

# MAKING A CONNECTION AND A DIFFERENCE WITH AMERICA'S YOUTH

A SERVICE GUIDE FOR LAWYERS



A Special Publication of the ABA Commission on Youth at Risk and  
the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service

In partnership with the Legal Marketing Association and LexisNexis

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*To the Reader,*

*Youth at risk were a special focus of the American Bar Association during my year as president and the Youth at Risk Commission work continues. It is making a very real difference in our communities and the lives of young people. America's youth need our help and we have the knowledge and commitment as a profession to help them. As lawyers, we cannot solve the larger personal, family and societal problems that greatly elevate the risks for youth. We can, however, use our legal expertise and our professional resources to enhance policies, practices and programs that help prevent them from becoming delinquent or engaging in criminal acts. By becoming better informed on the topic of youth at risk and how legal process and institutions can be used as interventions to help a young person, we can then use our unique skills and vantage point to do the important work of building the future we all want to see.*

Karen J. Mathis, President, ABA 2006 – 2007

## [ ABOUT THE COMMISSION ON YOUTH AT RISK ]

In 2006 an American Bar Association Presidential Initiative established the Commission on Youth at Risk, bringing together lawyers, judges, representatives of youth advocacy organizations, distinguished academics, corporate and community leaders and representatives of several of the nation's most youth-dedicated philanthropic organizations. The Commission's Reform Agenda has included:

- Finding better ways to assist juvenile “status offenders” (chronic school truants, runaways, youth with behavioral problems who are “out of control” at home) and their families and especially address the disproportionate custodial detention of girls in these categories
- Meeting the needs of youth who are “aging out” of our foster care or juvenile justice systems (at ages 18 or 19) who are still in need of considerable support, housing and assistance
- Aiding teens in chaotic or violent homes
- Assuring more meaningful participation by youth in the court proceedings affecting them
- Enhancing access to “evidence-based” services in the community that focus on preventing justice system involvement by aiding teens with emotional, behavioral or other severe issues
- Promoting education reforms to ensure that youth have a right to a high-quality education and rights to remain in school and return to school
- Improving how legal and court interventions affect youth “crossing over” from one category of systemic label (abused/neglected child) to another (delinquent child)

While we approach our task through a number of initiatives, the call to public service on behalf of our youth is paramount. Effective pro bono and public service efforts, some of which are cataloged in this publication, invite your participation and support. We encourage you to engage your colleagues to work with you, as our collective strength goes a long way in connecting to our youth. The youth of America are our future, the hope of our society.

**Lawyers must be their champions.**

## [ GOALS ]

*This Guide focuses on programs for youth aged 13 – 21 run by Bar Associations or programs with significant Bar involvement and describes ways that attorneys can devote time and expertise to helping youth avoid delinquent acts. The need is great and aligning lawyers' interests and resources maximize the positive impact attorneys can have on youth, our communities and the future of our society.*

*Thank you for your interest. We hope you will get involved.*

## [FIRST, DUE DILIGENCE]

Sociology research and practitioners who work most closely with youth in welfare and juvenile justice settings support these basic tenets regarding intervention:

- Consistent attention and sustained effort to one or a few programs yields a greater benefit than sporadic, short-term social interactions.
- Ideal qualities for role modeling and mentoring that yield quantitative, positive results are long term, intense, focused and consistent.

Keeping these tenets in mind, the best results are realized when contact is centered in helping the young person accomplish a goal or task that leads to successful life skills. Start with something achievable, practical and measurable. There is no substitute for taking the initial step of personal involvement with youth and this guide can help you create a sustainable and positive impact.

## [STEPS TO INVOLVEMENT WITH IMPACT]

### GET STARTED AND GET INVOLVED

By reading this guide you have already started. Now consider where you might make the greatest impact by volunteering in an area where you have an interest. Educate yourself on the youth issues that are most important to you, contact the appropriate parties and get involved.

### EDUCATE AND REPLICATE

Here are some specific and common needs found in the “systems” that serve at-risk youth and where lawyers can make a difference:

- Improving access to coordinated and effective services for youth who are in foster care, in the juvenile justice system or homeless
- Identifying how there can be more effective regulation and monitoring of private residential treatment facilities for youth, so as to assure their safety and proper care
- Assisting a legal advice and referral clinic or hotline
- Providing financial support for youth service programs that serve your community
- Examining conditions of confinement for juvenile offenders and status offenders
- Meeting the need for quality legal representation for youth involved in the courts, personally or by assisting community lawyers who represent youth with case preparation
- Supporting youth affected by parental incarceration and other situations that involve parental incapacity
- Increasing services for youth “aging out” of foster care who have inadequate education, life skills or job training and helping them transition from government care to independence



- Helping ensure non-discriminatory and humane protection for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and sexually questioning homeless and foster youth
- Promoting early intervention with juvenile status offenders, such as chronically truant youth and their families that can help prevent the need for court involvement
- Ensuring appropriate government support for evidence-based anti-gang and other interventions for troubled youth
- Helping ensure that unaccompanied and undocumented immigrant minors benefit from needed child welfare services

### LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Lawyers, law firms and bar associations can make a difference in the lives of America's youth by giving time and resources to:

**Schools**—Establishing scholarship support that provides recognition for outstanding youth based on various criteria. Going into schools to educate students and/or their parents, counselors and other faculty on youth legal rights, juvenile law and procedures, understanding “legalese” youth may encounter. Participating in tutoring/mentoring programs. Providing school-based legal services.

