



Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation

PRO BONO LINKS NEWSLETTER

October 7, 2011

Connecting the Legal Services Community

volume 2, issue 7



*This October, join AVLF in observing
National Domestic Violence Awareness Month!*

In This Issue

[AVLF Welcomes its Skadden Fellow](#)

[The Difference a Volunteer Attorney Makes](#)

[The Value of Volunteering](#)

[AVLF Launches New Promo Video](#)

[Last Chance to Purchase Winetasting Tickets](#)

[Winetasting & Silent Auction Volunteers Needed](#)

[The DV Project Thanks Volunteers](#)

Quick Links

[RSVP Now For the 19th Annual Winetasting](#)

[Join Us on FaceBook](#)

[Follow Us on Twitter](#)

[Check out our Blog: Pro Bono Briefs](#)

Upcoming Training Opportunities:

Wills, Health Care Advance Directives, & General Financial Powers of

AVLF Welcomes its Skadden Fellow, Lindsey Siegel

By: Lindsey Siegel, Staff Attorney, Skadden Fellow, AVLF Domestic Violence Project

Two summers ago, when I was a law student intern with the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation's Safe Families Office, I worked with Silvia, a Spanish-speaking woman who came to the office for a protection order. Silvia's husband had broken her arm the night before and she didn't feel safe staying at her house. Nor did she have any family or friends with whom she could stay. With the help of the courthouse interpreter, I helped her fill out the petition and secure a coveted space at a local domestic violence shelter. After the judge signed the protection order, though, Silvia wanted to go home to get some clothes and personal items. I told her I was afraid for her safety, but she insisted, so I waited for her to return so we could drive to the shelter's drop-off point. When she didn't return after several hours, I figured she lost her chance at leaving, and I couldn't stop worrying about her.

Then, two weeks later I was attending the 12-month protection order hearings and I spotted Silvia in the courtroom. She wasn't alone, though-she had with her not only an advocate, but also a pro bono attorney. After her hearing (where she did obtain her 12-month protection order), I went up to her in the hallway to find out how she was doing. As it turns out, she had found space at a different shelter soon after she came to our office, and the advocates there had connected her with the attorney for her case. I couldn't believe how resourceful Silvia had been all along her journey escape her abusive husband-all the while being new to the area and having a language barrier. I was so impressed, and the experience reminded me why I enjoy working with such strong women.

Read this article in its entirety by [clicking here](#)

The Difference a Volunteer Attorney Makes in the Courtroom

By: Elizabeth Whipple, Staff Attorney, Director of

Attorney:

On Thursday, November 17, 2011, the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation is partnering with the law firm of Alston & Bird to host the training - "Wills, Health Care Advance Directives, & General Financial Powers of Attorney." These are documents that most people (i.e. your friends and family) think ALL attorneys know how to draft when they graduate from law school. So here is a great opportunity to learn those skills, live up to those expectations, and develop a new area of practice!

Thursday, November 17th

9:00am to 12:30pm

The cost of this training is \$85.00/person (includes a continental breakfast, 2.5 CLE and .5 ethics)

[Space is limited; register today!](#)

Did You Know:

- According to the FBI, Georgia now ranks 10th in the nation for the per capita number of men who kill women.
- One woman is beaten by her husband or partner every 15 seconds in the United States. (Uniform Crime Reports, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1991).
- Since opening in 2009, more than 6,000 survivors have visited the Safe Families Office for safety planning and legal consultations.

AVLF Safe Families, Office

Each year, the Violence Policy Center in D.C. releases a study "When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2009 Homicide Data." Georgia is ranked sixth in the nation for its rate of women killed by men. Sixth!

I was recently told you can't control the actions of others, you can only control your own actions. As an attorney, never mind an attorney who does domestic violence work, this is not something I like to hear. I don't want to join a drum circle, I don't want to meditate, and I don't want to let things just be.

