

# Law Services News

[www.nslawservices.org](http://www.nslawservices.org)



FALL 2015

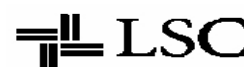
## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Suffolk Pro Bono Attorneys Work to Meet the Needs of DV Victims	2
Consumer Debt Law Project Fights Medical Debt for Disabled Client	3
Open Enrollment For 2016 Health Coverage	3
Child Support Pro Bono Innovation Project Update	4
Announcing New Veterans Project	5
Income Discrimination in Rental Housing	5

*Doing What's Legally Possible to Create a Just World*

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Fall Harvest Commitment to Justice Reception*
- *NSLS In the Community*
- *Volunteer Attorneys Recognized for Their Work*
- *NSLS Winter Training Schedule*
- *Advisory Council News*
- *Message from the Executive Director*



## Everyone Wins in Housing Case:

Client's Section 8 reinstated and local PHA directed to change policy to provide reasonable accommodations to disabled residents.

**Judy Hirshon**, an attorney with many years of experience in housing law, recently received a major victory for her Section 8 client who had lost her rent subsidy because she failed to provide all the required documentation for recertification.

The Section 8 termination notice provided by the Public Housing Authority (PHA) provided an opportunity for a hearing, but the client failed to request one. An examination of the daily notes in the client's file at the PHA, revealed that the client had problems understanding instructions and following through with providing documents. The notes additionally reported that the client frequently did not seem coherent when she came to the PHA office, that she rambled on when told what was required of her, and that she asked the same questions repeatedly.

Some of client's children were in foster care. When the family reunification worker learned about the Section 8 termination, she advocated for the client's reinstatement. The Director of the PHA refused to negotiate the termination. Even the client's landlord went to the PHA in an attempt to have the client reinstated to the program but was abruptly turned away.

When the client came to our office for help, Ms. Hirshon determined that the termination notice was defective in its content and did not provide sufficient time to request a hearing. In a letter to the PHA director, the attorney pointed to these deficiencies and also requested a reasonable accommodation for the client under the Fair Housing Act (FHA), the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act

(Continued on page 2)

## Civil Unit Assists Tenants to Fight for Habitable Housing

**Richard Semegram** recently represented Mr. Q in a nonpayment proceeding. He had been living with his great grandmother in a federally subsidized building for several years. For years, the conditions in the apartment deteriorated and their complaints went unheeded. Finally, in 2013, the tenants complained to the Freeport Village Building Department. An inspector wrote up a violation report and delivered it to the housing authority. The tenants then began withholding their rent.

Conditions in the apartment included a significant mold problem in the bathroom and consistent issues with the baseboard heating in several rooms. There were also a number of smaller issues including missing electrical fixtures.

In 2014, the landlord finally began to address some of the issues, including the mold, by remediating and replacing the drywall. However, these repairs were not completed in the summer of 2014, and some of the electrical work was left incomplete. The tenants were forced to install an electric lamp in the bathroom because none of the light fixtures had been replaced. The heat in the living room and kitchen remained defective. The tenants again began withholding their rent in hopes of getting the landlord to respond. It took the landlord until the Spring of 2015 to pursue the matter in court at which time the clients sought legal assistance at Nassau Suffolk Law Services.

(Continued on page 2)

## Everyone Wins In Housing Case

*(Continued from page 1)*

(ADA) and the NYS Executive Law. Ms. Hirshon also requested reinstatement to the Section 8 program. The Director refused all requested relief but did agree to provide client with a hearing. Unfortunately, the hearing decision affirmed the termination.

Convinced of the merits of the appeal, Ms. Hirshon then commenced litigation in an Article 78 proceeding. She was successful in obtaining a Temporary Restraining Order that reinstated the client to the Section 8 program retroactively, providing her a reasonable accommodation that enabled the client to comply with all of her obligations under the Section 8 program, including recertification and retroactive and ongoing payment of the rent subsidy to the landlord.