**Community Youth Organizations**—Providing law-related education to such groups as Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts, Boys & Girls Clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, ethnic and cultural society youth groups.

**Public Child Welfare Agencies and Juvenile Courts**—Working with a state or local bar to look into how attorney advocacy, for the petitioning child welfare agency, for the court-involved youth or for their parents, can be improved. Encouraging your state child welfare Court Improvement Project or your local juvenile court, to better address teenagers who are in the system, particularly those needing help in making a successful transition to adulthood. Provide legal consultation to child welfare/juvenile law attorney colleagues, who may not have skills in your specialized area of legal work and help them prepare complex cases, such as class action suits to enhance services for at-risk youth. You can also volunteer your services to take on, as co-counsel, assistance in case preparation to an overworked court-appointed lawyer. Your help could make a significant difference in how many youth they can assist, how well these cases proceed and how effectively social services are delivered to the youth and their family.

### IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT TAKING ON A PRO BONO CASE

Talk with lawyers who represent youth in the legal system or directors of child welfare, youth services or child advocacy organizations. Learn what they know about local juvenile justice and child welfare system youth at-risk needs, so that you know what you can do to affect or initiate positive change in the system through legal advocacy at the state or local level, such as help with statutory and regulatory policy reform or juvenile and family court rule improvements.

Become a long-term role model or mentor of a youth, through sustained involvement with a mentoring or youth services organization. There are many mentoring programs that are in need of qualified mentor participants. As a mentor, you can help promote positive development of youth and encourage them to succeed in school and pursue their dreams.

## EFFECTIVE LAWYER AND LAW FIRM PRO BONO AND PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAMS TO ASSIST YOUTH ENTAIL:

1. Selecting only *one or two sustainable long-term programs* to which the firm or individual lawyers will commit over a year (to start).

*This may also mean learning about your firm's policies regarding recognition or reward of contributed time, as these policies will impact the project you undertake and the time you give. Many law firms credit varying percentages of time to pro bono and community service projects against billable hourly expectations.*

2. *Securing training* for lawyer participants about ABA Commission on Youth at Risk goals, likely barriers and identify firm, key client and community resources available to you.

*Getting some specialized training on cultural issues, youth development and trauma experienced by the community you choose to work with is extremely important. Take time to be well-informed and prepared. You will feel more comfortable on this unfamiliar ground and you will be able to accomplish more positive results.*

3. Enlisting concrete and visible *firm management* support. Where there is little or no management support, many attorneys voluntarily choose to participate—and their contributions are valuable. Where the firm does substantively and publicly support attorney involvement in pro bono projects, there are many tangible client and community relations benefits to the firm. Often these programs can accomplish a great deal.

### [DISTINGUISHING SERVICE]

## UNDERSTANDING PRO BONO, PUBLIC SERVICE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Lawyers are trained to understand that within any given context it is important to be consistent in the use of language so that the meaning of words and phrases is clear and unambiguous. Interestingly, if you asked most lawyers if there are differences between pro bono, public service and community service as they relate to their professional ethical responsibility, they would likely reply in the negative. There are differences, however and for the purpose of this Guide it is important to understand these “service” models in the context of helping youth-at-risk programs.

Under rules of professional conduct in every state, lawyers have a professional responsibility to do something relative to providing “pro bono” service. One critical reason for knowing the difference between the three terms used throughout this Guide is to have clarity about what activities fulfill this professional responsibility.

