

Fall 2012

# pro bono program NEWSLETTER

*by and for Michigan Law students*

Issue 2



# Michigan Law

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL



## FIFTY PRO BONO HOURS:

The New York State Bar’s newest requirement for admission shows the judiciary’s concern for the “justice gap” but is unlikely to have a substantial impact on MLaw students.

*by Kelly Hagen & Allison Nichols*

For the roughly 25% of Michigan Law students hoping to begin their

careers in New York each year, pro bono work now holds new significance. According to a recent rule issued by the New York Court of Appeals, any lawyer who seeks admission to the New York State Bar must first complete 50 hours of pro bono work. Current 3Ls are exempt from the rule, and 1Ls and 2Ls will have 34 months to fulfill the obligation.

▣ The decision to impose a pro bono requirement stems largely from Chief Judge Jonathan Lippmann’s recognition of the “justice gap” — the crisis in access

to justice for those who cannot afford attorneys. According to Lippmann, the requirement also serves to ensure that those practicing law in New York cultivate and maintain a

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### take the pledge!

Michigan Law has a long tradition of serving the public. That's part of our heritage as a public school, and it stretches back to our beginnings in 1859. To celebrate Michigan Law's 150 years of producing lawyers committed to public service, we launched the Pro Bono Pledge in fall 2009. We encourage students to voluntarily commit to performing 50 hours of pro bono service while enrolled at Michigan Law. The Pledge allows students to connect their developing knowledge to the world outside the Law School. In this way, they gain valuable legal skills while helping organizations in our community meet the needs of underrepresented individuals.

## NY Pro Bono Requirement

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commitment to public service. After announcing the upcoming requirement, Lippmann told reporters, “We think that if you want that privilege, that honor of practicing law in the state of New York . . . then you are going to have to demonstrate that you believe in our values.”

Many praise the new requirement — the first of its kind — as a push toward socially responsible lawyering. Steve Banks, attorney-in-charge at the Legal Aid Society of New York City, supports the plan; his organization has to turn away eight out of every nine individuals seeking legal aid due to a

shortage of volunteers. Similarly, New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman has praised the plan as a “brilliant and innovative proposal.”

Some, however, are concerned about the effects of imposing such a requirement on young lawyers. Esther Lardent, president of the Pro Bono Institute, has qualms about the consequences of forcing lawyers to perform pro bono work. She noted, “I worry about poor people with lawyers who don’t want to be there.” Others, including the revered (or notorious, depending on whom you ask) bloggers of Above the Law, point out that this requirement hits law students at a financially vulnerable time, when many are deeply in debt and struggle to find work in a difficult job market.

As for the effect of this program on the justice gap, Michigan Law’s Dean Evan Caminker reasoned, “I think the conceptual idea of requiring or at least encouraging licensed lawyers to engage in some pro bono work over the course of their professional careers is a sound one . . . . There is no question that there are vast areas (both geographic and topical) in which people in need of legal services cannot afford them. That does not mean that an army of law students can easily be mobilized to respond to that need.” Caminker noted that creating opportunities for law student volunteers would require significant effort on the part of already-strained public interest organizations.

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# Letter from the Pro Bono Program Director

As Director of the Externship and Pro Bono programs, I spend most of my time at the Law School either encouraging students to take advantage of learning and skill-building opportunities outside the classroom or supporting students who have already made the (wise!) choice to do so. Last year, in an effort to help get this message out on the pro bono front, the Pro Bono Board — a group of students committed to strengthening Michigan Law’s Pro Bono Program — published the first issue of this newsletter. It was quite exciting to see their hard work come to fruition, and I’m delighted the second issue is already in print.