Two weeks after sending the initial letter to the Director of the PHA, the attorney filed a discrimination complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Due to Ms. Hirshon's compelling argument, while the Article 78 proceeding was pending, HUD issued a Letter of Findings in the client's favor based on the Rehab Act and the ADA. The HUD determination included reinstatement to the Section 8 program, and a reimbursement to the client for monetary losses. It also included a significant attorneys fees award to Nassau Suffolk Law Services.

Most importantly, HUD is requiring the PHA to review all reasonable accommodation requests made in the past 5 years and to remedy all decisions not made in accordance with the law. The PHA was also required to supply HUD with a list of all Section 8 voucher holders that were terminated in the last 5 years along with the reasons for the terminations. Furthermore, the PHA employees have to attend HUD-approved training about the Rehabilitation Act, the ADA and FHA and provide detail for all in attendance. Finally, the PHA must revise its reasonable accommodation policies and procedures which must be approved by HUD. Following the HUD directive, the PHA agreed to settle the Article 78 proceeding with all the relief requested. It also included a significant attorneys award to Nassau Suffolk Law Services.

The client's successes did not stop there. **Milton Braxter**, our DAP attorney who sadly passed away in recent months, was successful in challenging the client's denial of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits and the client is now in receipt of SSI.

Congratulations to Judy Hirshon and Milton Braxter on a terrific job!

*by Douglas Ruff, Director of Litigation*

## Tenants Fight For Habitable Housing

*(Continued from page 1)*

When Mr. Semegram attempted to negotiate a settlement, including an abatement (reduction) of rent due to the conditions, the landlord refused to settle for any amount other than the full rent due, and so the matter proceeded to trial. The landlord put up a total of five witnesses over the course of three days, including the building inspector, a neighbor, the superintendent, the building manager, and the attorney of record for the case. Mr. Semegram's client was the only one to testify in his defense, but he was an excellent, compelling witness. He described the conditions confidently and coolly and held his own in the face of some harsh cross-examination. Each side submitted a post-trial memorandum on the issue of whether the rent abatement should be granted based upon the full contract rent or the tenant portion of the rent.

In a favorable decision, the judge granted our client a 15% rent abatement from the full contract rent, which is actually a significant reduction of the tenant's subsidized rent portion.

It is important to note that withholding the rent can be an important tool for a tenant in a warranty of habitability situation such as this one, but it is imperative that the withheld rent be conserved pending the final decision of the court, in order that the housing not be jeopardized.

*by Richard Semegram, Staff Attorney, Civil Unit Hempstead*

## Suffolk Pro Bono Attorneys Work to Meet the Needs of DV Victims

*By Ellen Krakow, Suffolk County Pro Bono Project Coordinator*

Soon after being released from the hospital, after another attack by her husband, "Jen" called Nassau Suffolk Law Service's (NSLS) Pro Bono Project. Jen's husband, who had physically abused her for years, had just served her with divorce papers. She had no place to live, very little income, and no one to help her. Jen, who was an Asian immigrant, spoke only limited English.

NSLS immediately got to work by first referring Jen to a local domestic violence partner agency to help her obtain confidential housing, a temporary Order of Protection, and counseling. After expediting its Pro Bono intake, NSLS was able to quickly arrange pro bono divorce counsel for her and an interpreter to facilitate their communications. NSLS also helped her obtain immigration assistance from Touro Law Center.

This kind of team approach is often needed for the domestic violence victims that we encounter. The clients come to us with multiple immediate needs. Some, like Jen, do not yet have Orders of Protection. Others come to the Pro Bono Project from our own Domestic Violence Unit. Thanks to Chief Judge Lippman's Civil Legal Services funding, NSLS' DV Unit is able to represent victims in Family Court in order to

*(Continued on page 4)*

## CONSUMER DEBT LAW PROJECT FIGHTS MEDICAL DEBT FOR DISABLED CLIENT

Law Services' Consumer Debt Unit recently overcame a strict Attorney General (AG) office policy and obtained a reasonable and fair settlement of a medical debt for a learning disabled client.

The client, Mr. G, had been sued by the Attorney General's Office for a substantial amount of outstanding medical bills resulting from emergency care he had received at a state hospital a number of years prior. Mr. G had a severe learning disability and could not understand the documents he received, but was nonetheless motivated to handle his problems. He immediately reached out to the Attorney General's Office and with the help of his sister and a friend he was able to submit a financial disclosure with an application for settlement.