As you read this Guide you will see descriptions of various youth-at-risk program volunteer opportunities. Each project description will be marked with the appropriate abbreviation indicating whether it is a pro bono, public service or community service opportunity as further described here:

*Many of our youth face the prospect of bleak futures and stand at high risk of entering the criminal and juvenile justice systems. And, although the nation has made progress narrowing racial disparities, there is still a wide chasm when it comes to outcomes for youth of different races in the justice system. This disparity poses a threat to our nation's wellbeing. In establishing the Commission on Youth at Risk, former ABA President Karen Mathis put forth a vision that lawyers can and should make a positive difference in the lives of youth who need us most. This guide is designed to help lawyers and law firms interested in improving outcomes for at-risk youth to maximize their effectiveness. It contains valuable suggestions and strategies on how to make a positive impact for at-risk youth in local communities. On behalf of the Commission, I applaud the efforts of LexisNexis and the Legal Marketing Association in producing this tool. It shows that we can all make a difference.*

Will A. Gunn, Commission Chair 2007 – 2009



## PRO BONO

Rule 6.1 of the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct and similar rules in almost every state, set forth the responsibility of lawyers to provide legal representation without compensation or expectation of compensation to persons of limited means and to charitable organizations in matters that are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means. This is the most pure and clear definition of pro bono. The intent of the lawyer to render free legal services is essential for the work performed to fall within this definition.

Pro bono can also mean providing legal representation at no fee or at a substantially reduced fee to individuals, groups or organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights or to charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental and educational organizations where the payment of standard legal fees would significantly deplete the organization's economic resources or would be otherwise inappropriate. This somewhat broader definition expands "pure" pro bono to include the provision of certain types of legal services to those whose incomes and financial resources place them above limited means tests and permits the pro bono lawyer to accept a substantially reduced fee for services. A wide range of organizations may be represented, including social service, cultural and religious groups.

In addition to the pro bono opportunities highlighted in this guide, there are a multitude of other pro bono opportunities that might be of interest to you. For more information see the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service National Pro Bono Volunteer Opportunities Guide at [www.volunteerforprobono.org](http://www.volunteerforprobono.org).



## PUBLIC SERVICE

The term "public service" is an extension of pro bono, but without the direct representation component. Typically "public service" refers to a wide range of law-related volunteer activities including participation in efforts to improve the law, the legal system or the legal profession. As with "pro bono" the important consideration is that the volunteer service provided can only be provided by a lawyer.

Examples include:

- Serving on bar association committees
- Serving on boards of pro bono or legal services programs
- Acting as a continuing legal education instructor
- Engaging in legislative lobbying to improve the law, the legal system or the profession
- Serving as a mediator or an arbitrator
- Taking part in Law Day activities.



## COMMUNITY SERVICE

At the ABA's Midyear Meeting in 2006 the House of Delegates adopted a resolution urging all lawyers to contribute to the public good through community service in addition to exercising their professional responsibility to deliver pro bono service. Community service is defined in the resolution as volunteer activity that falls outside the scope of the services a lawyer has a professional responsibility to provide in accordance with Model Rule 6.1 and the various equivalents adopted by the states. Another way of thinking about community service is that it is not unique to being a lawyer. Coaching little league, volunteering as a tutor at a school, working for Habitat for Humanity and similar activities are exciting and personally enhancing experiences but you do not have to be a lawyer to participate.

On the following pages we have selected specific pro bono, public service and community service opportunities in which you may have an interest. We have included Web contact information so that you may learn more and get involved or start a similar program in your own community.

## [TRANSITIONING YOUTH]

### **PB/PS**

#### **ABA BAR-YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT TO AID YOUTH IN AND EXITING FOSTER CARE**

This ABA project is dedicated to improving outcomes for youth who have “aged out” or are about to “age out” of foster care by promoting youth participation in the court cases that affect them and offering legal counseling and representation. The program calls upon bar associations, law schools, legal services and pro bono organizations to provide legal assistance and other services to these youth and for attorneys to work in tandem with foster youth advocacy groups on foster youth-related systemic reforms.

Web contact: [www.abanet.org/child/empowerment/home.html](http://www.abanet.org/child/empowerment/home.html)

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### **PB**

#### **ATTORNEYS FOR YOUTH—MULTNOMAH BAR ASSOCIATION YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION, PORTLAND, OREGON**

Attorneys for Youth provides legal guidance to benefit youth in the Portland area. Attorneys volunteer to be placed on an “on call” list, which is given to organizations that serve homeless and nearly homeless youth, as well as youth in job-training programs. The attorneys answer questions on legal issues, such as criminal, family, immigration, landlord/tenant and employment law.

Web contact: [www.mbabar.org](http://www.mbabar.org)

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### **CS**

#### **BRIDGES TO THE FUTURE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM—LOS ANGELES COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION**

A collaboration between the Los Angeles County Bar Association and the Department of Children and Family Services begun in 1998, the “Bridges to the Future Mentorship Program” pairs mentors with foster youth. Youth in the program are usually at least 16 years old and have typically experienced multiple placements, schools and/or caretakers. Youth in the program have expressed some interest in guidance from an adult other than their foster care provider. The program provides training and support for mentors and involves both individual and group events.