Of course, the true test of whether this newsletter encourages students to find skill-building opportunities beyond the classroom is whether you, the readers, start logging hours. As you’ll see in the Student Organization-Sponsored Pro Bono Project Directory, on page 7, there are a wide range of projects to choose from, or you can always start a new one. 1Ls, especially, don’t be shy! There’s no way quite like pro bono to build a résumé, try new skills, make 2L and 3L friends (they come in handy), and remind yourself why you came to law school in the first place. As proof, check out Laura Andrade and John Van Deventer’s testimonials on pages 5-6 for some first-hand perspectives. Then take the Pledge, and start logging those hours. And of course, please come see me if I can help with any of the above!

Happy reading,

*Amy*



Prof. Amy Sankaran, at left, is the Director of the Externship and Pro Bono Programs. She can be reached at [aharwell@umich.edu](mailto:aharwell@umich.edu).

# NY vs. MLaw

The New York Bar’s definition of pro bono work differs from how we define it here at Michigan for the purposes of the Pro Bono Pledge. Here’s a cheat sheet to help you keep it straight.

# New York

Law school clinics and externships completed for academic credit count.

Working with high school or college mock trial teams does not qualify.

Judicial internships and pro bono work performed while employed at private law firms count.

# Michigan Law

Clinics and externships, while valuable, do not count as pro bono.

Mock trial programs, such as FAIT, may be counted toward the Pledge.

Judicial internships do not count, nor does pro bono work completed as summer associate at a law firm.

## NY Pro Bono Requirement

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### What Law Students Need to Know

Lippmann announced the specifics of the plan, codified in 22 NYCRR § 520.16, at a press conference in September. The rule requires prospective lawyers to submit an affidavit along with documentation certifying that they have completed the necessary pro bono hours.

The hours do not have to be logged in New York, so out-of-state students will not be at a disadvantage. The program defines “pro bono” as law-related work that is supervised by a faculty member, a licensed attorney, or a judge. This broad definition encompasses participation in a law

school clinic, a judicial internship, a for-credit externship, and even pro bono work completed at a private firm.

It remains to be seen how law schools across the country will help their students prepare for this new challenge. As Michigan Law Pro Bono Director Amy Sankaran noted, “Pro bono work is extremely valuable and needed, particularly in this time of deep cuts in legal aid funding.”

But Sankaran explained that she also foresees potential difficulties arising from competing definitions of “pro bono.” After all, “if more states follow New York’s lead, but their definitions of pro bono are different from ours and from New York’s, it could get extremely confusing. Fifty-one definitions of pro bono, all with varying certification requirements,

would take a large amount of work” on the part of law schools.

Similarly, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs David Baum hopes that the New York Bar Examiners “are sensitive to the challenges that implementation of such a requirement [will] present to both law students and law schools.” He noted approvingly the opportunity for students to fulfill the requirement “through one of more of a variety of high-quality experiences (including law clinics and externships), [such that] law schools can be involved without undue bureaucratic and administrative complications.” ♦

Questions about how this affects you? Contact Amy Sankaran or the Office of Student Affairs.

# Q & A

*with Michael Steinberg*

The Legal Director of the ACLU of Michigan offers his thoughts on finding his dream job, fighting police misconduct, and incorporating pro bono work into a non-public interest career.

## Q: How did you find your way to the ACLU?

A: After law school, I had a clerkship with a judge, and then I went into private practice in Ann Arbor, where I did a lot of civil rights litigation - fair housing, employment discrimination, police misconduct, and so on. During that time, I became active with the ACLU, and apparently they liked my work. When the former director left, they did a search for an executive director. They needed someone to oversee the legal program, so they asked me to do that on an interim basis. Of course I said I’d fill in. And then I just fell in love with the job. It was truly a dream job.

