

Save The Date!

November 5th, 2016

Jazz 4 Justice™

UMW— Dodd Auditorium at
7:30pm

Come enjoy a fun night of great music, performed by UMW students, faculty, and professional



musicians for 2 amazing causes. We had over 500 people tapping their toes and singing along last year.

Thank You!

Business community supporters and friends...thank you for your many efforts in making 2015 a great year for our journey to ensure there will be equal access to justice for ALL!



www.raplegal.com



RLS | *Because Justice Really Should Be For All*

In the Best Interests of the Kids

What happens when the decision rendered by the custody hearing judge doesn't work out? In a custody trial, the judge's decision is based on what he or she determines will be in *the best interests of the child*. Every effort is made to give primary physical custody to the parent who will provide the best environment and upbringing for the child, with appropriate visitation to the other parent. The judge's decision is based on the case presented by both parties involved.

Unfortunately, there are times when, what appears to be in the best interests of the child/children during the hearing, just doesn't work out that way. What recourse is there to change the situation, especially if you can't afford an attorney? That is exactly what happened for this family (real name not used). Fortunately, when the distraught parent turned to RLS for help, his voice, and his children's voices, were heard and the situation was finally resolved in the **true** best interests of the children.

Father Really Does Know Best

Before contacting RLS, "Harry" was in a tough spot with the mother of his two children. When the children were eleven and nine years old, their mother had primary custody. Harry began receiving calls from the school that the children had been coming to school in clothes that were far too small for them. This problem became so severe that, on one occasion, Harry had to leave work early to buy new shoes for his daughter and immediately take them to her at school.

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Unfortunately, ill-fitting clothing was only the beginning of Harry's growing concern for the well-being of his children. The kids called him constantly, informing him that their mother had left both of them at home for long periods of time, alone and unattended. This situation left Harry anxious about their safety and the children terrified. He tried calling the mother and offering to watch the kids when she needed to go out and didn't have a sitter. But the mother refused and continued leaving the children alone and unattended. The final straw for Harry came when he found out the mother was physically assaulting and cursing at the children on a regular basis. Harry's older child reported this abuse to the school teacher, counselor and principal, who in turn submitted a total of five reports to Child Protective Services (CPS) over the course of two years. Unfortunately, CPS failed to take any action.

Once Harry began working with RLS attorney Tamara Moore, he was able to file a motion to amend the custody agreement for his children. With Ms. Moore's help, Harry was able to gain primary physical custody of the children in juvenile court, and ensuring that contact for the kids with their mother would be restricted.

Now, under Harry's care, the children's lives have been transformed; both have gone from being stressed, extremely emotional, and anxious about their lives, to being happy, outgoing and involved in their community and extracurricular activities. The legal representation provided by RLS' attorney helped turn what could have been a tragic situation into one with a much brighter future for Harry and his children.



\$10,350 Raised through The Community Give

\$3,645 Raised through Give Local Piedmont

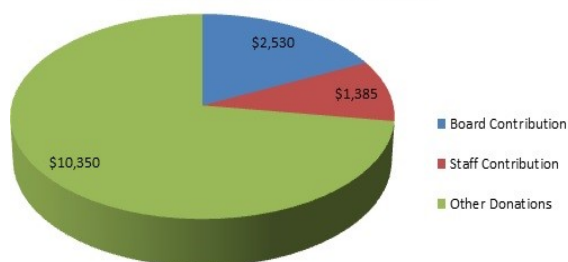


A huge "Thank You" is extended to everyone who was tenacious and made online donations during *The Community Give* and the *Give Local Piedmont* online fundraising campaigns.

And a special "Thank You" goes out to our Board of Directors and staff for demonstrating their dedication to those we serve by also making generous contributions. 77% of our Board Members and 93% of our staff participated. Our community supporters are an incredible group—we and our clients appreciate all you do



The Community Give & Give Local Piedmont Fundraiser Results





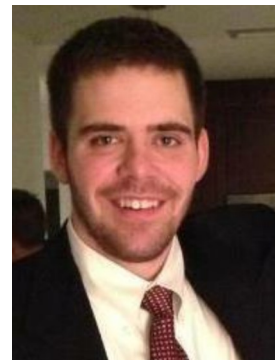
Profiles in Service



Megan Murphy is a rising junior at the University of Mary Washington. She is pursuing her bachelors degree in Philosophy, with a pre-law concentration, as well as double minoring in Practical Ethics and Environmental Sustainability. Upon completing her undergraduate degree, Megan plans to attend law school. She decided to volunteer at RLS at her academic advisor's recommendation. According to Megan, "RLS has an extremely admirable purpose, and it seemed like it would provide an engaging experience, one where I would learn a lot." By volunteering at RLS this summer, Megan has worked closely with the attorneys, and acquired some valuable experiences in a real law office. Additionally, her time here allowed her to gain some insight and guidance about what type of law she will practice in the future.



