

**American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division**  
*The Affiliate*

## **Leadership Spotlight: New York State Bar's Outstanding Young Lawyer—Joseph M. Hanna**

*By Kara J. Johnson*

*The Affiliate* would like to congratulate Joseph M. Hanna, a partner with Goldberg Segalla, LLP, in Buffalo, New York, for receiving an affiliate leadership award. Hanna is the 2010 recipient of the New York State Bar Association's Outstanding Young Lawyer Award. The New York State Bar presents this award annually to one individual who demonstrates exceptional leadership skills and community service within his or her community.

### **Bunkers in Baghdad**

Hanna has demonstrated his outstanding philanthropic efforts through his involvement with "Bunkers in Baghdad." Hanna is the president and founder of this not-for-profit charity that sends golf balls and golf clubs to our troops in overseas combat zones, including Iraq and Afghanistan. The golf equipment also is used by Wounded Warriors Programs around the country to aid in the rehabilitation of injured veterans. As of the writing of this article, Hanna had helped Bunkers in Baghdad reach the milestone of collecting more than 1 million golf balls and over 40,000 golf clubs during the course of the charity's existence.

While watching an episode of *60 Minutes*, Hanna noticed troops in the background of a camera shot golfing at a makeshift driving range while one of the soldiers was being interviewed. "I didn't think much of it at the time," said Hanna, "but then I read an article by David Feherty in *Golf Magazine* that discussed how [golf] was a good form of stress relief for the troops." Hanna used these stories as his inspiration to start Bunkers in Baghdad in 2008.

In addition to stress relief, the golf equipment provided by Bunkers in Baghdad also provides a recreational outlet for the troops. "It was the least I could do," Hanna said about collecting the golf equipment and sending it to the troops.

In November 2008, Bunkers in Baghdad sent its first shipment of equipment to the troops and has continued to expand ever since. It has gained sponsorships from Hanna's firm, national retailers, and professional athletes and sports teams.

Bunkers in Baghdad also includes a program called "Bunker Buddies" that goes into classrooms and teaches school kids about the importance of service and volunteering. Bunker Buddies holds fundraisers, equipment drives, and writes letters to the troops.

As a result of his efforts, Hanna received several awards of appreciation from various service organizations. To find out more information about Bunkers in Baghdad and Hanna's development of the program, visit the Bunkers in Baghdad website at [www.bunkersinbaghdad.com](http://www.bunkersinbaghdad.com).

### **Success in the City**

In addition to being the founder and president of a successful charity, Hanna has also demonstrated leadership and professional development skills in creating the "Success in the City" event. Hanna is the organizer and chair of the program. Success in the City is a professional networking event that began in Buffalo, New York, in 2008. It started as an attempt to break down segregation barriers that are still present within the city and to promote diversity throughout all professions. The event focuses on celebrating diversity and advocating for its importance within the workplace.

Success in the City events have been attended by judges, members of minority and women's bars, along with professionals across several career fields. The networking events have helped to fill many important internships and created cross-profession networking opportunities. As Hanna stated, Success in the City has "truly made a difference" and has started getting things "moving in the right direction" to improve diversity within the Buffalo business community.

As an annual tradition Success in the City continues to grow. In 2009, the event attracted more than double its inaugural attendance, and Hanna is hopeful for a strong showing again in 2010. The program has also become a model for legal and business communities on a national level who want to encourage diverse relationships within their workplaces.

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**Active Bar Participation**

Bunkers in Baghdad and Success in the City are Hanna's two primary initiatives, but he is also an active member in several other organizations and has been an author and presenter on multiple topics, including diversity issues. Hanna has been the vice-chair of two ABA YLD committees, has been involved in the ABA Litigation Section, and also involved in the ABA Judicial Internship Opportunity Working Group and Screening Committees. Hanna has held several committee leadership positions within the Defense Research Institute and is a member of the New York Bar Association, the Sports Lawyers Association, the American Intellectual Property Law Association, the District of Columbia Bar Association, the Erie County Bar Association, and the Minority Bar Association of Western New York.

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