Volunteer Opportunities

Immigration Justice Project
The American Bar Association (ABA) launched an innovative pro bono immigration pilot project in San Diego, California pursuant to a seed grant from the ABA Enterprise Fund. The mission of the Immigration Justice Project (IJP) is to promote due process and access to justice at all levels of the immigration and appellate court system, through the provision of high-quality pro bono legal services for those in immigration proceedings in San Diego. The IJP serves both detained and non-detained individuals, and recruits, trains, and mentors volunteer attorneys and law students representing clients. Through funding from the EORF, the IJP also implements a Legal Orientation Program for adult immigration detainees. The IJP aims not only to increase access to counsel for immigrants, but to benefit the judicial system as a whole; legal representation results in higher appearance rates, and more fair, efficient, accurate, and consistent decision-making. The number of immigration appeals has skyrocketed in recent years, and the lack of representation places a great strain on the federal courts - more than 50% of all immigration appeals are handled by the Ninth Circuit alone. In addition, “Notarios” claiming to be immigration lawyers or specialists, who prey upon unsuspecting individuals, are increasingly prevalent in the San Diego area and the IJP aims to expand the scope and quality of representation for those who might otherwise become their victims. To learn more about the IJP, please contact Liz Sweet at sweetce@staff.abanet.org.

VIP Mentors Program
VIP Mentors, a program that pairs juvenile parolees with attorney mentors, is seeking attorney volunteers. VIP Mentors is the only program in California that recruits attorneys exclusively to be role models for parolees as they struggle to turn their lives around. Since its founding in 1972, the VIP Mentors program has helped thousands begin new lives free of crime and based on self-sufficiency and self-respect. To volunteer, please contact VIP Mentors at 619-220-3348 or e-mail vip-sd@vipmentors.org.

San Diego Book Project
Working with A Plus Surplus Inc, a partner to St. Vincent de Paul, the “San Diego Book Project” provides needy organizations such as schools, assisted living facilities, juvenile detention facilities with books at no charge. Currently, the San Diego Book Project needs volunteers to sort and distribute the books to organizations. Sorting and packing materials are provided; however, volunteers will need to transport the donated books on their own. If you are interested in getting involved in the San Diego Book Project or know of an organization that could use children’s or adult books, please email Mike Meaney and Lori Mendez at lmendezplc@sbcglobal.net.

San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program
Since 1983, the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program (SDVLP) has changed the lives of thousands of poor women, children and men throughout San Diego County. A private, non-profit organization, SDVLP serves the most vulnerable members of our community: the homeless, abused children, domestic violence victims, elder abuse victims, veterans, immigrants and HIV/AIDS sufferers. It is through the efforts of volunteer generosity of supporters that SDVLP clients are able to get the legal help that they are otherwise unable to afford. For more information on SDVLP and to get involved visit www.sdvlp.com or call 619-235-5656.