

The Legal Aid Advocate

November 2016



Legal Aid Society
of Middle Tennessee & the Cumberland

Working Together. Doing Justice. Restoring Hope.

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Happy Thanksgiving!



With the holiday season upon us, we are reminded of the generous network of support provided to Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland. We want to thank YOU for valuing the underserved of our region through your personal and financial support of Legal Aid Society. We are grateful to work alongside you in furthering justice for all throughout our 48 county service area. May you be reminded this Thanksgiving that WE appreciate you!

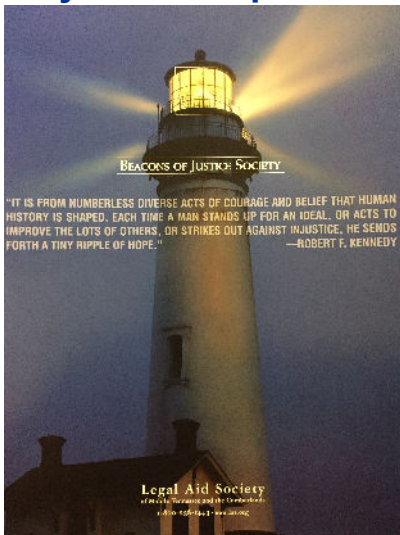
Legal Aid Society Secures Divorce and IRS Refund Through Holistic Case Management

“Betty” is the mother of two daughters. She separated from her husband after there had been severe verbal, financial and physical abuse including punching Betty, strangling her and pushing her into a bathtub where he then sat on and crushed her legs. Her husband was a truck driver and very neglectful of the family including failing to pay taxes, taking the working cars to punish Betty and not providing for basic necessities including lights and water in the home they shared. Betty and her children were often stranded in the home for days at a time while he was on the road.

One Legal Aid Society attorney secured a divorce for Betty which allowed her to start over in a new apartment of her own. During the course of the representation, it was determined that Betty had been saddled with all her husband’s tax debt and her IRS refund checks were being taken each year to pay the debt. Another Legal Aid Society attorney intervened and the IRS granted Betty innocent spouse relief for 2006, 2007 and 2008. This was a tax savings of \$5,990. In addition, the IRS refunded Betty \$10,695.

And, finally, when Betty received notice of foreclosure on her previous home, a third Legal Aid Society attorney provided legal advice on the next steps based on the fact Betty no longer lived in the home. Because of the holistic approach we take to cases, Betty and her daughters are living in safety and have essential income to support them.

Anonymous Bequest Provides Support for Our Services



In late October we received a \$50,000 bequest from a donor who has supported Legal Aid Society for almost 20 years. There were no restrictions placed on the gift except that the donor requested to remain anonymous. We are grateful to this donor for this incredible gift and for becoming the newest member of our Beacons of Justice Society.

Several years ago we created the Beacons of Justice Society to honor those who have made planned gifts to Legal Aid Society. In providing a planned gift to Legal Aid Society, these Beacons illuminate a path others can follow to provide free civil legal assistance to those who have nowhere else to turn. Contributing to Legal Aid Society through a planned gift is a way for YOU to shine a light on

the path to justice for all and help our neighbors in their journey from surviving to living.

For more information about joining the Beacons of Justice Society or to let us know you have made a planned gift through your will, life insurance and/or other estate planning documents, please contact Cindy Durham at 615-780-7125 or cdurham@las.org.

Staff Updates



Andrae Crismon, managing attorney of our Murfreesboro office, was one of a handful of attorneys recently recognized by the Rutherford/Cannon County Bar Association (“RCCBA”) with the Volunteer Service Award for volunteering at the Free Legal Clinic at Greenhouse Ministries at least 10 times over the past year.



Robert Dickens, Board member from Westmoreland (Gallatin service area), obtained his GED in October.



Cindy Durham, Director of Development, was elected the 2017 Program Chair for the Breakfast Club of Nashville.



Sam Keen, staff attorney, has moved from our Clarksville office to our Nashville office. Sam will be working on housing issues.



Tessa Lawson, Board member from Cookeville (Cookeville service area), has been elected President of the Putnam County Bar Association for 2017.



Michelle "Miki" Sisco has joined our staff as a Family Law attorney in the Nashville office. Miki received a B.A. with Honors from Bates College. She received her Master's in Anthropology and Women's & Gender Studies from Brandeis University and received her J.D. from Northeastern University School of Law. Miki was barred in Massachusetts in 2013 and will sit for the February bar, practicing under Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 7 in the interim. She most recently worked at The Justice Bridge Legal Center in Boston. She has experience working with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts, Greater Boston Legal Services, Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders Office and the Family Law Project for Battered Women.

Holiday Schedule for Legal Aid Society

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

- Friday, December 23
 - Monday, December 26
 - Monday, January 2, 2017
-

Make a Gift in Thanksgiving of Someone

It's that time of year when we are thankful for the many blessings in our lives. 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 November 16, we have raised \$724,393 towards our \$827,000 goal for the 2016 campaign. **This leaves a funding gap of \$102,607 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 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.