## Q: What does a typical day look like for you?

A: There is no typical day, but I can tell you what I did today. At 9:00 am, I met with attorneys from a Michigan band with a national following. The fans

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**Q&A with Mike Steinberg,**  
*continued from page 3*

of the band have been harassed for wearing t-shirts and putting bumper stickers on their cars. After that, I edited an amicus brief that we're filing in the Sixth Circuit about women's right contraceptive insurance coverage. I had a conference call with someone from the national ACLU to discuss filing a brief in a case involving cell phone trafficking. I did an interview with Michigan public radio on surveillance cameras in Lansing neighborhoods—we just released a report on that yesterday. Then, I had a call with an attorney in western Michigan about our strategy in our challenge to the state law banning begging in public. We won a motion for partial summary judgment last week, and now we have to decide what to do next. I talked with a staff attorney about a prisoner's rights case, and I spoke with another member of our staff about our "know your voting rights" education work. I had a very long conference call about a nationally important racial justice case that we're going to file next month. And finally, I had a conference call about our strategy in our right-to-read campaign.

**Q: It sounds like your office covers the full range of civil rights and civil liberties issues. Is there a particular area of law that you are most personally drawn to?**

A: I find all the civil liberties issues compelling. But I completely detest police abusing their power and harassing people who are not middle- to upper-class white men. I've been doing police misconduct work for a long time. I see the function of the ACLU as preventing this country from

becoming a police state. So when I see police abusing their power, it really draws me to the issue and makes me want to do something about it.

**Q: What is your personal experience with pro bono work?**

Michigan Law Public Interest Director Alyson Robbins with Mike Steinberg at the Public Service Kick-Off.



**And what is your experience working with other pro bono attorneys and student volunteers?**

A: When I was in private practice, my pro bono work consisted of ACLU cases. One of my most memorable cases, a critically important one, involved a serial rapist investigation from 1992 to 1994. The police had a very vague description of the person who committed the crimes, but they had DNA evidence. The Ann Arbor and state police decided to collect blood samples from every African American man that they could in Ann Arbor. They would stop people and ask them where they were on a series of dates, and if the men couldn't answer, the police would require them to give a DNA sample. One day, the police went to my client's employer and said he was a suspect in a serial rape case, and as a result, he was fired. He gave a blood sample, but he was stopped eight more times over a two month period. The police found the rapist—through other means—but then they wouldn't get rid of the blood samples. We sued and got the blood samples back.

Now, I work with pro bono attorneys every day. Sometimes it's a law professor or a clinical professor serving as co-counsel. More often it's attorneys in private practice, everywhere from small local firms to prominent national ones across the country. Each of these experiences has been satisfying and memorable in its own way.

**Q: Which types of cases in Michigan could use more pro bono attorneys?**

A: We have projects from time to time where we need more

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**Know an attorney with an interesting pro bono story to share?**

Contact Allison Nichols at [anic@umich.edu](mailto:anic@umich.edu), and your interview could be featured here!

# SPOTLIGHT: *Michigan Unemployment Insurance Project*

by John VanDeventer

The Michigan Unemployment Insurance Project (MiUI) has two overarching goals. The first is to provide free legal advice and advocacy to unemployed Michiganders, especially those workers who are wrongfully denied unemployment insurance benefits or who are ordered to pay back benefits they've already received. The second is to engage law students in unemployment issues by training them to become effective advocates. Usually that means representing our clients in their dealings with the Unemployment Insurance Agency, appearing on behalf of clients at administrative hearings, or filing and arguing briefs in state circuit court.

MiUI is expanding in some exciting ways, too. We're working with some of the very best attorneys in the state to develop strategies for both impact litigation and policy initiatives — and those efforts will create some really exciting opportunities for law students in the coming months.

I found out about MiUI because I showed up for the free lunch. Before that, I had worked for a labor union for several years, and I care deeply about economic justice. So, MiUI sounded interesting. Turns out, it *is* interesting! My time as a student attorney with MiUI has been one of the most important experiences of my law school career. Representing real clients has lots of emotional ups and downs—but it is always rewarding. My experience with MiUI really let me wrap my brain around what it means to represent clients, take ownership of cases, and put together all the seemingly disparate skills I learned during 1L. I worked at the State Appellate Defender Office in Detroit this summer, and I walked in with a lot of confidence because I'd already worked on two appellate briefs as a student attorney with MiUI.

