A Message from MFY’s Chair

Over the past year, MFY has made significant strides in advancing social and economic justice for New Yorkers. We have strengthened core legal services to vulnerable social and economic justice for New Yorkers. We have strengthened core legal services to vulnerable populations and expanded the scope of our work. We have opened a satellite office in the Bronx to provide legal assistance on housing, public benefits and family law matters. Building on this strong foundation, we are excited to expand the impact of our programs in 2016.

As this report demonstrates, MFY continues to grow and expand the scope of our work. MFY is able to fulfill its mission and help more people in need than ever before.

Robert M. Sack
Chair of the Board

Scalas of Justice Contributors

MFY’s success is possible. We are deeply grateful and want to acknowledge the support of the law firms and businesses in New York that have supported MFY Legal Services’ mission to advance social and economic justice for New York’s residents.

Our thanks for your continued support.

Robert M. Sack
Chair of the Board

MFY is grateful to all the law firms that provide pro bono assistance to our clients, from helping kinship caregivers to helping abused children to securing benefits for people with disabilities and helping people with past criminal histories to secure licenses that enable them to work.

A number of firms also serve as co-counsel on complex cases where they have special expertise. Some current examples include:

Pillsbury Winnow Shaw Pittman LLP is co-counseling a class action lawsuit against Social Security Administration for not serving defendants with court papers and obtaining default judgments.

Ledy Davis & Maher, LLP is co-counseling a federal lawsuit on behalf of former employees of C & I Associates, Inc., a cable installation services company, alleging that it failed to pay them wages for time actually worked.

Spanier LLP is co-counseling two class action lawsuits on behalf of home health care workers formerly employed by BNY Home Care Agency and First Care of New York, Inc., for wage theft.

Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP is co-counseling a class action lawsuit against New York City Transit for failing to provide due process to people applying or recertifying for health care benefits.

JAMS is co-counseling a class action lawsuit on behalf of former employees of C & I Associates, Inc., a cable installation services company, alleging that it failed to pay them wages for time actually worked.

MFY Legal Services 2015 Year-End Report

Pro Bono Partners: Making an Impact

MFY Legal Services 2015 Year-End Report
Mobilizing for Justice: 2015 Highlights

City Takes Notice of Abusive Three-Quarter Houses

After almost five years of defending three-quarter house residents from illegal evictions, organizing tenants, submitting complaints to government agencies about possible Medicaid fraud, and working with the press to draw attention to an abusive and exploitive industry, City officials took notice after The New York Times published a scathing expose in May. The articles exposed how operators exploit tenants, pay kickbacks from treatment providers, and force tenants to “relapse” in order to keep their beds in overcrowded and generally run-down houses.

The Three-Quarter House Tenant Organizing Project (TOP) and MFY secured a class action lawsuit on behalf of New Yorkers who have been improperly denied Affordable Access-A-Ride service.

A Path to Citizenship

Juan does not remember crossing the border with his mother at age 3 to join his father who was already in the United States. Five years ago his abusive father returned to Mexico, and two years later his mother abandoned him. An aunt took in him and he thrilled under her care. Worried for her nephew’s future, the aunt contacted MFY to secure legal guardianship of Juan to apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), which would give Juan a path to citizenship in the only country he has ever known. With MFY’s help, the aunt became Juan’s legal guardian and the SIJS application was granted. Juan now has a Green Card and is attending college on a soccer scholarship.

Four-Year Old Wins Right to Access-A-Ride Service

Aaron, a four-year-old with developmental delays and physical disabilities, whose balance and spatial awareness are so poor that he is at risk of falling onto subway tracks or stumbling down stairways, was denied Access-A-Ride (AAR) service, the City’s paratransit system for people with disabilities. Without this benefit, Aaron’s mother was forced to take cabs to get the child to frequent doctor and therapy visits, a luxury she could not afford. The case was complicated by the city’s longstanding policy not to authorize Access-A-Ride service for children. MFY appealed the denial and won.

Tens of thousands of New Yorkers with disabilities rely on Access-A-Ride to get to work, go to medical appointments, and otherwise carry out daily tasks. Yet many who qualify are denied the service when they initially apply or when they seek renewal. In May, MFY and Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP filed a class action suit on behalf of New Yorkers who have been improperly denied AAR service.

Saving the Home of a Veteran’s Widow

Kathleen fell behind on mortgage payments and sought a loan modification. Although she made all the payments, the bank refused to make the modification permanent, claiming that she had failed to return paperwork and, when that proved false, that she was not the borrower. Because the trial modification was denied, MFY handled the denial and went on to secure a reasonable mortgage loan modification. After her husband died while on active duty in the military, Kathleen fell behind on mortgage payments. MFY secured a reasonable mortgage loan modification. Although she made all the payments, the bank refused to make the modification permanent, claiming that she had failed to return paperwork and, when that proved false, that she was not the borrower. Because the trial modification was denied, MFY handled the denial and went on to secure a reasonable mortgage loan modification.