Web contact: [www.lacba.org](http://www.lacba.org)

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### **PS**

#### **READY FOR THE WORLD—HAWAII STATE BAR ASSOCIATION, YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION**

*“Making the transition from teenager to adult and from student to employee can be a challenge. There will be many decisions and choices to make. Newly acquired rights come with certain legal duties and responsibilities. Many lawsuits and problems can be prevented or resolved without having to go to court. One way to avoid legal problems is to prevent them from happening. The best prevention is to make informed decisions.”*

—Ready for the World booklet

Ready for the World sends attorneys to talk with high school seniors about laws that will affect them as they transition to adulthood/employment. Topics include practical advice about contracts, discrimination, employee rights, personal injuries and property damage and criminal offenses.

Web contact: [www.hsba.org/yldprojects.aspx](http://www.hsba.org/yldprojects.aspx)

*The challenge is clear and the need is urgent. Young people are being pushed toward the adult criminal justice system. This is a tragedy that we, as lawyers, are uniquely able to help prevent. Children and youth need champions. Lawyers must be those champions.*

Dwight L. Smith, Commission Chair 2006 – 2007

## **PS**

### **STEPPING OUT—FRANKLIN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION, PENNSYLVANIA**

This program is aimed at high school seniors preparing to “step out” into the world. Through the program, attorneys from the bar association go to high schools in the area and discuss the legal rights and responsibilities youth have as they enter the world after high school. The program is offered throughout the school year.

Web contact: <http://www.franklinbar.org/community/schools.asp>

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## **PS/CS**

### **SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM—BOSTON BAR ASSOCIATION**

Nataly Cabrera, a Boston native and aspiring attorney, participated in the Boston Bar Association’s Summer Jobs Program when she was in high school and she credits her success to the opportunities she received through it:

*“This program provided me a level of confidence I didn’t have before my internship and it also allowed me to get a feel of working at a law firm ... One of my first mentors was Joseph McConnell from the law firm Morgan, Brown & Joy, where I interned through this program. He—along with everyone else at the firm—made me truly believe in my competency as a student and as a future professional.”*

A collaboration with the Boston Private Industry Council and Boston Public Schools, the Boston Bar Association provides paid internships at various law firms for high school students in the Boston area. The program’s aim is in accordance with a broader initiative to make the legal profession more inclusive and diverse. The students gain an inside look at the legal profession and develop meaningful connections and relationships with professionals. In addition to the internship, students in the program also participate in a financial literacy program, which focuses on making good choices with regards to credit, credit cards and avoiding bankruptcy.

Web contact: [www.bostonbar.org](http://www.bostonbar.org)

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## **PS**

### **NOW THAT YOU ARE 18—WASHOE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION**

Now that You are 18 is an interactive “Survival Guide” created by the Washoe County Bar Association for high school students and their parents. The Web site contains information and resources on topics such as credit cards, renting an apartment, identity theft, car insurance, getting arrested, marriage and other legal issues that affect young adults after they turn 18.

Web contact: <http://nowthatyouare18.org>

## PS

### U@18—KENTUCKY BAR ASSOCIATION, YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION

The “U@18” program is a project that aims to prepare teens for the transition to adulthood. The project includes the creation of a 28-page booklet that outlines the change in legal status that occurs after an individual turns 18 and provides information on one’s basic rights as a renter, consumer, property owner, voter, spouse and employee. The second aspect of the program is a classroom visit from a young attorney. Lawyers in their first ten years of practice in Kentucky make one-hour presentations about the U@18 program to high school classrooms and serve as a positive role model to young adults interested in a career in the law.

Web contact: <http://www.kybar.org>

## [ MENTORING YOUTH ]

## CS

### CHAMPIONING OUR STUDENTS THROUGH MENTORING, SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION

The ABA Division for Public Education is partnering with two national organizations, Council on Legal Education Opportunities (CLEO) and America’s Promise Alliance to conduct a year-long law-related mentoring program. The program will provide teens with the tools to ensure personal, academic and career success and increase their exposure to career choices within law-related professions. The overall goal of the program is to provide students with access to legal professionals as role models and mentors. In addition to giving teens an insider’s look into legal careers, the program will teach skills of analysis, debate, logic and ethics, and provide opportunities to investigate issues of law, society and rights. Funded by the Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, five local direct service partners in Chicago, Mississippi Gulf Coast, New Orleans, Providence and Washington, D.C. have been selected to participate in this innovative project.

The program began in July with a week-long residential Summer Law Camp at the University of Chicago that included students from each partner community. The following program activities will be offered in each partner community beginning in fall 2009: Online one-on-one mentoring program, monthly programming on law-related themes and a one-day Law Summit. Long- and short-term volunteer opportunities are available in each of the five communities. From serving as a mentor (in a specially designed law-related online one-on-one mentoring program with curriculum and writing prompts provided by ABA) to presenting at law-related mentoring events or hosting a group mentoring event at your office, your assistance will enrich the experience of the young people.