For many of my clients, the problems with their unemployment insurance benefits are the single biggest source of stress at that point in their lives. Being able to help them through that and get them some relief is a powerful feeling. Obviously, we can't always get them a "win." Even in those cases, though, my clients have been grateful just to have someone who will actually listen to them, advocate for them, and bring a sense of finality to their situation. That is an incredibly powerful feeling.

Getting involved with pro bono projects will give you the best return on investment of just about anything you could do during your time at Michigan Law. It makes you a better legal writer and researcher. It grounds abstract legal concepts and theories in reality. It gives you insight into possible career paths and areas of interest. And it makes you feel really, *really* good. That's the most important one. Law students have precious little time and lots of things competing for it. When you're thinking about which obligations will win out, go beyond what looks good on a résumé. Obviously, pro bono work *is* great as a line on a résumé or a talking point in a job interview (it really is). But it's even better as a formative experience that will change you for the better and remind you why you decided to become a lawyer. ♦



*From left to right: Steve Gray, MiUI supervising attorney; Nick Monterosso, 2L volunteer; and Erika Kaneko, 1L volunteer.*

# SPOTLIGHT: *Future Advocates in Training*

by Laura Andrade

FAIT coaches mock trial at Ypsi High in an effort to give an underserved community a chance to get involved in debate and analytical thinking as early as possible. Over the past few years, we have had enough students at the high school to submit two teams to the mock trial competition. Last year, there was an overwhelming amount of interest from the high school students, so we created, coached, and submitted three teams to the competition for the first time.

Three head coaches worked together to prepare our teams. We ultimately contributed over 150 hours to the project, which began in September 2011, and culminated in the final competition in March 2012. We drove to the high school two to three times a week, and prepared lesson plans, drafted openings and closings, gave evidence lectures, and hosted scrimmages for the students. We also conducted trainings at the Law School to recruit law student volunteers who helped us with our practices.

The project required coordinating law student volunteers, dealing with high school students who sometimes wouldn't show up to practice, balancing three different coaches' viewpoints, consulting 3L advisors for assistance, and finally, the challenge of

transporting more than 25 high school students to the competition on a Saturday morning.

My team advanced to the state finals and maintained an undefeated record at the state competition. I am immensely proud of what they accomplished, and I feel a huge sense of pride in their success. ♦

*Know a pro bono volunteer or project whose efforts deserve the spotlight?*

Contact Allison Nichols at [anic@umich.edu](mailto:anic@umich.edu), and your story could be in the next newsletter!

## four projects that 1Ls can join now.

1. Meet people and hone your presentation skills! Join MILLA and the Arab Community Center for Economic & Social Services (ACCESS) in giving **Know Your Rights presentations** to the Arab community of southeast Michigan — transportation provided. There will be a brief training, repeated several times throughout the year, and there's no ongoing commitment required. Arabic language skills, although helpful, are not required.
2. Like working with teens? One of the most popular pro bono projects for 1Ls is **Future Advocates in Training (FAIT)**, which coaches mock trial teams at Ypsilanti High School. FAIT organizes transportation, offers brief trainings, and there is no regular attendance required — low pressure, tons of fun, big difference.
3. Gain client counseling, legal writing, and oral advocacy experience with the **Michigan Unemployment Insurance Project (MiUI)**, sponsored by MILLA. Second-semester 1Ls are eligible to get to work following a brief training. Time commitment varies depending on hearing schedules, but students can expect to put in around five hours per week.
4. Create the pro bono project of your dreams. You don't have to work through a student group or established project to do pro bono work. Visit the Pro Bono Program website ([www.law.umich.edu/careers/probono](http://www.law.umich.edu/careers/probono)) to learn more about **independent projects** available your 1L year and beyond. Then contact Amy Sankaran at [aharwell@umich.edu](mailto:aharwell@umich.edu) to get started!