According to the AG's Office Mr. G was sent a formal letter explaining that based on his financial disclosure he was eligible for settlement at a 95% reduction of his total debt and he could satisfy his debt in full with a lump-sum payment of \$1000, provided he signed the documents to accept the award. Unfortunately, Mr. G never received this written notification; instead he was informed of the settlement offer by the AG's Office over the phone and maintained regular communications with them while he was working to obtain the funds. During this time, with full knowledge of Mr. G's efforts to accept the settlement and without once notifying him, the AG's Office obtained a default judgment for the total amount owed. It was at this time that Mr. G sought the assistance of attorney Sharon Campo and the Consumer Debt Unit at Nassau Suffolk Law Services, Inc.

Despite Mr. G's diligent efforts and obvious desire to settle this matter, Ms. Campo was told that the AG's Office has a strict policy that once a judgment is entered they will not revisit the matter of a settlement, regardless of the circumstances. However, this stonewall approach did not stop Ms. Campo. The attorney challenged the AG from every possible angle. She submitted letters of representation iden-

tifying Mr. G's learning disability and need for financial assistance. She also made a formal request for a reasonable accommodation under the American's with Disability Act. Unfortunately, the AG's Office would not budge on their policy.

Ms. Campo was not deterred and ultimately filed a successful motion in court to vacate the judgment against Mr. G. In so doing she was then able to pursue the settlement he so rightfully deserved.

by Robert Horn, Staff Attorney

## Announcement: Open Enrollment for 2016 health coverage starts on November 1, 2015 and ends on January 31, 2016



Anyone looking to apply for Child Health Plus, Medicaid, OR ENROLL INTO A QUALIFIED HEALTH PLAN IN THE NY STATE OF HEALTH INSURANCE MARKETPLACE can be referred to one of the sites. NSLS is now a regular site for the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council's Navigator Enrollment interviews.

Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council sites operate on a **first come, first serve basis**. Please call 631 656-9783 for their schedule or go to their website [www.coverageforhealthcare.org](http://www.coverageforhealthcare.org)

The Nassau Suffolk Hospital Council also has a NEW application assistance program for aged, certified blind and disabled persons.

If people prefer to make an appointment, they can call one of the following agencies to meet with a Navigator: **Community Service Society** 888 614-5400, **Public Health Solutions** 646 632-5986. People can also enroll by phone by calling the **NY State of Health Customer Support** at 855-355-5777.



(Continued from page 2)

## Meeting the Needs of DV Victims

obtain Orders of Protection and, in some instances, child custody and support orders as well. The NSLS Pro Bono Project will then step in to arrange for pro bono divorce counsel. Some of NSLS' DV clients find themselves sued by their spouses for divorce in courts outside of Long Island. When this occurs, NSLS utilizes the network of New York pro bono programs, such as *Her Justice* in New York City, to locate legal assistance. In addition to the generosity of pro bono counsel, what makes our program so effective are the relationships developed over the years with key players, such as judiciary personnel, the advocates in the DV service agencies, and our colleagues at local law schools and pro bono programs in other parts of New York.

Suffolk County residents who are victims of domestic violence and in need of legal assistance in Family Court, or who need pro bono assistance for a divorce, can contact NSLS at (631) 232-2400. Nassau County residents can contact NSLS' Nassau office at (516) 292-8299. Emergencies should be directed to the New York State Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-942-6906.

## Child Support Pro Bono Innovation Project Update: Law Firms, Suffolk Bar Association, Judiciary and Law Schools Collaborate

In our last newsletter we reported on a new initiative which would bring free legal assistance to child support litigants. (Spring 2015 p.12 ). The Project started over the summer with the assistance of law student interns. Melissa Greenberger, the supervising Pro Bono Innovator, is the attorney in charge. As part of the students' internship experience they were trained by judges and attorney mentors who generously donated their time including Touro Law School faculty **Lewis Silverman**, **Danielle Schwager** and **Erica Edwards-O'Neal**. Special thanks to **District Administrative Judge C. Randall Hinrichs** for his critical support for the Project.