Web contact: <http://www.abanet.org/publiced>

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## CS

### MENTORING/TUTORING PROGRAM—CINCINNATI BAR ASSOCIATION, YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION

The Cincinnati Bar Association Young Lawyers Section has partnered with the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative to create a program to improve the lives of students in inner-city public schools. The Mentoring/Tutoring Program aims to address the problem of high dropout rates in the Cincinnati Public School District by recruiting members of the legal profession, including attorneys, paralegals and other legal staff, to serve as mentors and/or tutors of students. Attorneys have also served as mentors to youth in suburban schools with similarly high dropout rates. Mentors devote as little as half an hour a week to mentor youth one-on-one and can make a tremendous difference in encouraging a student to stay in school, go on to college or find a job. Hundreds of youth have been matched with volunteer mentors in the past four years and there are currently about 1,000 more youth on a waiting list for a mentor.

Web contact: [http://www.cincybar.org/mentoring\\_program.asp](http://www.cincybar.org/mentoring_program.asp)

## PS

### JUDICIAL YOUTH CORPS—MASSACHUSETTS BAR ASSOCIATION

The Judicial Youth Corps Program provides an opportunity for high school students from urban communities to learn about the law and the court system. The program is administered by the Supreme Judicial Court and has been in operation since 1991. During the 14-week summer program, students attend weekly sessions in which judges, court staff and attorneys instruct them on a variety of topics, including juvenile justice, landlord/tenant issues, family law, mediation and the appellate process. Students work four days a week at a paid internship in one of the court departments, which provides students with a hands-on learning experience.

Web contact: <http://www.massbar.org>

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## PS/CS

### LAWYERS LEND-A-HAND TO YOUTH PROGRAM—CHICAGO BAR FOUNDATION AND CHICAGO BAR ASSOCIATION

*“Mentoring and working with children allows you to experience that ‘ah ha!’ moment. That moment where you realize that by donating just a few hours of your time, you are giving the greatest gift that one can give. A gift of joy and respect, where there sometimes is none and support to a child that yearns to be appreciated, encouraged and loved. In a world where it is often easier to write a check than to give a moment of your time, the Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth Program makes it easy to connect with those within our communities that are most in need.”*

—Tatiana Czaplicki, Attorney at Law

The Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth Program was initiated in 1995 by the Chicago Bar Foundation with the leadership of the Chicago Bar Association. The program includes a variety of initiatives to serve youth, including inviting attorneys to volunteer their time as mentors and tutors. The program runs the “Tickets for Kids” program, which provides donated tickets to sporting and cultural events to mentoring agencies and the youth they serve. The program also awards grants to deserving grassroots programs that provide mentoring services for youth. The Chicago Bar Association serves a leadership role in the organization with the goal of encouraging more minority and disadvantaged youth to pursue careers in the legal profession.

Web contact: <http://www.lawyerslendahand.org>

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## CS

### E-MENTORING, ESQ., PROGRAM—DALLAS BAR ASSOCIATION

*“When I first volunteered to e-mentor Adrianna, my first thought was ‘what are we going to talk about for 9 months?’ Adrianna didn’t like high school, didn’t care about her grades and had little ambition to improve. However, Adrianna told me that she wanted to be a nurse. I tried to explain how much school, hard work and good grades would be required, and encouraged Adrianna that she could easily do it with a little effort. We e-mailed about classes, grades, cheerleading and football, about teachers and attending extra study sessions, about her birthday and within 1 or 2 e-mails it was easy to see all I needed to do was encourage her to study and ask about her grades and classes. Sometimes I felt that just having someone to “share” her grades with helped Adrianna care more about them. Before I knew it, we were sitting together at the End-of-Year Banquet and Adrianna was presented with the Award for the Most Improved Student. I was so excited for her and I was proud to hear that she passed every area of her TAKS tests! She had also improved her grades by over 20 points in some subjects! It was one of the most rewarding experiences I had all year and it only took about one e-mail a month.”*

—Sarah Kownacki, Attorney at Law, Mentor

The E-Mentoring, Esq., Program began in 2004 as a cooperative effort among the Dallas Bar Association (DBA), Dallas Association of Young Lawyers (DAYL) and the Dallas Independent School District (DISD). The DISD developed a program, Advancement Via Independent Determination (AVID), which assists high school students in achieving their goal of being the first person in their family to graduate from college. The program involves attorney and business professionals who volunteer to mentor, encourage and motivate youth through e-mail. The program began with 45 mentors in 2004, grew to 95 mentors and 110 student mentees in 2005 and had 475 attorney and staff mentors and 750 student mentees by the 2006 – 2007 academic year. At the end of the academic year, the program holds a banquet in which students are able to meet their mentors.