# Directory of Student Org-Sponsored Pro Bono Projects

## ACLU OF MICHIGAN — MICHIGAN LAW CHAPTER

Michigan Law's chapter of the ACLU links student volunteers with a variety of research and outreach projects related to civil liberties and civil rights. Generally, all law students are eligible to participate, but training and time commitment requirements vary from project to project. The ACLU's most recent project offering involved voting rights, while previous offerings have dealt with LGBT issues and more.

## EDUCATION LAW SOCIETY

### **Civil Rights Litigation Clearinghouse**

This project entails legal research and writing related to civil rights injunctive cases. Students will focus on an area of law of particular interest to them - prison conditions, policing, fair housing, deinstitutionalization, employment discrimination, child welfare, education, etc. They will obtain and code case documents from PACER (the federal judiciary's electronic docketing system), code cases, and write summaries of the cases for publication on the Clearinghouse website.

## ENVIRONMENTAL LAW SOCIETY

### **Environmental Crimes Database**

Participants assist Professor David Uhlmann in conducting the first-ever comprehensive empirical study of environmental criminal prosecutions in the country. Students collect information and develop a database about such prosecutions, facilitating research and analysis about criminal enforcement, including discretionary factors that make environmental violations criminal and geographical disparities in criminal enforcement under environmental laws. Results will

be published and shared with Congress, the DOJ, and the EPA. The project requires five hours per week; 1Ls, 2Ls, 3Ls, and LLMs are eligible.

## FAMILY LAW PROJECT

FLP provides an opportunity for law students to obtain practical legal experience working with survivors of domestic violence. Under the supervision of an attorney, student volunteers assist with all aspects of case work including client interviews, drafting pleadings, and planning case strategy. All law students are eligible to participate; 2Ls and 3Ls are eligible to appear at court hearings. Volunteers must attend domestic violence training (provided once during the fall semester) and office training (provided several times throughout the year) prior to volunteering on a project.

## FUTURE ADVOCATES IN TRAINING

FAIT is a volunteer outreach program that seeks, through the development of mock trial teams: (1) to improve high school students' reading, writing, and critical thinking skills, and (2) to increase law student participation in surrounding communities through the mentorship of youth. The weekly time commitment can be anywhere from two to ten hours. 1Ls, 2Ls, 3Ls, and LLMs are eligible to participate after one to two hours of training.

## HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES

### **Human Trafficking Database**

Efforts to combat human trafficking suffer from a lack of research, data, and analysis. The Human Trafficking Law Project database is the first publicly available database of human trafficking cases within the United States. This project allows students to participate in

this first-of-its kind resource, gain legal research skills, and learn about human trafficking. 1Ls, 2Ls, 3Ls, and LLMs are eligible to participate, and must commit five hours per semester.

### **Jewish Family Services Project**

Jewish Family Services is an Ann Arbor nonprofit that provides English language, immigration, resettlement and employment services to immigrants and refugees from around the world. For this project, law students volunteer to complete green card applications for JFS's constituents or plan and present various Know Your Rights presentations designed to educate Lawful Permanent Residents. Volunteer opportunities are generally on Fridays, and students can participate as many or as few times as they like. 1Ls, 2Ls, and 3Ls are eligible, and no training or foreign language skills are required (although Arabic, in particular, may be helpful in giving presentations).

### **Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project**

This project seeks to assist Iraqi refugees living in the Middle East with worthy refugee and resettlement claims. Under the supervision of alumni attorneys, students work in pairs to file legal forms, including requests for reconsideration. 1Ls, 2Ls, and 3Ls are eligible to participate, but must attend training at the beginning of the year. Ten to twenty hours per semester are expected.

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY STUDENT ASSOCIATION

### **Engineering Capstone Projects**

Students will prepare and give presentations to undergraduate senior engineering students regarding intellectual property rights and how they can protect the innovative ideas developed in their capstone projects.

## **Project Directory** *(continued)*

### **Entrepreneurship Clinic Website**

Students will research, write, and film short clips for the Entrepreneurship Clinic website. The informational videos will provide an overview of intellectual property concepts to potential clinic clients.