Controlling things is precisely what I want. I want an abuser to stop hurting a loved one. I want a client to leave her abuser and never look back. I want a grown person to love their elderly parent, not terrorize them in their own home. I want my clients' young children to emerge emotionally unscathed from a home filled with strife. I want the judge to grant every protective order I bring in front of her. Bottomline - I want to win.

Sometimes, some of these things happen. Occasionally, I take the credit. Much of the time, however, I am brought back to that much-resisted reality: I can only do as much as I can do. Realistically, sometimes that's enough, sometimes it isn't. Even when it is "enough", the small part I've played in someone's life is exactly that - a small part. I have to be happy with that, and let them deal with the entirety, hopefully equipped with a tool that can make dealing with that entirely a bit easier.

Losing a protective order case is a hard thing to accept when you believe your client needs an order to stay safe. There's simply no getting around it. But volunteer attorneys provide so much to their clients, even if the petition itself is denied. The simple presence of someone there to advocate for you can strengthen a victim's resolution to stay safe from their abuser. While it's always incredible to have a person share in your victory, suffering a loss *with* someone is an entirely different experience, and is far more likely to strengthen one's resolve to stay safe.

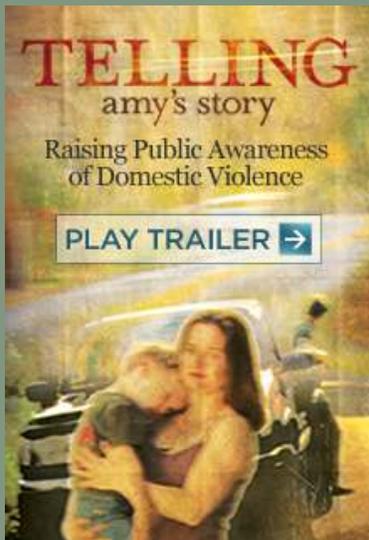
I am in Protective Order Court every Monday and Friday. I see the difference attorneys make in that courtroom, and it affirms my belief that we need to provide representation now more than ever. Attorneys don't win every case. Each case they don't win is more of a reason their presence is so important. Pro se clients are alone and facing an intimidating process, and attorneys can make a world of difference to a case. Coming to court alone can often be a barrier to a client pursuing a protective order - who wouldn't be afraid of facing their abuser alone, in a setting as intimidating as a courtroom, with the prospect of telling intimate details of your life to a room full of people. Things we take for granted are often beyond the abilities of a pro se client - negotiating consent orders, presenting any evidence, even telling a coherent story.

Read this article in its entirety by [clicking here.](#)

- Employers lose an estimated \$3 to \$5 billion annually in absenteeism, lower productivity, high turnover, and health and safety costs associated with battered workers.
- Two million American workers are victims of workplace violence each year.
- Domestic violence is a major public health problem that exceeds \$5.8 billion each year in the United States in health-related costs.

The AVL F Safe Families Office serves survivors of intimate partner violence and stalking in their efforts to obtain civil protective orders and to secure safety for their families.

About 1/4 of all women in the U.S. report that they have experienced domestic violence? Support the fight to end domestic violence! Watch *Telling Amy's Story* and share the film and web site with



others. View the trailer [here](#).

The Value of Volunteering

By: Steven Cayton, Esq.

I graduated law school in 2009 and went to work for an attorney I had interned with both summers of law school. I quickly discovered that there is still so very much I needed to learn and more I wanted to do. I enjoyed the consumer defense work I was doing, who doesn't enjoy suing abusive debt collectors, but I wanted to do additional work to help those in need. In my endeavor to branch out I started taking numerous CLEs, including those outside of my practice area and that was how I found out about AVL F. I started with the Guardian ad Litem program in the fall of 2010 and learned how rewarding these cases can be. Its a wonderful feeling knowing that you can be a neutral participant whose only there to represent the best interest of the children in the case. I was lucky to get a case that was fairly straightforward and where both parents were reasonable to deal with.