Web contact: <http://www.dbamentor.org>

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## CS

### MENTORING FOR SUCCESS—OKLAHOMA BAR ASSOCIATION, YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION

“Mentoring for Success” is a program of the Young Lawyers Division: Children and the Law Committee of the Oklahoma Bar Association that matches lawyers and law student mentors with elementary and high school students considered “at-risk.” Students identified as borderline cases, including youth who are falling behind academically or need extra help, are matched with a mentor. Mentors meet with their student once a week at the student’s school during school hours, although the time is flexible depending on the mentor’s schedule. During these meetings, mentors engage students in activities that aim to build the student’s self-esteem, establish positive and supportive relationships, help the student overcome negative behaviors, improve the student’s engagement in the classroom and help the student develop the skills necessary to achieve his or her goals.

Web contact: <http://www.okbar.org>

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## PS/CS

### MENTOR PROGRAMS—VIRGINIA BAR ASSOCIATION AND LOCAL BAR ASSOCIATIONS

Mentor Programs exist in Lynchburg, Richmond and Roanoke. Under the Lynchburg program, a partnership between the Lynchburg Bar and Lynchburg City Schools, volunteer attorneys meet with fourth-grade students and serve as educational resources for fourth-grade teachers. In the Roanoke Program, attorney volunteers are assigned to a fourth-grade class. Attorneys meet with their assigned class for approximately one hour a month and teach the students about the judicial system, career opportunities and good decision-making skills. The program also incorporates a field trip to Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court, mock trials, contract drafting and simulated mediations.

*According to a November 2008 report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the current economic downturn is likely to cause significant increases both in the number of Americans who are poor and the number living in “deep poverty,” with incomes below half of the poverty line. Because this recession is likely to be deep and the government safety net for very poor families who lack jobs has weakened significantly, increases in deep poverty in this recession are likely to be severe. The nation’s cash assistance safety net for very poor people who are jobless is much weaker and less well equipped to meet the challenges that a serious economic downturn poses than it was in previous major recessions. That will especially hit youth hard. More than ever, they will need the types of support and aid that this publication describes. A Fall 2007 The Future of Children Journal and policy brief addressed this issue, arguing that many of society’s ills—delinquency and crime, school dropouts, unemployment and non-work, non-marital births and poverty are all associated disproportionately with young men—the youth most affected by this recession. This guide is particularly timely for America’s lawyers who aspire to make significant personal contributions to their communities.*

Howard Davidson, Director

ABA Center on Children and the Law

The Richmond Mentor Program, begun in 1990, originally aimed to educate fifth-grade students on the dangers of substance abuse. The program gradually transitioned to a more general focus on accessing positive pathways to success. Mentors are assigned to elementary schools in Richmond and are required to visit their school for at least one hour a month.

Web contact: <http://www.vba.org>

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## PS

### GROW YOUR OWN LAWYER PROGRAM—WICHITA BAR ASSOCIATION

*“It has been rewarding for me as an attorney to mentor these minority and young women who are interested in the law. I learn as much from them as they do from ... me about the program. It is also fun to take the students on tours and watch as they learn about the law. Students have had the opportunity to talk with Federal District Court Judge Wesley Brown who turned 101 years old this year ... They get to have lunch with several Justices on our Supreme Court as well as our local Judges.”*

—Carol, Volunteer Attorney

Organized by the Professional Diversity Committee of the Wichita Bar Association, this program is directed towards racial minority and female high school students who have an interest in pursuing a legal career. Each student is matched with a lawyer and they develop a positive mentoring relationship. The program also includes activities such as tours of the District Attorney’s office, jail facilities and the Kansas Supreme Court. The project’s goal is to cultivate attorneys who will eventually return to the Wichita area to practice.

Web contact: <http://www.wichitabar.org/resources/growyourownlawyer.php>

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## PS

### LAWYER IN THE CLASSROOM—KANE COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION

This project pairs a volunteer attorney with every middle and high school that serves students from Kane County. This entails nearly 50 attorneys and schools. The attorneys assist the teachers in planning and presenting lessons that concern legal issues. Examples include the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the death penalty, family law and legal careers.

Web contact: <http://www.kanebar.org>

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## [ TRUANCY PREVENTION ]

## PB/PS

### TRUANCY INTERVENTION PROJECT GEORGIA—ATLANTA BAR ASSOCIATION

Before Faydren Edwards became involved in the Truancy Intervention Project, she was struggling with a difficult situation at home, in which she had little support and many responsibilities. During her sophomore year of high school, her attendance record and academic performance faltered. Having been referred to the Truancy Intervention Project, she received the help and encouragement of a volunteer attorney, who advocated for Faydren in school and at home. In a short amount of time, she was able to drastically improve her academic record and she received the highest score on the SAT in her class. She successfully graduated from high school and is studying education at Georgia State University.