### LEGAL ALTERNATIVE BREAKS

LAWBreaks offers service-learning experiences for Michigan Law students during spring break. The trips are designed to provide a brief immersion into the human side of a pressing legal or social justice issue. Students will meet and work together with actors on many sides of the relevant issues, contribute to important social justice work, and have a chance to bond with fellow students outside of Hutchins Hall. This year's trips will be to New Orleans (criminal justice), Tucson (immigration), Detroit (poverty law and economic development), an American Indian reservation (tribal law — precise location TBD), and Belize (human rights, with a focus on women's rights). Applications are due in the fall, and the trips are available to 1Ls, 2Ls, and 3Ls.

### MICHIGAN IMMIGRATION AND LABOR LAW ASSOCIATION

#### **Michigan Unemployment Insurance Project**

MiUI recruits and trains students to give free legal assistance to unemployed workers seeking UI benefits. Currently, with up to 79 weeks of UI available in Michigan, a denied claim represents a potential \$23,700 in lost income for that individual and his or her family. 1Ls with one semester of law school completed, 2Ls, and 3Ls are eligible, but must attend training. The time commitment is roughly give hours per week, depending on hearings.

#### **WCWC Domestic Worker Advocacy**

MILLA has partnered with the Washtenaw County Workers' Center (WCWC) to create a bilingual Know Your Labor Rights presentation

for immigrant workers (particularly low-wage workers and independent contractors) in the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti area. Topics covered by the presentation include safety and health laws, unemployment insurance and workers' compensation, misclassification of employees, and wage theft. The presentation is still being written. 1Ls, 2Ls, and 3Ls interested in helping with research, drafting the presentation itself, or presenting it to workers are eligible. The time commitment will vary according to the number of presentations available.

#### **Know Your Rights: Latino Immigrant Community**

The Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights (WICIR) and MILLA developed a bilingual English/Spanish PowerPoint presentation and accompanying handout to facilitate informational sessions for local immigrants, particularly those who are undocumented. Law students and community advocates present this information at churches, schools, and other public meeting spaces. 1Ls, 2Ls, and 3Ls are eligible to participate both in giving presentations and helping to arrange presentation opportunities. Spanish speakers are especially desirable. The time commitment varies from semester to semester.

#### **Know Your Rights: Arab Immigrant Community**

MILLA is partnering with ACCESS (Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services) to develop a Know Your Rights presentation geared toward the Arab American community. The format will be similar to our Latino KYR. The project is currently looking for students to help research the relevant law. 1Ls, 2Ls, and 3Ls are eligible. The time commitment will vary according to the number of presentations available.

### **Michigan Immigrant Rights Center**

The MIRC focuses on helping undocumented immigrant women who are victims of domestic violence apply for U-visas. This type of visa is available to immigrants who assist authorities with the reporting and prosecution of crimes. In addition, MIRC works with clients who have claims under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and other immigration issues. Students work on part of the U-visa process, communicate with clients about their cases, and interpret/translate. 1Ls, 2Ls, and 3Ls are eligible to volunteer, and generally commit at least two hours per week at the downtown Ann Arbor location. Spanish fluency preferred, but not required.

### POVERTY LAW SOCIETY

#### **Mississippi Center for Justice Project**

MCJ volunteers conduct policy research, help draft legislation, create consumer education materials, and assist with litigation projects on a variety of poverty law and consumer protection topics. Different projects arise each semester and require varying time commitments, up to a few hours per week. Previous projects have dealt with foreclosure prevention and the discriminatory recruitment tactics of for-profit colleges. Volunteers may have the opportunity to visit the MCJ headquarters in Jackson, MS, for a week of pro bono service over spring break.

### PUBLIC BENEFITS ADVOCACY PROJECT

PBAP volunteers visit local transitional housing and community centers to assist clients in completing applications for food stamps and other public benefits. Under the supervision of attorneys, volunteers also hold regular office hours at Legal Services of South Central Michigan to help clients navigate the public benefits system, serving as advocates to ensure clients receive the benefits to which they are entitled. Trainings are held each fall.