**Judge Jeffrey Spinner** meets with students at Touro PAC Center for a Lunch and Learn



**Judge Cheryl Joseph** provides legal training to students on child support law

*below* **Judge C. Randall Hinrichs** takes time from his busy schedule to meet with students at Touro PAC Center



*left* Students visit the Suffolk County Bar Association



**Fred Rooney** of the Touro Incubator discusses legal career with students at NSLS Islandia



*right* Students attend child support training at the firm of Kaye Scholer LLP



Thanks to a collaboration with **Professor Jennifer Gundlach** at **Hofstra Law School** who taught a capstone technology course in the Spring semester, her students (pictured above) have developed an automated A2J Author and Hot Docs tool to make it easier for unrepresented litigants in Family Court to complete initial petitions for child support. See [NYSBA Pro Bono News Summer Edition p. 17](#). We hope that the guided interview created by the Hofstra students will eventually be available online, providing access to justice to many other New Yorkers.

## ANNOUNCING NEW VETERANS RIGHTS PROJECT

Suffolk County is home to the largest population of veterans in New York State, and has one of the largest veterans' populations of any county in the United States.

Recognizing this great need in our community, Law Services has dedicated some of its Judiciary Civil Legal Services funding to a new unit committed to serving veteran's civil legal needs. The Veterans Rights Project will be focusing on veteran-specific issues but will also consider other issues, primarily public benefits, for veterans with income below 200% of the Federal Poverty level. In addition, we will provide legal education to veterans and their advocates, working closely on outreach with veterans organizations on Long Island and at the VA Northport campus. We will be providing at-risk veterans with the legal support and dignity Nassau Suffolk Law Services is recognized for. Call 631 232-2400.

by Blair Hill, Law Graduate



**Congratulations to Harold M. Somer** of Westbury, N.Y. who was honored earlier this year with the **NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S PRO BONO SERVICE AWARD**. He has helped hundreds of low-income individuals make fresh financial starts with Chapter 7 bankruptcy proceedings logging in excess of 300 hours in 24 years in the Volunteer Lawyers Project's bankruptcy clinic.



## INCOME DISCRIMINATION IN RENTAL HOUSING

In our last issue we described the new amendment to the Suffolk County Human Rights Law (*"Important Expansion of Human Rights Law in Suffolk" Spring 2015 p. 9*). The Suffolk County Legislature unanimously passed the Source of Income (SOI) Discrimination Ordinance which took effect as of January, 2015. As the name implies, SOI makes it a discriminatory act, among other things, to refuse to rent to a prospective tenant on account of their lawful source of income. It protects tenants receiving Section 8 voucher assistance, public assistance and any other subsidy that may help pay rent. A few years back, Gov. Patterson vetoed a State wide SOI statute claiming that it would hurt small landlords. In fact, in Suffolk County, it is our experience that it is the largest landlords that have refused to deal with the Section 8 agencies and Social Services. That is now a violation of the Suffolk County Human Rights Ordinance. It is not a violation of the federal Fair Housing Act, (FHA) but it is a start.

The goal of the ordinance, as of the FHA, is to promote diversity. Minority tenants should have the option to move wherever they can afford to live. Section 8 and to a lesser extent, public assistance, give them that opportunity.

Be aware that cases where your clients with public assistance or Section 8 are told that a particular landlord will not rent to them, may constitute a violation under this ordinance. There are certain exclusions, such as small landlords, (2 family house, owner occupied), but, once again, it in our experience it is usually the largest landlords that have refused as a matter of policy to deal with Section 8 or DSS.

by Victor Ambrose, Staff Attorney Civil Unit



### Free Legal Information Day

Nassau County Bar Association 10/29/15  
Nassau residents meet one on one with an attorney  
3:00-7:00 P.M By Appointment Only  
Call to register 631 747-4070



**NASSAU SUFFOLK LAW SERVICES**  
**FALL HARVEST COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE RECEPTION**  
**OCTOBER 28, 2015—6:00-9:00 THE CARLTUN**  
**EISENHOWER PARK, EAST MEADOW**  
**TICKET PRICE \$125**



