



BY STACY RUPPRECHT BUTLER

Superheroes Step Up in VLP Recruitment Campaign

In September 2008, the Volunteer Lawyers Program (VLP) launched its first statewide attorney recruitment campaign in more than five years. The theme of the campaign, “Do Something Amazing—Just Do What You Do,” was designed to draw attorneys’ attention to the fact that they have a unique educational background and skill set that can be used to make an incredible difference in the lives of impoverished Arizonans who cannot afford access to our justice system. The campaign targeted attorneys who practice in Arizona but who do not currently participate in a VLP program.

The Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education invested \$15,000 in the campaign. According to Kevin S. Ruegg, the Foundation’s CEO/Executive Director, “Giving your pro bono service through the VLP programs assures you are maximizing the impact your expertise can offer. The Foundation knows that investing in the recruitment campaign of the Arizona VLP programs offers the greatest return for increasing access to justice for Arizona.”

The VLP thanks the attorneys who joined the VLP during its recruitment campaign. Here is a partial list:

John Eli Aboud	Robert Erven Brown	Jennifer Fite	Samantha Hodapp	Jennifer Manzi	Chad Shell
Ben Aguilera	Brice E. Buehler	Lisette Flores	Tiffany Huffman-Spiers	John McClure	Harmony A. Simmons
Edwin Aguilar	J. Patrick Butler	Erin Fox	Jeffrey A. Imig	Cassandra Meynard	Ellen Simon
Rene Alcoverde	Michael Catlett	Lance Francis	David Jackson	Maricela Meza	Monique Simpson
Lyle Aldridge	Michael G. Ciaccio	Stacy Gabriel	Jane Jacobs	Kenneth Neeley	Vanessa N. Smith
Douglas Alexander	Mari Jo Clark	Robert Garcia	Jenny Jansch	Amy Nix	Leonard Sowers
Donn Alpert	Jose Antonio Colon	Richard Gaxiola	Lance Johnson	Dale F. Norris	Joe P. Sparks
Ron Altherr	James Lyman Cork	Ryan Gibson	Launi J. Jones	Margaret Olek Esler	John Stompoly
Ramai Alvarez	Steve Corradini	John T. Gilbert	Elizabeth Juarez	Thomas Pace	Rachel Strachan
Mark Andersen	Steven Czop	Rodney Glassman	Jonathan Kaiho	Leah Pallin-Hill	Eileen Sullivan
Michael S. Anderson	Ana Cecilia Dabbs	Marsha Goodman	Laura Kennedy	Joel Parris	Pilar Thomas
Gabriel Aragon	Barry Davis	Vicki Gotkin	Michael Kielsky	Kristel K. Patton	Sylvia L. Thomas
William M. Bache	Gregory Alan Davis	Matt Green	Jennifer Kindred	Lydia Anne Peirce	Lenore Tsakanikas
Alisa Bailey	John Matthew Derstine	Todd Hardy	Lawrence Koslow	Mimi Petro	Sarah Tschider
Jason Barraza	Ashley Blye DeStefano	Brian Harlow	Jerry D. Krumwiede	Marilyn A. Pollard	Faisai Habib Ullah
Jeff Bartolino	Nicki DiCampli	Neil Harrington	Reagan Kulseth	Patricia A. Premeau	Jason Van Doren
Emilie Bell	Andrew Diodati	Mary L. Harriss	Brian Laird	David Preudhomme	Phillip B. Visnansky
Elisabeth Benavidez	Patric Durazzo	Macie Hawkes	Ryan Lamb	Mark Allen Raczkowski	Michael Wallace
Tali Elizabeth Best	Chris Dutkiewicz	Andrew Heideman	Jennifer Larson	Jennifer Rebholz	Matt Walton
Joseph M. Bettini	Jordan Ellef	Celeste Helms	Steven Charles Lawrence	Jill Ripke	Audrey Wanich
Kristy Blackwell	Jennifer Espino	Mari Herchold	Jeff Levine	Lee Ann Roads	Joseph Watkins
Adam Bleier	Erin Evans	Joel Herk	Brian Lougenbauch	Venus Sahwany	Suzanne Watts
Lisa Bliss	Joel Feinman	John E. Herrick	Lori Lundberg	Paul Sansone	Tina D. Wilcox
Ricardo Bracamonte	Elizabeth Fella	Bruce Heurlin	Frances T. Lynch	Rich Scherb	Kate Willison
Jeffrey R. Brooke	Nikia Lee Fico	J. Ridge Hicks	Michael F. Magee	Daniel James Schultz	Rachel Yosha
Christine Brown	Linda Fisher	David Hindman	Matthew J. Mansfield	Cynthia Sehr	Ronald Zack

As part of the campaign, the VLP sent brochures to approximately 12,000 Arizona attorneys, challenging them to get involved. Different counties supplemented these materials with letters from local judges. The VLP followed up with advertisements and articles in local and statewide publications, presentations to local bar associations and free CLEs for attorneys who joined VLP.

VLP volunteers also took to the phones, calling attorneys they knew (or, in some cases, did not know) and inviting them to join. Tom Roberts, a member of the VLP Advisory Board, was part of that effort:


I was pleased to be able to participate in the recruitment campaign by helping with calls to Pima County attorneys not already enrolled as volunteers. No one that I talked to said no. No arm twisting was ever required. They listened and signed up. This is, in my view, an affirmation of the kind of folks practicing in this community, and the reputation of the program. It was a rewarding experience, as it always is.

As a result of the recruitment campaign, 179 new volunteers signed up to participate in one of the three VLP programs in Arizona. Michael Anderson, an attorney who joined during the campaign, explained why: "I felt the personal need to provide some advice to those that need it. The VLP staff are incredibly helpful and friendly, and they make it easy to help in even the smallest way." Attorney Erin Fox also joined the VLP recently. Her decision was motivated by her experiences with VLP as a law student. She added, "There is an enormous segment of the population in Southern Arizona that cannot afford legal representation. The VLP provides services and clinics that assist persons who would otherwise never encounter attorneys, and in doing so the VLP creates a more equitable and just society for us all."

The impact of the 177 new volunteer attorneys is expected to be great. VLP estimates that its new volunteers will generate at

least 4,400 additional hours of pro bono legal assistance to low-income residents of Arizona. Many of the new volunteer attorneys expressed a willingness to volunteer in areas of law in which the need is greatest: domestic violence, foreclosure prevention, debt collection and bankruptcy.

These new volunteers joined the ranks of 2,200 attorneys who were already VLP volunteers, many of whom were inspired to increase their participation in the program as a result of the campaign. Today, the VLP is nearly 2,400 superheroes strong. Although the campaign was originally scheduled to conclude at the end of 2008, there are plans to continue activities into 2009 in some areas of the state to capitalize on the momentum generated by the initial campaign efforts.

To join, contact Michele Mirto at mmirto@sazlegalaid.org. 

STACY RUPPRECHT BUTLER is a member of the VLP Advisory Board and law clerk to United States Magistrate Judge Jennifer C. Guerin. Her favorite superhero is Michele Mirto, Executive Director for Southern Arizona's VLP.