The Truancy Intervention Project (TIP) pairs lawyers with students who have excessive absences from school. The volunteer lawyers mentor students one-on-one and advocate for them through early intervention and in the courts. Through these efforts, countless children have been encouraged and able to successfully stay in school. Volunteer attorneys attend a TIP training seminar and work on truancy cases, educational neglect cases or as advocates in a school-based program that does not involve court representation. In all these roles, the volunteer helps ensure a more positive future for the child.

Web contact: <http://www.truancyproject.org/>

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## CS

### ST. LOUIS TRUANCY COURT, THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN ST. LOUIS, ST. LOUIS COUNTY FAMILY COURTS, AND LOCAL ST. LOUIS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The St. Louis Truancy Court, which began in 2000, is an intervention program that works closely with schools and students and tries to prevent at-risk students from being referred to social services. Volunteer attorneys meet with chronic truants, their families and school counselors on a weekly basis to identify the specific issues that are causing truancy for the individual student and to work to alleviate them by discussing solutions. Sometimes, the solutions can be as basic as purchasing an alarm clock for the student. Through the efforts of the St. Louis Truancy Court, two-thirds of the truant students have seen improvement in some or all of their problem areas.

Web contact: <http://www.bamsl.org>

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## PB/PS/CS

### TRUANCY INTERVENTION PROJECT—CO-SPONSORED BY CONNECTICUT BAR ASSOCIATION, CONNECTICUT BAR FOUNDATION, NEW BRITAIN PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM AND THE JUVENILE COURT

*“I took one of the first cases, an eighth-grade boy who had 30 – 40 absences over each of the prior three school years. It turned out that Tyler’s mother was being treated for cancer and his grandmother had had a stroke, leaving him as the caretaker responsible for getting his grandmother up, dressed and fed in the morning before the visiting nurse arrived. It did not take much to get Tyler to begin having a good attendance record. A contact with visiting nurses had the nurse arrive earlier in the morning to relieve Tyler of the burden of caring for his grandmother. Knowing that I was getting regular reports from the school about his attendance and following up each time I heard he was not in school or was late, provided the incentive Tyler needed to attend school. Tyler loved the idea that he had ‘his lawyer,’ and I think having the regular attention of an adult who cared about whether or not he went to school was all that he needed ... We still see each other for Saturday morning breakfast every couple of months. He promised me that I will be invited to his high school graduation in two years. School does not come easily to Tyler and he hates to do homework, but he appears to be committed to getting his high school diploma.”*

—Peter Arakas, Volunteer Attorney

This program operates by matching volunteer attorneys with middle school students from New Britain public schools with a record of unexcused absences. The attorney works with the child, his/her family, school and community and represents him/her in court. The attorney also serves as a role model for the student and helps to address underlying problems that may contribute to the poor attendance record.

Web contact: <http://www.ctbar.org/article/articleview/1010>

**PS**

**MEDIATORS ACHIEVING PEACE (MAP)—STATE BAR OF TEXAS**

The Mediators Achieving Peace program trains attorney volunteers to teach selected middle school students in schools throughout Texas to mediate disputes. Attorneys are given a two-and-a-half hour video and a notebook that includes all the information they need to lead a mediation class of 10 – 15 middle school students. Attorney volunteers teach the class of students for one hour each week for six to eight weeks. The lawyer and students discuss what conflict is, listening skills, the role of the mediator, the importance of confidentiality and how to reach an agreement. The time commitment for attorneys who wish to volunteer with the program is approximately twenty hours over a three-month period.

Web contact: <http://www.texasbar.com>

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**PS/CS**

**PROJECT PEACE—INDIANA STATE BAR ASSOCIATION, INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND OFFICE OF THE INDIANA ATTORNEY GENERAL**

Project PEACE was begun in 1994 by the Indiana State Bar Association's Civil Rights of Children Committee and the Office of the Attorney General. The Indiana Department of Education began to coordinate the program after joining with the Bar Association and Attorney General in 2001. Project PEACE (Peaceful Endings through Attorneys, Children and Educators) is an alternative dispute resolution program that aims to reduce conflicts and violence in schools by teaching children to discuss and mediate their conflicts. Over 300 elementary and middle schools have received training in establishing Project PEACE programs.

Web contact: <http://www.doe.in.gov/sservices/peace/welcome.html> And <http://www.inbar.org>

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**PS/CS**

**PROJECT PEACE—PENNSYLVANIA BAR ASSOCIATION**

Project PEACE (Peaceful Endings through Attorneys, Children and Educators) was initially brought to Pennsylvania in 1999 by the Pennsylvania Bar Association and the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office. Project PEACE trainings introduce school teams—composed of one administrator, one teacher, one guidance counselor or second teacher, one parent and one attorney—to the peer mediation and conflict resolution education process through hands-on learning activities over the course of a multiple day conference. Team members are instructed in adjudication vs. mediation, diffusing conflicts and conflict resolution. Teams develop their own conflict resolution and mediation plans and later select and train student mediators. Project PEACE is a unique program for peer mediation in Pennsylvania in that it incorporates an attorney advisor who spends considerable amount of time in the school working with and listening to youth as they work to establish the program. Attorney volunteers provide positive reinforcement for students involved and serve as a link back to the community.