*Dear Friend*

*Established in 1966, Law Services provides vital civil legal representation and advocacy for low income and disabled residents of Long Island. During 2014, nearly 14,000 individuals benefited from our direct legal representation—preserving Social Security and public benefits for seniors, low income families, and individuals; preventing foreclosure, legal assistance for people with cancer and HIV/AIDs. Please join us at our 2015 Fall Harvest Commitment to Justice Reception featuring a dinner buffet, open bar, live music and raffles. With your support, we will continue to provide free, quality civil legal representation to Long Island's neediest residents.*

*Tickets are \$125*

*Gold Leaf Sponsors* *\$5,000*  
*Includes 10 tickets and prominently featured acknowledgement on program and signage.*

*Silver Leaf Sponsor* *\$3,500*  
*Includes 8 tickets and prominently featured acknowledgement on program and signage.*

*Bronze Leaf Sponsor* *\$1,500*  
*Includes 4 tickets and prominently featured acknowledgement on program and signage.*

*Green Leaf Sponsor* *\$1,000*  
*Includes 3 tickets and acknowledgement on program.*

*Orange Leaf Sponsor* *\$500*  
*Includes 2 tickets and acknowledgement on program.*

*Yellow Leaf Sponsor* *\$300*  
*Includes 1 tickets and acknowledgement on program.*

*To sponsor please complete sponsorship agreement on page 7.*

*Tickets are \$125/pp.*

*For questions regarding sponsorship and/or tickets, please contact  
Sheila Johnson at 631 232-2400 ext. 3322 or [sjohnson@wnylc.com](mailto:sjohnson@wnylc.com).*

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

NOTICE: Because Nassau Suffolk Law Services Committee, Inc. (NSLSC) is funded in part by the Legal Services Corporation (LSC,) NSLSC may not expend any funds - including funds from other sources - for any activity prohibited by the Legal Services Corporation Act, 42 U.S.C. 2996 et seq. or by Public Law 104-134. For a copy of these laws or for any other information or clarifications, please contact NSLSC.





## Nassau Suffolk Law Services Sponsorship Agreement

As a sponsor you, your company or organization will be positively identified with the Law Services' commitment to access to justice and quality legal services in civil matters in a manner which respects the individual dignity of low-income Long Islanders, and help ensure the future of the full protection and benefits of the law.

### Sponsorship Information

Name of Company, Institution or Individual

Contact Person

Email Address

Phone

Fax

Billing Address (include city, state and zip code):

Name as you wish it to appear in printed materials:

### Sponsor Contribution

Amount

Card Type (Visa & MasterCard Only)

Card Number

Expiration Date

I authorize Nassau Suffolk Law Services to charge my credit card for the amount above

Authorized Signature

Date

Total Contribution

☐

Gold Leaf (\$5,000)

☐

Silver Leaf (\$3,500)

☐

Bronze Leaf (\$1,500)

☐

Green Leaf (\$1,000)

\$

☐

Orange Leaf (\$500)

☐

Yellow Leaf (\$300)

☐

Other

### Sponsor Signature

I/We agree to sponsor Nassau Suffolk Law Services' 2015 Fall Harvest Commitment to Justice Reception on October 28, 2015.

Signature

Date

Print Name

Title

☐

Full Payment Enclosed

☐

Payment to Follow by \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsorship Pledge due by October 6, 2015

Thank you for your generous support!

Please make checks payable to Nassau Suffolk Law Services

Mail to: Nassau Suffolk Law Services, 1 Helen Keller Way, 5th Floor

Hempstead, NY 11550

Attn: Maureen Marmero

**Please return this completed form promptly to assure acknowledgment will be made on program and signage for the event. For more sponsorship and/or ticket information, please contact Sheila Johnson at 631 232-2400 ext. 3322 at [Sjohnson@wnylc.com](mailto:Sjohnson@wnylc.com)**

NOTICE: Because Nassau Suffolk Law Services Committee, Inc. (NSLSC) is funded in part by the Legal Services Corporation (LSC,) NSLSC may not expend any funds - including funds from other sources - for any activity prohibited by the Legal Services Corporation Act, 42 U.S.C. 2996 et seq. or by Public Law 104-134. For a copy of these laws or for any other information or clarifications, please contact NSLSC.



