

## A Message from MFY's Chair

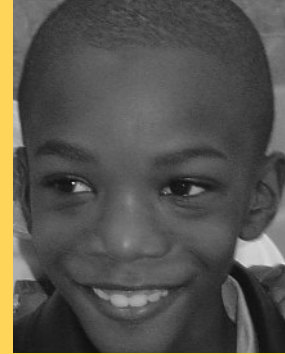
In 2007, MFY made enormous strides in meeting unmet legal need. From 2005 to 2007, MFY's caseload increased 30% as MFY responded to increased need for legal assistance with housing and benefits problems. In addition, MFY added two new programs—for consumers and kinship caregivers—filling a large gap in services city-wide. And MFY redoubled its efforts on behalf of exploited immigrant workers, winning significant, groundbreaking settlements.

These achievements would not have been possible without the commitment of MFY's dedicated staff whose unfailing determination to win justice for their clients is well-known in the city's civil courtrooms. Setting a standard of excellence was MFY's Executive Director Lynn Kelly, who left MFY in October after leading the organization's restructuring and growth for the past nine years. She will be missed by the staff and the Board, but she has left an organization that is stronger and better equipped to respond to the emerging needs of low-income New Yorkers.

Your generous support has enabled MFY to expand its reach and enlarge the scope of its work. We thank you and urge you to continue your support in the coming year.

Alan Mansfield  
Board Chair

# 2007 Highlights



### MFY Meets Growing Demand for Core Legal Services

Over the past 12 months, MFY worked hard to meet the increased demand for basic services in the areas of housing, public benefits, and employment, while consolidating new practices in consumer law and pro bono assistance for families caring for related children. In the past year, MFY handled 4,900 cases, a 14% increase over the previous year. Consumer cases increased by 75% and family law cases went up 43%. MFY has clients in every zip code throughout the five boroughs of New York City.

### Addressing the Needs of the Working Poor

As the gap between rich and poor widens in New York City, large numbers of New Yorkers live in poverty despite having jobs. MFY's **Workplace Justice**, **Consumer Rights**, and **Housing**, and **Family Law** units provide valuable assistance to individuals and families that cannot afford an attorney. MFY serves all New Yorkers, regardless of citizenship status or family composition.

### Success Stories

- ◆ **Back Wage Settlement for Delivery Workers.** MFY settled a suit under the Fair Labor Standards Act, winning significant back wages for seven delivery workers who had been grossly underpaid for years, often earning only \$20 for an eight-hour shift.
- ◆ **MFY Foils Adult Home 'Headhunter.'** MFY settled a suit in federal court on behalf of four mentally disabled adult home residents against a 'headhunter' and others who coerced the plaintiffs into accepting inappropriate adult home placements and stole over \$40,000 from three of them. The successful agreement includes a significant monetary settlement for the four plaintiffs and injunctive relief that bars the defendants from working in adult homes in the future.
- ◆ **MFY Challenges Debt Collection Practices.** A decision won by MFY in *Centurion Capital Corporation v. Druce* means that debt collectors operating in New York City will have to change their practices. MFY argued that Centurion, which purchases uncollected credit card

debt and then uses forceful tactics to collect on these purported debts, was not a licensed debt collection agency under the New York City Administrative Code. The Court ruled that the city's statute should be interpreted consistently with the federal statute. The case set a precedent that has been cited in subsequent cases.

- ◆ **MFY Wins Retroactive Awards for SSI Claimants.** Over the past 12 months, MFY secured over a half million dollars in retroactive payments for people with mental disabilities who had been denied Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. Without this income, these New Yorkers would be homeless or institutionalized.
- ◆ **Tables Turned on SRO Landlord.** An SRO landlord who claimed his units were not rent-stabilized (and sent his sister to MFY's offices pretending to be a tenant needing help to get information on our strategy) got a rude awakening at an administrative hearing on a tenant's harassment complaint. The judge ordered the landlord to concede that the unit was rent-stabilized and grant a 100% abatement of rent paid to date or face treble damages and criminal charges.

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# 2007

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*MFY's audited financial statements are available on request.*