After working the GAL program I knew I wanted to do more and did the training for the domestic violence program at AVL F. These cases are about getting the protection of the courts for the victims of domestic violence through obtaining a Temporary Protective Order. My first case quickly taught me the importance of having trained attorneys to help these victims. Since taking that first case I have averaged one or two TPO cases a month and they are incredibly rewarding, but can also have an element of frustration. I have spoken with a number of domestic violence clients who exhibit the classic signs of this crime including rationalizing the behavior of their abuser. Many tell me how the person is really good at their heart, was just having a rough time, only gets this way when they are intoxicated, etc. It is a bit heartbreaking when the client on the other end of the phone is trying to tell you why they don't need your service because they have worked things out with their abuser. In one case I flat out told the client based on her facts that I was sure she would end up dead. Cases that severe aren't that common and are easily outweighed by the rewards of a client who does follow through and the look on your case when you are successful in getting a TPO.

Read this article in its entirety by [clicking here](#).

AVLF Launches New Promo Video

After a year of labor and love, we are pleased to present our new organizational video. Thanks to all of our volunteers, clients, and community partners for their time and patience as we worked diligently to pull this effort together.

We're excited to hear your feedback. Please let us know how you liked the video by [emailing us](#) or calling 404.521.3319.

Other AVLF News:

- Thank you to Elizabeth Whitworth, whose infant client had to be removed from his mother recently to ensure the baby's safety. Elizabeth's advocacy helped to ensure that DFCS paid close attention to the child's special needs as he transitioned from home to foster care. Elizabeth is advocating for the court to adopt a permanency plan that will address her child client's needs and interests.
- Sarah Zampell accompanied her 13 year old client to mediation in the Juvenile Court, and the parties were able to reach an agreement that allows the child to move to a new permanent home with her grandparents while still maintaining meaningful contact with her mother. Sarah's advocacy for her child client has helped to give the child the first truly stable home that she has ever had!
- The D.V. Project thanks attorney Scott Lange and paralegal Betty Richards for keeping their client's children safe from a predator by getting a 12-Month Protective Order by Consent against a convicted sex offender.
- Thanks to Safe Families Office volunteer Gloria Dworet for her unflagging enthusiasm and boundless energy - our office is a brighter place because she is working each week.
- On Oct. 4th, AVLF Deputy Director, Tamara Serwer-Caldas, and Director of Housing and Consumer Programs, Michael Lucas,

Enjoy!



AVLF Promotional Video 2011

Last Chance to Purchase Winetasting Tickets

"The legal community's best party of the year!"

Back and Better than ever, the 20th Annual AVLF Winetasting, our signature fundraiser and an ongoing demonstration of the community's commitment to pro bono legal work, will take place on Thursday, November 3, 2011 at the beautiful offices of King and Spalding.

We invite you to help support the work of the Foundation by purchasing [tickets](#) and participating in our Inaugural Silent [Auction](#). Tickets sold out again last year; don't risk your chance of missing one of the "best legal parties of the year!"

**** Purchase your tickets in advance. If not sold out, tickets will be \$150 online and at the door.*

View [photos](#) from last year's event.

Winetasting & Silent Auction Volunteers Needed

The AVLF Winetasting, our signature fundraiser and an ongoing demonstration of the community's commitment to

conducted a training on the Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act, for the Mediators of the Fulton County Landlord-Tenant Court's Mediation Program.