Law Services continues its strong ties within the community in an effort to collaborate with various agencies and ensure that low income Long Islanders receive the services they so desperately need. If you happen to see any of our Law Services' staff at a community event, please stop by to introduce yourself and say hello. We'd love to meet you, and as always we thank you for your support!

On April 30, 2015, **Mike Wigutow**, Senior Staff Attorney of the Foreclosure Prevention Project attended the Low-Income Forum on Energy in Plainview. He presented on the impact of foreclosures on Long Island and how the state and federal governments have attempted to address the problem.

On May 6, 2015, **Marcia Vogel**, Paralegal in the Education and Disability Rights Project, staffed a table and handed out brochures at the *Moving Forward in Children's Mental Health Annual Symposium* sponsored by The Office of Mental Health.

On May 9, 2015 Marcia also staffed a table at the Special Education Fair at the Elmont Public Library. She gave information/referrals to parents in attendance.

On May 7, 2015 **Liz Wolf**, Director of Social Work presented an overview of Law Services - describing our various different units, eligibility and services at North Shore LIJ Health Home Outreach event.

On May 7, 2015 **Carolyn McQuade**, Staff Attorney in the Adult Home Project, gave information about Law Services and trained Family Service League's OmbudService Program staff on adult home rights.

### Senior Citizens Project community outreach

On March 27, 2015, **Daniel Okrent**, Staff Attorney of the Senior Citizen's Project attended the NYS Office for the Aging Conference held at Molloy College where he responded to questions on seniors and aging.

In April, 2015 Dan gave a training to new Ombudservice volunteers on various elder law topics at Family & Children's Association in Mineola and an in-service training on Medicaid to social workers at Age-Well in their Lake Success office.

On May 27, 2015 Dan participated in Glen Cove's Senior Citizens Law Clinic, where he met with seniors to discuss some of their legal issues.

This summer Dan staffed tables at "A Fair for the Savvy Senior" held at the Long Beach Public Library sponsored by Magnolia Senior Citizen's Center, and at "Funday Monday" Senior Citizen Fair held at North Hempstead Beach Park sponsored by the Town of North Hempstead.

On August 26, 2015, **Lynn Iacona**, Staff Attorney in the Education and Disabilities Rights Project gave a lecture on NY Special Education Law to Positive Behavior Support Counseling's administrators and staff.



Our very own "Legally Pink" team participated

in Susan G. Komen's weekend's Race for a Cure held in Central Park on Sunday, September 14, 2015. Through candy sales as well as raffles, and sponsorships for those who participated in the race, we raised funds for the Susan G. Komen Foundation. We are happy to support this great cause which in turn provides funding to our PLAN Cancer Project.





## Nassau Attorneys of the Month

The Nassau Suffolk Law Services' **Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP)** and the Nassau County Bar Association recently honored two attorneys for their strong passion and commitment to indigent Nassau County residents by providing them with pro bono legal counsel.

**Michael Schmitt** began volunteering with the VLP in 2009, handling mostly matrimonial cases. Since that time, Mr. Schmitt has consistently maintained a steady caseload with the VLP, working rigorously to provide legal services to those in need. He recognizes that most needy clients lead challenging lives, and would never be able to navigate our legal system without the help of pro bono counsel.



Mr. Schmitt believes he has a responsibility to provide assistance to them. Susan Biller, Pro Bono Coordinator of the VLP states: "Mike is one of a select group of attorneys we know we can count on to handle a challenging or contentious case. Our program relies on attorneys like him; we are extremely grateful for his commitment."

**Ashka Patwa** was also recently honored as an attorney who has displayed incredible passion and dedication for the clients she represents. Ms. Patwa has volunteered for Nassau Suffolk Law Service's VLP Landlord/Tenant Attorney of the Day Project since 2012, providing tenants with much needed representation which they would not otherwise be able to afford. Ms. Patwa has devoted over 30 hours in the past year assisting tenants with their disputes, helping many remain in their residences who would otherwise be faced with eviction and rendered homeless.