Web contact: <http://www.pabar.org>

## **PS/CS**

### **PEER MEDIATION PROJECT—STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN, LOCAL BAR ASSOCIATIONS**

The Law-Related Education Committee of the State Bar of Michigan adopted the Peer Mediation Project, begun in Lansing Public Schools in 1994. The program, designed for elementary and middle school students, uses a prepared curriculum to teach conflict resolution skills in day-long training sessions on the conflict management process and communication skills. The training is conducted by attorney volunteers from local bar associations. Students are taught non-violent conflict-solving skills, problem-solving skills, development of good listening skills, seeing both sides of an argument and using verbal and nonverbal communication signals. Students trained as “school mediators” assume playground or lunch duty to identify potential conflicts and resolve disputes. Attorneys return once a month for additional training and to offer comments, advice and an opportunity to practice mediation skills. The program enables youth who serve as mentors to have one-on-one interaction with attorney volunteers who serve as mentors and role models.

Web contact: <http://www.michbar.org>

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## **PS/CS**

### **PEACEFUL RESOLUTIONS FOR OKLAHOMA STUDENTS—OKLAHOMA BAR ASSOCIATION AND THE SUPREME COURT OF OKLAHOMA**

Peaceful Resolutions for Oklahoma Students (PROS) is a collaborative effort of the Law-Related Education Division of the Oklahoma Bar Association and the Early Settlement Programs administered by the Supreme Court of Oklahoma, Administrative Office of the Courts. The program aims to train representatives of Oklahoma schools, including students, to develop peer mediation programs in their schools. The peer mediation programs encourage students to resolve conflicts in a positive and constructive manner by focusing on developing student self-esteem and the abilities of teachers to deal with on-site conflicts.

Web contact: <http://www.okbar.org/public/lre/pros.htm> And <http://www.okbar.org>

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## **PS/CS**

### **DISPUTE RESOLUTION SERVICES, YOUTH PEER MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION—LOS ANGELES COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION**

After being a disputant in a mediation case with Dispute Resolution Services, Anna Iporac volunteered when she was in the sixth grade and served as a peer mediator in dozens of cases. Although initially skeptical about the effectiveness of dispute mediation, she was impressed by the way the mediation process empowered herself and fellow youth to address and resolve difficult conflicts. Through the years, she has developed into a mature and confident leader and is noted for her neutrality and skill by peers whose cases she has mediated. In 2007, she was awarded the Outstanding Youth Volunteer Award by the LA County Board of Supervisors.

Dispute Resolution Services, a non-profit corporation of the Los Angeles County Bar Association, operates a Youth Peer Mediation and Conflict Resolution program, which serves youth and schools across Los Angeles County. The program’s purpose is to reduce and prevent acts of frustration and violence among youth. Peer mediators undergo an intensive 25-hour training course. The program’s four activities include the following: Student Peer Mediation, Conflict Resolution Education, Parent Education Seminars and Teacher and Faculty Training. In addition, there are also ongoing training and consulting for schools and other organizations and families.

Web contact: <http://www.lacba.org>

## PS/CS

### OPERATION MEDIATION – MINNESOTA STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

*“The perspective of the student citizen is unique and valuable and hard to regain later in life and we must hear it and listen to it if we want this nation to sustain itself as a free and democratic society in the years and generations ahead. ‘Operation Arbitration’ is an original project in which volunteer lawyers will help students hear and resolve real-life disputes involving students, student groups and their school communities. Operation Arbitration is different from other law-related programs such as mock trial or moot court because it involves real-life disputes, not an academic exercise.”*

—Brian Melendez, Minnesota State Bar Association President

Operation Mediation is a program of the Minnesota State Bar Association’s Civic Education Committee and Alternative Dispute Resolution Section. The program works by having volunteer lawyers train students to hear and resolve disputes between their peers. Additionally, the program will introduce students to how the justice system works and how disputes can be resolved outside of court, help them appreciate and understand the rule of law and have positive interactions with lawyers in their communities.

Web contact: <http://www.mnciviced.org>

The ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service ([www.abaprobono.org](http://www.abaprobono.org)) is the ABA’s principal entity focusing on promoting and expanding pro bono and public service opportunities for lawyers across the country. It maintains an extensive library of resources and materials designed for a broad range of individuals and institutions within the legal profession and provides in-depth technical assistance on program management, policy development and more.



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