



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Six Months After Hurricane Sandy, MFY Legal Services, Inc.'s  
Disaster Relief Law Field Clinic Comes To A Close**

*Cardozo Law Students Have Helped MFY Serve Over 500 Victims of Hurricane Sandy*

NEW YORK, NY, April 22, 2013— Today marks the last class of this semester's Disaster Relief Law Field Clinic (the Clinic), through which Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law (Cardozo) students have been working with MFY Legal Services, Inc. (MFY) attorneys to address the legal needs of low-income New Yorkers devastated by Hurricane Sandy.

Although MFY's offices in lower Manhattan did not have power for a week after the storm, MFY immediately mobilized with attorneys visiting shelters and going to the most seriously affected areas. The agency produced a series of seven fact sheets in English, Spanish and Chinese to give storm victims accurate information on their rights and how to access assistance. During the following weeks, MFY attorneys regularly staffed clinics in hard-hit areas, including Far Rockaway, Coney Island, the Lower East Side of Manhattan, and Staten Island. By December, however, MFY was stretched to capacity.

The Clinic grew out of discussions between Kevin M. Cremin, MFY's Director of Litigation for Disability & Aging Rights, and Rebecca Rosenfeld, Cardozo's Director of Externships, regarding the new 50-hour pro bono work requirement for New York State bar admission. "After Hurricane Sandy, we were contacted by many volunteers, but we knew that we had to provide appropriate training to ensure high-quality services for our clients," said Mr. Cremin. "We decided that a law school clinic would be the best approach."

"Our field clinics provide students with real-world experience and build on Cardozo's innovative clinical history and dedication to social justice," said Ms. Rosenfeld. "When MFY approached us with the idea for a Hurricane Sandy-related project, we knew that our students would jump at the opportunity to gain real-world experience while helping their fellow New Yorkers."

After interviews, six students were selected to participate in the Clinic. The Clinic's seminar component, designed by Mr. Cremin, has examined how law students, not-for-profit organizations, and the three branches of government have responded to Hurricane Sandy and other disasters. Guest lecturers have included New York City Council Member Daniel R.

Garodnick, who said: “Victims face so many challenges when a disaster strikes, and not least among those is navigating the bureaucracy that arises as part of any relief effort. And for these students, guiding people through this difficult time provided hands-on experience that few classes can offer.”

During this semester alone, Cardozo students have helped MFY serve over 500 victims of Hurricane Sandy. Students have provided a wide range of services, including: conducting intake; helping homeowners secure Neighborhood Recovery Fund grants; appealing denials of FEMA benefits; and helping MFY identify and begin to address the systemic problems facing victims of Hurricane Sandy by drafting FOIL requests, fact sheets, and various research memoranda.

“The Clinic gave me the chance to work with clients one-on-one,” said Tammy Kom ’14. “I had the opportunity to hear clients’ stories, to build their cases by creating legal arguments, and make a real contribution to the actions taken by the attorneys. Most importantly, the Clinic allowed me to help a lot of people affected by Hurricane Sandy, and to be rewarded daily by their genuine appreciation.”

Since Hurricane Sandy hit, MFY has served over 900 Sandy victims and provided trainings for approximately 750 additional people on their rights to FEMA and other benefits. Although the Clinic is ending, MFY’s work on behalf of Sandy victims will continue with the addition of new staff, summer interns, and help from volunteer attorneys. New Yorkers who need help with a problem stemming from Hurricane Sandy can call MFY at 212-417-3808 on Mondays or Wednesdays, between 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm.

MFY Legal Services, Inc. envisions a society in which no one is denied justice because he or she cannot afford an attorney. To make this vision a reality, for 50 years MFY has provided free legal assistance to residents of New York City on a wide range of civil legal issues, prioritizing services to vulnerable and under-served populations, while simultaneously working to end the root causes of inequities through impact litigation, law reform and policy advocacy.

Founded in 1976 by Yeshiva University, one of the finest research universities in the United States, the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law has a national reputation for a top-caliber faculty and an innovative academic program that includes a wide range of exciting and practical opportunities.

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