According to Robert Scoll, Staff Attorney and Coordinator of the Attorney of the Day Program: "Ashka brings a special talent with her when she volunteers with the Attorney of the Day Project. She is always cheerful and her exuberance is contagious. We are so lucky to have her share her landlord/tenant experience with us, and her passionate representation of our clients can be seen in the settlements she obtains."

On behalf of the Nassau Volunteer Lawyers Project and the Nassau County Bar Association, we congratulate Michael Schmitt and Ashka Patwa on their achievements.

## Suffolk Attorneys of the Month

The **Suffolk Pro Bono Project**, along with the Suffolk County Bar Association were pleased to have chosen several attorneys in recent months to be honored as Pro Bono Attorneys of the Month.

Among those honored as Pro Bono Attorney of the Month is **James M. Corcoran**. Mr. Corcoran has been a consistent and stalwart participant in the Suffolk County Pro Bono Foreclosure Settlement Conference Project (Foreclosure Project) since 2003. The commitment and diligence he has brought to the Foreclosure Project is unsurpassed. Barry Smolowitz, co-coordinator of the Project, holds Corcoran in high regard describing him as "diligent, reliable, dedicated, and invested." According to Smolowitz, Corcoran is extremely organized "and can always be counted on to take a case." For this reason, it is with great pleasure that we recognize him for his outstanding pro bono service.



The Suffolk Pro Bono Project also honored **Edwin L. Smith**

as Pro Bono Attorney of the Month. Mr. Smith, a recently retired attorney, has been an integral part for the Project for the past year-and-a-half, assisting with the screening of the Project's numerous prospective clients. Upon retiring, Mr. Smith was motivated to volunteer his legal services



in the community and learned of Nassau Suffolk Law Services upon joining the New York State Attorney Emeritus. "We are honored to have an attorney of his experience and caliber assisting us in the provision of pro bono services to the community," said Nassau Suffolk Law Services' Director of Communications and Volunteer Services, Maria Dosso. She added, "Ed brings a professional commitment to his volunteer responsibilities, and we are so grateful to have him as part of our team."

The Suffolk Pro Bono Project is extremely grateful for the generosity, dedication and professionalism of our pro bono attorneys and it is with great pleasure that we honor them as Pro Bono Attorneys of the Month.

**CELEBRATE** National Pro Bono Celebration  
**PRO BONO** October 25 - 31, 2015  
[www.celebrateprobono.org](http://www.celebrateprobono.org)



## Law Services Winter Training Schedule



Trainings will be held at our offices, either in Islandia: 1757 Veterans Hwy, Suite 50, Islandia OR Hempstead: 1 Helen Keller Way, 5th Fl, Hempstead. Please visit our website [www.nslawservices.org](http://www.nslawservices.org) for directions. To pre-register, please call the Training Line at 631 232-2400 x 3357, fax 631 232-2489 or email Cathy Lucidi at [clucidi@wnylc.com](mailto:clucidi@wnylc.com). Fee is \$35 per training. Scholarships available. Please make check payable to Nassau Suffolk Law Services and mail your payment in advance to confirm pre-registration. If inclement weather on day of the training, please call the training line for possible cancellation

The ICAN Unit is available to provide free informational seminars to clients in the community on issues involving long term managed care (MLTC) and FIDA plans. Please call our office at 631 822-3290 to schedule **free on-site trainings**.