Alex Cutts. Just finished his first year at Antonin Scalia School of Law at George Mason University. He is from Fairfax, Virginia and earned an undergraduate degree in history from Virginia Tech. Alex was drawn to RLS because he wanted experience in a law office, and he knew RLS would provide him with the opportunity to learn a lot and work closely with attorneys and clients. While interning at RLS, Alex has especially enjoyed observing court proceedings and sitting in on client meetings because, "that is where the action takes place." Upon completing his law degree, Alex hopes to practice family law. Working at RLS has reinforced his interest in this area of law. Alex has enjoyed living in Fredericksburg this summer and feels fortunate to have had the opportunity to volunteer at RLS.



Thallya Diaz is a rising senior at the University of Mary Washington. She is double majoring in Spanish and International Affairs, and hopes to become a translator or Spanish linguist upon completing graduate school. Thallya first heard about RLS through a friend who had previously volunteered with us. After her interview with our Executive Director, Ann Kloeckner, Thallya says she knew she wanted to spend her summer volunteering at RLS for the "great translation experience, and the opportunity to help those in need within the Fredericksburg community." Additionally, she expressed how valuable the experience of a real law office setting will be for her in the future.

Joining RLS in late 2015, **Jackie Schlesinger, Development Director**, came to us from the Peninsula Agency on Aging in Newport News, where she was the Development Director. She is responsible for the planning, coordination, implementation, and expansion of the ongoing private fundraising program that supports operations, and various programs, of RLS. With a background in development, communication and marketing, Jackie brings an understanding of the corporate, financial, and educational arenas and how they can successfully work with nonprofits to achieve a positive impact within local communities. She received her BA in English/Pre-Law from La Roche College and her MA in Corporate Communications from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh.



Many thanks to Megan and Thallya for their assistance with this newsletter and so many other projects. Their help was invaluable, as was Alex's. Alex worked alongside the attorneys, assisting them respond to Discoveries and preparing motions, in addition to other tasks required in Domestic Relations litigation. We wish them much success as they pursue their goals.

Our busy attorneys welcome the chance to mentor law students and undergrads interested in legal careers, and certainly appreciate the many ways in which our volunteers lighten the heavy caseloads we need to carry up with the demand for our services.

Rappahannock Legal Services (RLS) – Soon to be Legal Aid WorksSM (LAW)

Before long, you'll be seeing our new logo a lot and hearing more about Legal Aid WorksSM as we transition to our new name and look over the next several months. But don't be concerned.

We're still the same reliable law firm that is passionate about doing everything in our power to ensure equal justice for all. Just ask our clients!



NAP State Tax Credits Available

We received our NAP state tax credit allocation in July and the funding state-wide is less than last year's. However, we expect an even greater demand for the credits this year.

We will honor requests for NAP state tax credits with qualified donations or Pro Bono hours on a first come, first serve basis. If you have questions about the program and how to qualify for these state tax credits, contact Jackie Schlesinger, Development Director or Carolyn Ross, Pro Bono Coordinator, at (540) 371-1114.



I really like the Idea of getting credits for a NAP!

Client Survey Comments About RLS:

- The best thing [my attorney] did is set up a garnishment; without that, my situation would be much worse. [The garnishment] protects me and him.
- I'm grateful. It's a shame what you have to go through to get a little bit of money.
- I've benefited a lot. [The child support] helps me pay for daycare.

On behalf of our clients, thank you for funding the work of RLS.

A Fresh View From RLS' Clients

During June, RLS intern Megan Murphy conducted the 2016 Support Order Study. She contacted RLS clients with closed cases to determine how their support orders (child support, spousal support, or both) have affected their lives. There was also a client who, through the help of an RLS attorney, was able to get a child support order terminated.

Ms. Murphy spoke with 12 of the 29 clients she attempted to contact. Nine agreed to answer the survey questions. The majority of clients she spoke with were eager to contribute to the study, especially once they found out their replies would play a part in helping others in similar situations; some asked if there was anything else they could do to help.

A sample of the results include:

- All asserted significant decrease in stress – spending less time worrying about how to pay for the basics such as food and clothing.
- They could spend more time “ensuring their children were getting the best possible education and lives”
- The child support payments allowed them to search for work or a better job – which also resulted in their being able to pay the bills.
- Credited their drive to their desire to provide for their family.

An unexpected outcome was the feeling expressed by many of the respondents about how embarrassing it is to ask for help, go to court, and seek support. They felt the stigma of the process was humiliating.

Ms. Murphy enjoyed conducting this study because it provided her with a greater understanding of RLS's aim, as she heard firsthand the impact that free legal representation has on those who cannot afford a private attorney. By speaking with these clients, she sensed that many of them had a newfound sense of hope and determination for their futures. For more details on this study, please contact Ann Kloeckner, Executive Director, at akloeckner@rls.com or call 540-731-1105.

So many ways to help!

If you want to know more about the different ways you can make a donation to RLS, please visit RLS' donation page on our website at: <http://tinyurl.com/jhemo67>

See you at Jazz4JusticeTM on November 5th at UMW's Dodd Auditorium!

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