## Project Directory *(continued)*

### STREETLAW

StreetLaw links students with several organizations around the Ann Arbor area, where they provide legal education and more to elementary and high school students, prisoners, the elderly, and sexual assault victims and counsellors. Time commitment is flexible, and training requirements (if any) vary from site to site. Current sites include the following:

#### **Ann Arbor Safe House**

Members work with staff to educate both Safe House staff and high school student volunteers about sexual assault laws and other legal issues they may encounter in their work.

#### **Bryant Community Center**

Members visit this community center weekly to provide after-school programming for high schoolers. Members will lead mock trials and other lessons and games that engage high school students in different aspects of the law.

#### **Green Baxter Community Center**

Members visit this community center weekly to provide after-school programming for elementary and middle school students. Members spend the first half of each session teaching a law-related lesson, then help the students apply what they've learned through an interactive activity.

#### **Juvenile Detention Center**

Members educate teens at the Juvenile Detention Center about various legal issues. Lesson plans are provided to volunteers each week, on topics ranging from the First Amendment, to Criminal Procedure, to Torts.

#### **Parnall Correctional Facility**

Members visit an all-male correctional facility about an hour away from Ann Arbor to work with the Michigan Prisoner Re-entry Initiative. Members teach lessons on a variety of topics to prisoners who will soon be re-entering society. Common topics include employment and child support.

#### **University Living**

Members host one-hour discussion sessions with elderly members of an assisted-living community. Past sessions have included mock law classes and debates on legal issues.

*Student org leaders, is  
your project missing  
from our directory?*

Contact Allison Nichols at  
[anic@umich.edu](mailto:anic@umich.edu) to  
ensure all your projects are in  
our next newsletter's  
project directory.



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## Q&A with Mike Steinberg *continued from page 4*

pro bono volunteers. For example, last year, we had a big voting rights project, and law students helped to recruit plaintiffs for our case, which focused on the failure of public assistance offices to assist clients in registering to vote, in clear violation of their statutory obligations. We sent out 25 to 30 law

students to offices across the state, and they talked to people as they came out, asking if they had been offered the chance to register to vote. We identified about six new plaintiffs this way. The state got wind of our efforts, and we were able to resolve the issue out of court.

**Q: Do you have any advice for students looking to incorporate pro bono work**

**into their careers post-graduation?**

A: We're always looking for the right pro bono attorneys — the ones who have a demonstrated commitment to advancing human rights, even if they chose to work at private law firms. I get resumes from people who want to volunteer, and if I see ACLU or other relevant experience, I'm much more likely to want to work with that person. ♦

*Introducing:*  
the 2012-2013 pro bono board  
president

Megan Sanders

events committee

Jessica Morton (chair)

Andrea Taylor

Dani Krumholz

Sean Killeen

communications co-chairs

Ji Won Kim

Dayna Zolle

awards co-chairs

Katie Kersh

Danica Taylor

student org outreach chair

Caitlin Howitt

law firm outreach chair

Kelly Hagen

newsletter committee

Allison Nichols (chair)

Sarah Thompson

Emily Suran

members at large

Kate Gilbert      Heather Goodlett

Maria Liu      Liz Lamoste

Daniella Schmidt

*with pro bono program director, Amy Sankaran*

**Q** What is the Michigan  
Law Pro Bono Pledge?

A voluntary program, the University of Michigan Law School Pro Bono Pledge encourages students to perform 50 hours or more of qualifying pro bono work over their three years in law school. Graduating students who have fulfilled the Pledge will receive a Certificate of Pro Bono Service from the Dean, recognition at an annual pro bono banquet, and acknowledgment during the Honors Convocation.

If you have not yet taken the pledge and are ready to do so, please visit [law.umich.edu/careers/probono](http://law.umich.edu/careers/probono) or contact Prof. Amy Sankaran at [aharwell@umich.edu](mailto:aharwell@umich.edu) or (734) 764-7787.