**Veterans Rights:** The Veterans Rights Project will sponsor a training for advocates on issues that affect our veterans living in the community: Topics will include: veterans benefits, discharge issues, public benefits, landlord tenant rights for veterans, and child support law. Islandia office, **Tuesday November 24, 2015 10:00-12:30**

**The Self Help Child Support Project** will present a training for advocates on child support law. Some of the questions to be discussed will include: How does a client start a support petition? How to collect on an existing child support order? How can a disabled, non-custodial parent deal with a large child support obligation and/or garnishment? The presenters will also discuss the free self help assistance that is available for residents in Suffolk. **Wednesday November 4, 2015 9:30-12:00 Islandia office**

### Training Registration Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Title and date of Training(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Site of Training \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Please check if payment will be sent at a later date or on the date of the Training

☐

*Please return with applicable fee to: Nassau/Suffolk Law Services, 1757 Veterans Highway, Suite 50, Islandia, N.Y. 11749  
Attn: Cathy Lucidi. This form may also be faxed to Cathy at (631) 232-2489*

Nassau/Suffolk Law Services Committee, Inc.

1 Helen Keller Way, 5th Fl.  
Hempstead, N.Y. 11550

(516) 292-8100

1757 Veterans Memorial Hwy., Suite 50,  
Islandia, N.Y. 11749

(631) 232-2400

400 W. Main St., Suite 301,  
Riverhead, N.Y. 11901

(631) 369-1112

*“Doing What’s  
Legally Possible  
to Create a Just  
World ”*

We're on the Web

[www.nslawservices.org](http://www.nslawservices.org)

PLEASE SHARE A  
COPY OF THIS  
NEWLETTER WITH  
YOUR COLLEAGUES

Make sure to give us your  
email address by going to  
[www.nslawservices.org](http://www.nslawservices.org) and  
look for the “Sign up for our  
Email Newsletter.” Tell your  
friends and colleagues!

“Like” us on Facebook!



<https://www.facebook.com/NassauSuffolkLawServices>

## Staff Announcements

**Welcome: Blair Hill**, Staff Attorney Veterans Rights Project

**Farewell: Yolanda Neems**, Paralegal Welfare Unit Islandia. As a colleague with over 10 years of dedicated service to homeless families in Suffolk County, we wish Yolanda all the best in her future.

## Congratulations to Newly Elected Advisory Council Executive Committee Officers:



**Beth Polner Abrahams, Esq.**  
Chair

Polner Abrahams Law Firm  
Garden City, N.Y.



**Leslie H. Tayne, Esq.**  
Vice Chair

Tayne Law Group, P.C.  
Melville N.Y.



**Regina Brandow, Esq.**  
Secretary

Brandow Law  
Stony Brook, N.Y.



**Ellen Birch**  
At Large

Realtime Reporting Inc.  
Babylon, N.Y.



**Cory H. Morris**  
At Large

The Law Offices of Cory H. Morris  
Hauppauge, N. Y.

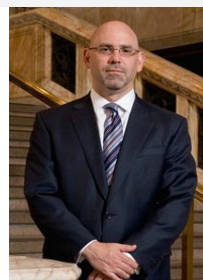
## Welcome New Advisory Council Members



**Leonard J. Badia, Esq.**  
NYS Court Officers  
Central Islip, N.Y.



**Harold L. Deiters, CPA**  
Baker Tilly  
Melville, N.Y.



**Jeffrey M. Kimmel, Esq.**  
Salenger, Sack, Kimmel & Bavaro  
Woodbury, N.Y.



**Robin Miller**  
Real Estate Strategies, Ltd  
Jericho, N.Y.





### *Message From the Executive Director, Jeffrey A. Seigel*

We are extremely proud of the work we do at Law Services but do not rest on our laurels. We are mindful of our need to continuously monitor and assess the emerging legal needs of our clients. In response to changing times and issues, we seek out specific funding or rededicate existing resources to address gaps in services or populations in need. In the past 12 months, we allocated funding to focus on a new education and disability rights (EDRP Project), revived and expanded our Consumer Debt Law Project, and launched our ICAN Project in response to growing issues around managed long term care. We have embarked on a new Veterans Rights Project (see p. 5) to assist our large numbers of veterans, and received funding to start our Pro Bono Innovations Project, recognizing the need to provide assistance in child support matters (see p. 4).

We hope you will continue to sustain our efforts by supporting our upcoming Fall Harvest Commitment to Justice Reception on October 28, 2015 (see p. 6&7 for details). It promises to be a social gathering filled with camaraderie and fun. Please consider a sponsorship or purchasing a ticket to the event.