (currently 82 years-old and a US citizen), and his wife, Haydee, moved to the U.S. several years ago from Columbia where he was a CPA. Because his degree was not recognized in the U.S., Hernandez began working on real estate to provide for his family. When the market changed in 2009, he worked other jobs and began pursuing a degree in Accounting.

Hernandez stopped working in Jan. 2015 and notified the Social Security Administration of his employment change. Unfortunately, this change was not processed and the SSA thought he was still working and had overpaid him by $2,450. They began deducting from his usual monthly payment and by Spring 2015, the Chovils were living on $375 per month.

The Chovils could no longer afford to put gas in the car or buy basic over-the-counter medications. Hernandez put his bachelor’s degree on hold as he couldn’t afford to drive to class. Thanks to his previous CPA profession, he budgeted their $375 as best he could. He kept copies of all of his transactions and communications with SSA (with no relief), and he continued trying to contact SSA on his own for another year before reaching out to Legal Aid Society for help in July 2016.

After reviewing Hernandez’s detailed records of his contacts with SSA, a Legal Aid Society attorney submitted a request for reconsideration. The SSA agreed the overpayment was miscalculated and by September 2016, the Chovils were receiving their regular $733 payment. They also have now been reimbursed for the benefits previously deducted.

Hernandez is back attending college classes, working towards his U.S. bachelor’s degree. After Haydee became a citizen, Legal Aid Society helped with her application for benefits through the SSA. Together, they now receive $1,100/month and are doing very well.

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Jim Beakes Receives Volunteer of the Year Award

Our Volunteer Lawyers Program recently presented James "Jim" A. Beakes III of Butler Snow LLP with its 2016 Volunteer of the Year Award.

Jim earned the 2016 Volunteer of the Year award based on his involvement with Legal Aid Society’s “desktop clinic.” On behalf of Butler Snow, Beakes partnered with us to promote and organize a weekly virtual clinic, providing legal services to those in need in local rural communities including Williamson, Hickman, Cheatham and Dickson counties. The clinic has provided assistance to more than 100 individuals through this clinic since April 2016.

The Legal Aid Society’s Volunteer of the Year Award is presented to a lawyer whose work has made access to justice a reality. The award is presented to individuals based on varied criteria including: recognition for long-term assistance to pro bono clients; advocacy in support of access to justice initiatives; innovative action to make legal help available to more individuals.

Jim earned his undergraduate degree from Duke University and his Juris Doctor from Vanderbilt University. He is a member of the Pharmaceutical, Medical Device and Healthcare Group at Butler Snow. He focuses his litigation practice on general, trucking and healthcare matters.
Staff Updates

Our Executive Director, Gary Housepian, was honored on November 29 by the Nashville Business Journal as a Most Admired CEO. He was asked “Tell us about a time you had to make a leap of faith that required a lot of courage. What was the situation, and how did you find the courage to leap?” See his answer here.

Patricia Jones, an attorney in our Columbia office, has been chosen to be in the TBA’s 2017 Leadership Law program. Now in its 14th year, Leadership Law is designed to equip Tennessee lawyers with the vision, knowledge and skills necessary to serve as leaders in their profession and local communities. The class will meet for its first session in January, and then spend the next six months learning about leadership in the legal profession, issues in the courts, policymaking in state government and the importance of community service.

Dresden Suits has joined our Nashville office as a VOCA Advocat, providing assistance to persons who are victims of domestic violence. She most recently worked for HomeSafe in Wilson County as the Advocate for Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence. Dresden is a graduate of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville where she graduated with a B.A. in Political Science. She also previously worked for Howard and Mobley Hayes and Gontarek, PLLC as an Administrative Assistant to three attorneys.

DarKenya Waller, managing attorney of our Nashville office, has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Nashville Bar Association.

Holiday Schedule for Legal Aid Society

Our offices will be closed on the following days over the holidays:

- Friday, December 23
Need a Holiday Gift for Someone Special? Make a Donation in Their Honor

It's that time of year when we are all searching for the perfect gift for that person who has everything. Is there someone special you want to thank but you're not sure how? You can make a gift to Legal Aid Society in their honor or memory and we will notify them of your generosity.

As of December 16, we have raised $768,272 towards our $827,000 goal for the 2016 campaign. **This leaves a funding gap of $58,728 to reach our goal.** Your gift in someone's honor or memory will help provide critical support for our civil legal advocacy, representation and community education.

To make a tax-deductible donation to Legal Aid Society, you can go online to [www.las.org](http://www.las.org) or send a check payable to Legal Aid Society to 300 Deaderick Street, Nashville, TN 37201. If you need additional information, please contact Cindy Durham, director of development, at 615-780-7125 or cdurham@las.org.

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.

Please note that many of our clinics are cancelled during the holidays. Check the list if you're not sure. You can see the list of upcoming clinics, hosted by Legal Aid Society and offered by partners, here.

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!

Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands
1-800-238-1443 | 300 Deaderick Street | Nashville, TN 37201

Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands advocates for fairness and justice under the law. The non-profit law firm offers free civil legal representation and educational programs to help people in its region receive justice, protect their well-being and support opportunities to overcome poverty. 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.