- AVLF Volunteer Lindsey Brady, of King & Spalding, secured a settlement of over \$4,000 for a low-income tenant whose property was destroyed in an apartment fire.
- AVLF volunteer attorneys David Zacks and Hillary Rightler, of Kilpatrick Townsend, got justice for the victim of deplorable and dangerous living conditions, securing a \$2,500 cash settlement and the forgiveness of several months of unpaid rent.
- High praise from one volunteer to another. Ingrid Hogan, a paralegal at Delta who interpreted divorce documents for Stephen C. Andrews of Bodker, Ramsy, Andrews, Winograd, Wilderstein. Mr. Andrews was very impressed with Ingrid and said she was "fantastic". She was always available and did a great job. She deserves special recognition and praise.
- Along with guest trainer and AVLF volunteer Tim Phillips, Senior Counsel at the American Cancer Society, AVLF's Wills on Wheels program held a training for members of the UPS legal department on Wills, Advance Health Care Directives, and Powers of Attorney on Sept. 27th.
- AVLF Deputy Director, Tamara Serwer-Caldas presented at the Texas Pro Bono Coordinators Retreat in Austin on September 7 regarding the use of pro bono lawyers in assisting self-represented litigants.
- Emory 3L Matthew Pechous obtained a 12-

pro bono legal work, will be held on Thursday, November 3, 2011 at the law firm of King & Spalding (corner of Peachtree



and 14th Streets) from 5:30-8:30 pm. Again this year, we expect between 700-900 guests for the Winetasting, and this year we will also conduct our first [Silent Auction](#) at the event!

We need a significant number of volunteers to help us with various aspects of the party, and for each piece we need help in each of the three one-hour shifts (5:30-6:30, 6:30-7:30 and 7:30-8:30). We need people to be stationed at the doors and on the elevators to offer directions, people to hand out and to create name tags, people to pour wine and to support the wine stations by restocking ice, opening wine bottles, bringing out fresh cases etc. We also need a large number of volunteers for the silent auction functions, and we need an extra-special detail at the end of the party to assist with the clean-up of the event.

We hope that you will consider helping us by serving as a volunteer for one of the jobs for one or more of the shifts. All volunteers are welcome to participate in the evening, which is really a lot of fun, at no cost. If you agree to participate, we ask that you commit to being in the building NOT LATER THAN 15 MINUTES before your shift begins to meet with Volunteer Coordinator Michael Misenheimer and that you agree to staff your position for the full hour until relieved by the next volunteer.

Of course there will be detailed instruction either ahead of the event or on-site, depending on the job to which you are assigned. We work very hard to make this fundraiser an extraordinary party, and we are grateful that you will consider supporting us by working with us toward that goal. Please respond directly to mhenderson@avlf.org and to mmisenheimer@gmail.com if you are interested in volunteering- please let us know if there is a particular shift you hope to work.

Thanks so much for your kind attention to this note and for working with us on November 3.

You can now preview Silent Auction items on our [website](#)!



The Domestic Violence Project would like to

Month Protective Order (his first!) for his elderly client against an abusive, mentally-ill grandson.

- AVLF volunteer attorney Jerilyn Gardner reached a settlement on behalf of her AVLF client, securing the erroneously withheld portions of her security deposit.
- AVLF volunteer Michelle LeGault, of LeGault Legal, LLC, obtained a settlement of \$13,500 - money in hand! - for a for a low-income mother of two whose children were exposed to a severe bed-bug infestation.
- Knox Withers of AGG once again secured a client a 12-month protective order. The young mother endured violence at her boyfriend's hand for years. Most recently, Respondent had, in a drunken rage, taken her children (only one of whom is his) and driven away with them in her stolen car, after knocking her to the ground. He can no longer get to her or her children.
- Debbie Segal, Pro Bono Partner at Kilpatrick Townsend, won a TPO for her client, and custody of her 9 children, in a horrific case of abuse by her husband spanning 19 years.
- GSU 3L Jeanette van der Linden had her first case under the 3rd Year Practice Act, and successfully negotiated with 2 attorneys for a 12-Month protective order for her client and her child.
- AVLF volunteer attorney Anna Fretwell of Huff, Powell & Bailey, LLC, quickly obtained all the unpaid wages due to an AVLF client without litigation.
- Thank you to Geoffrey Gavin and Tiffany Williams of Kilpatrick Townsend, Dana Ashford

thank the following volunteers who represented survivors of domestic violence in the month of September:

