

## SAVE THE DATE

**Raise A Glass For Justice**

**June 29, 2013**

**3-6 PM**

**at**

**Prince Michel**

**Vineyard & Winery**

**154 Winery Lane**

**Leon, VA 22725**

**1-800-800-WINE**

**Winetasting • Winery Tour •  
Music • Fun**

June is a great time to visit Prince Michel—set in the rolling hills of Madison County, this winery features some of the best wine the area has to offer. Whether you live near or far, PM is a destination worth the drive.

RLS is fortunate to be PM's charity of the month, so visit them early and often during June as they will be donating a portion of their profits from that month to our cause. But don't miss Raise A Glass on the 29th!



**RLS** | *Because Justice Really Should Be For All*

## RLS Helps Family Surmount Challenges in Dealing with Mental Illness

If you have never imagined the difficulties involved in obtaining guardianship of an adult child with a mental illness consider the story of Liza Parker and her husband James both of whom are advanced in years and living on a fixed income which barely covers their basic expenses. Their son Jack, a veteran who is dependent on his parents for care, suffered from paranoid delusions which over the course of time severely compromised the family structure despite Liza and James' best attempts to obtain help for their son.

Jack's condition had been in a downward spiral for several years because Mr. & Mrs. Parker were in the objectionable position of being unable to compel Jack to seek or accept medical treatment despite the fact that his paranoia clouded his ability to make rational decisions about his own needs. Increasingly, Jack no longer recognized his parents; rather, he grew fearful of them rejecting any foods Liza cooked. Firm in the belief that he lived in a facility at which Liza was a worker, Jack also refused to bathe or leave his room, and as a result his physical health deteriorated precipitously to say nothing of the grave concerns that James and Liza faced every day as a result of Jack's muddled thinking.

Many people who share the Parkers' caregiver status find themselves at odds between their daily reality and the bounds of medical professionals who cannot force treatment on an unwilling person unless that person is proven a danger to himself or others. The Parkers were no different, but standing by waiting for a negative outcome was not only excruciatingly painful, but seemingly counter-productive. That is when the Parkers turned to RLS for help.

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Our Tappahannock Office secured a pro bono attorney for Liza Parker and an adult Guardian ad Litem to represent Jack's interests. Jack was finally brought to a treatment facility at which point a judicial hearing was convened. It was determined that Jack suffered from Schizophrenia resulting in his much needed treatment. After only one week under a doctor's care, Jack's condition improved dramatically to the point where he was able to recognize Mr. & Mrs. Parker as his parents. After Mrs. Parker obtained guardianship of her son, RLS was also able to assist her in applying for disability benefits on his behalf which he received.

Jack's circumstances have improved markedly since that time. He is able to participate in many aspects of life that were impossible before RLS came into the picture: sharing family meals, playing the guitar with a favorite nephew and attending church services among them. And because of Jack's improvement, Mr. and Mrs. Parker now have a measure of comfort in their own lives, too, but most of all they are happy to have their son back from the dark recesses of his mind where he spent far too long in residence.

**THIS JUST IN:** John Rellick, managing attorney of RLS' Tappahannock Office, named Legal Aid Attorney of the Year by the Virginia State Bar. Congratulations, John, on receiving this extremely well-deserved honor!



**Calling All Equal Justice Supporters!**  
**Help us reach our goal of**  
**40 FOR THE 40TH**  
**Join RLS' Equal Justice Society**

What is 40 for the 40th all about? As you may know, RLS is currently celebrating its 40th year of service, and this marvelous accomplishment would not have been possible without the help of committed supporters all across our service area and beyond. But as we survey the history of our funding in conjunction with the current economic landscape, it is clear that we must do more to build certainty and stability into our funding mechanisms.

With that in mind, RLS is initiating a monthly giving campaign. Check our website for details in the next few weeks when our monthly giving page will be live. For as little as \$10 per month, you can provide equal access to justice for the most vulnerable citizens in our communities by funding the work of RLS on a monthly basis. This type of giving can be accomplished safely and easily on our website via PayPal. The subscription button allows users to choose their preferred monthly rate of giving. Set to your specifications, PayPal handles the credit card transaction for you. It's simple and efficient which means that an even greater percentage of your gift goes directly to client services which, in turn, means that YOU make a larger and more sustained impact.

So, in the next 4 months, let's see if we can hit the mark by signing up at least 40 people to the Equal Justice Society in this our 40th year of operation. For questions, call Grace McCormick at 540-371-1105 Ext. 21 or send an email to [gmcormick@rapplegal.com](mailto:gmcormick@rapplegal.com).

## VISTA Member Vastly Improves Tech Resources at RLS

Amidst his pursuit of a career in Information Technology, RLS welcomed VISTA Volunteer Andrew Hackey as our resident technology advisor in March 2012. As a VISTA, Andrew is part of a cadre considered the domestic equivalent of the Peace Corps which is responsible for placing individuals into nonprofit organizations all over the United States. In his third term as a volunteer, and completing his first term with RLS, Andrew carries out the VISTA mission of building the kind of capacity that empowers nonprofits to work more effectively.



The creation and maintenance of RLS' website has been one of Andrew's prime goals. Now that the bulk of the redesign is complete, Andrew is focused on making our site more user-friendly, especially for those with handicaps. There are a number of tools at Andrew's disposal, but the real task is implementing them successfully.

An example of one of those tools is Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software, which allows for the mechanical and electronic conversion of scanned images of handwritten documents into machine-encoded text. When placed online, a PDF file is formatted as an image, making it impossible for a screen reader to identify the text with

in. OCR technology yields word identification by reading the characters in the PDF. However, because OCR software is not free, barriers still exist for some users

with visual impairment. To circumvent this issue, Andrew also creates HTML pages and downloadable Word documents in place of PDF files for those who do not have access to OCR as a resource.

In addition, Andrew is working to make the RLS website more user-friendly for those with color blindness which entails using the right colors and contrasts within both texts and images. By doing so, Andrew hopes to eliminate the hassle those with color blindness might face when seeking legal help via the website.

Not only has Andrew revamped RLS' website for the average user, a huge undertaking given that prior to his term of service one needed an advanced degree in information technology to make even the most mundane changes, but he has raised the stakes and taken our web design to the next level so that all audiences can gain access to the important information found there. Additionally, Andrew continues to systematize his advancements so that once his term of service concludes, we can continue to build on his investment of time and expertise in building our technology infrastructure.

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