

A Message from MFY's Chair

The past year has seen amazing growth in all aspects of MFY's work— more clients served, more firms engaged in pro bono work, and creative new programs developed to address significant unmet legal needs.

I am particularly proud of the private bar's enthusiastic response to my call to join MFY in launching the Pro Bono Kinship Caregiver Law Project, which matches volunteer attorneys with grandparents and others who need representation in guardianship and adoption proceedings. The Project is already viewed as a potential model for other areas of New York State.

In 2006, MFY staff attorneys serving as assigned counsel demonstrated the importance of a civil right to counsel for seniors in the Housing Court by preventing scores of seniors from being evicted. MFY also participated in organized bar efforts to improve the Housing Court. MFY's talented and tenacious staff is paving the way for much-needed reform in housing court.

In addition to representing hundreds of individual workers in employment matters, MFY, with assistance from Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, surveyed workers to find out how successful they were in recouping unpaid wages in Small Claims Court. The resulting report identifies serious problems in the collection process and will form the basis for future advocacy with that Court and the State Legislature to improve workers' chances of collecting judgments for back wages.

MFY's work on behalf of mentally disabled New Yorkers living in adult homes and in the community is unmatched anywhere in the United States. And thousands of Manhattan tenants and SRO residents throughout the city continue to rely on MFY's expertise in housing to keep their affordable apartments. Your generous support has made these accomplishments possible. We thank you and urge you to continue your support in the coming year.

Alan Mansfield, Board Chair

Pro Bono Partners

Pro bono attorneys make a vital contribution to MFY, serving as counsel or co-counsel on individual or class action cases, serving as guardians ad litem, and conducting case-related research. Volunteer attorneys also help MFY attorneys conduct intake on housing matters, and provide advice and counsel to low-wage workers at bi-monthly employment law clinics. Over 80 attorneys have been trained to handle guardianship and adoption proceedings for our KinCare Project. The following firms and corporations provided pro bono assistance to MFY over the past year:

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2006 Highlights

Bringing Permanence to Children's Lives

Since initiating the Pro Bono Kinship Caregiver Law Project in June, dozens of families have been matched with pro bono attorneys from nine firms for representation in custody, guardianship and adoption proceedings. Greenberg Traurig LLP, in collaboration with the NYC Family Court and MFY, trained 80 volunteer attorneys in June. With few resources available to over 85,000 grandparents and others who make great sacrifices to care for children in New York City, the Project is helping to fill an enormous unmet need for legal services.



Preserving Income & Assets for Low-Income New Yorkers

MFY's new Consumer Rights Project counsels, advises and represents low-income New Yorkers who are victims of identity theft and other forms of financial exploitation, have received improper judgments, or are being harassed by debt collectors. Since launching the project last year, MFY has doubled its consumer cases, and has drawn media attention to financial abuse affecting seniors and the disabled.

Promoting the Right to Counsel for Seniors Facing Eviction

Building on MFY's successful Manhattan Legal Aid for Seniors Project, MFY attorneys defended scores of seniors facing eviction as part of a pilot project organized by the NYC Department for the Aging and the Civil Court. MFY works with the citywide Right to Counsel Coalition to promote legislation that will level the playing field for seniors in Housing Court.

Housing Remains #1 Issue for MFY

Over the past 12 months, housing cases increased by 20%, as landlords intensified pressure on rent-regulated tenants throughout Manhattan. MFY's Neighborhood Preservation Project works with local housing groups and tenant organizations to combat phony demolitions and other illegal eviction

tactics. In a precedent-setting case, the East Side SRO Law Project thwarted a landlord's attempt to undercut the rent stabilization law for SRO tenants.

Litigation & Advocacy for the Mentally Disabled

In addition to serving individual clients with mental disabilities, the Adult Home Advocacy Project is litigating a class action suit against an adult home that withholds residents' personal needs allowances; suing Verizon Communications for violating the Americans with Disabilities Act; challenging New York State's practice of placing mentally disabled people in segregated settings; and taking a "headhunter" and others to court for coercing disabled people to enter adult homes and stealing residents' funds. MFY's Mental Health Law Project remains the largest program nationwide serving mental health consumers who live in the community.

Economic Justice for Low-Wage New Yorkers

With the growth of the low-wage workforce in New York City, increasing numbers of workers are underpaid by employers and forced to work in dangerous conditions. MFY's Workplace Justice Project partners with local workers' centers and neighborhood organizations to educate workers on their rights and to advise, counsel and represent workers with unpaid wage claims and other employment issues. With assistance from Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, MFY issued *Making the Small Claims Court Work for New York City Workers*, a study that drew critical attention to the difficulty many workers face in collecting back wage judgments.



Diversity in Our Workforce

MFY has attracted a diverse staff to serve our highly diverse clients. Among staff attorneys and paralegals, 58% are people of color and 42% are able to speak with clients in languages other than English.

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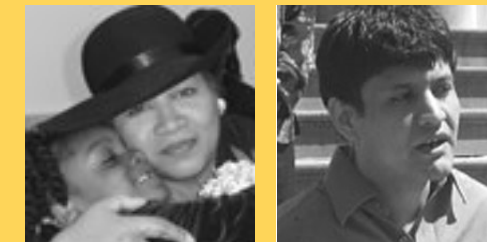
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*The struggle for justice is
at the center of it all.*



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