Jeanette van der Linden, Georgia State University College of Law
Mary Virginia Grigsby, John Marshall Law School
Matthew Pechous, Emory University College of Law
Debbie Segal, Esq., Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP
Mark A. Fink, Esq., Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP
Scott Lange, Esq., DLA Piper LLP (US)
Betty Richards, DLA Piper LLP (US)

AVLF would also like to thank the following volunteers for their service during the month of September:

The Saturday Lawyer Program

Debbie Segal, Kilpatrick Townsend
Sidney Simms, Kilpatrick Townsend
Katrenia Goode, Attorney at Law
Amber Johnson, Attorney at Law
John Seay , Attorney at Law
Albert Wan, Attorney at Law
Matthew Bennett , Attorney at Law
Kiran Misra, Seyfarth
Lori Whitfield, Seyfarth
Michelle Barnett, Seyfarth
Shuman Sohrn, Seyfarth
Julie Upshaw, Attorney at Law
Sana Ayubi, Attorney at Law
Steve Barden, Attorney at Law
Michelle Swiren, McKenna Long & Aldridge
Jon Green, Baker Donelson
Natalie Suhl, Baker Donelson
Steven Richman, Smith Gambrell & Russell
Lauren Hayter, Smith Gambrell & Russell
Prabir Mehta, Attorney at Law
Craig Carmean, Attorney at Law
Kimberly R. Bourroughs, Esq., Schiff Hardin LLP
David Zacks, Kilpatrick Townsend
Hillary Rightler, Kilpatrick Townsend
Ben Easterlin, King & Spalding
Jonathan Letzring, King & Spalding
Brendalyn Lumpkins, Seyfarth Shaw
Taylor L. Davis, Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi L.L.P.
Patton Dycus, McKenna Long & Aldridge
Michaela Kendall, McKenna Long & Aldridge
Cory Lyles, Paralegal
Jennifer Ervin, Baker Donelson
Sally Ridenour, Kilpatrick Townsend LLP
Trishanda Treadwell, Parker Hudson Rainer & Dobbs
Andrew Weiner, Seyfarth Shaw

The Eviction Defense Program

ofThe Ashford Law Firm, LLC, and Alice Limehouse of Senterfitt & Knight LLC for accepting Guardian ad Litem cases this week.

- Thank you to the two recipients of the 2011 Children's Volunteer of the Year, Jean Kutner and Raina Nadler, for closing another Guardian ad Litem case.
- This week the One Child One Lawyer Program and the Wills on Wheels programs merged for a workshop for the clients of the Family Drug Court. The speaker, AVLF volunteer Romney Phillips, engaged the participants in a discussion regarding the importance of end of life documents, appointing a healthcare agent and decisions about the care of their children.

Contact Us:

Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation

235 Peachtree Street NE

Suite 1750

Atlanta, GA 30303

Phone: (404)521.0790

Fax: (404)521.3434

www.AVLF.org

Dan Ludlam, Troutman Sanders
Rob Elliott, Troutman Sanders
Natalie Sacha, Troutman Sanders
Mark Cohen, Troutman Sanders

Wills and Probate Information Center

John Aldridge, McCalla Raymer, LLC
J. Warren Ott, Law Office of J. Warren Ott
Walter Cohen, Cohen and Caproni, LLC
Amy Yarkoni, Amy Yarkoni, PC
Sally Ridenour, Kilpatrick Townsend LLP
David Schoenberg

One Child One Lawyer

Cynthia Yarbough, Esq.

Guardian ad Litem

Holly B. Lanford, Esq.
Steven N. Cayton, Esq.
Elinor Hitt, Warner, Mayoue & Bates PC
Jean M. Kutner, Esq.

About AVLF: *The Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation (AVLF) coordinates the provision of free civil legal services for low-income greater Atlanta residents by private lawyers. In 2009, AVLF advised more than 28,500 callers and secured representation or other forms of legal information and support for more than 2,500 eligible clients through volunteer attorneys.*

Yours in service,

Monique Henderson

Development Director

Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation