

BRAVO, Aberdeen Green!

Many thanks to Carley Chilton and Amanda Mackintosh for their brilliant performance at Raise A Glass For Justice on April 24th.

Thanks to our sponsors:

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RLS | *Because Justice Really Should Be For All*

The Community Give & Give Local Piedmont

Help RLS win \$10,000 in prizes and matching gifts. Details can be found at www.rapplegal.com. Read more on Page 2, then take action on Tuesday, May 6th!

Follow RLS on Facebook for the latest and on Twitter at www.twitter.com/rapplegal.

DON'T FORGET

40 for the 40th Campaign
Joining the Equal Justice Society is easy and rewarding; do it today! Find out how at www.rapplegal.com.



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Intimate Partner Violence: An Evening In the Life of One RLS Client

According to the NO MORE campaign, 12.7 million people per year are physically abused, raped or stalked by their partners. RLS works with victims of domestic and sexual violence every day to obtain the legal remedies available in civil courts.

Sue, whose real name is being withheld, was sitting on the sofa watching a movie with one of her three children nestled in her lap. Her spouse, Ed, entered the room and stood nearby for a long period of time fixed in a cold stare directed at Sue. Sue was frightened and asked what was wrong, but Ed just kept mumbling to himself in a low, calm tone which only served to increase Sue's alarm.

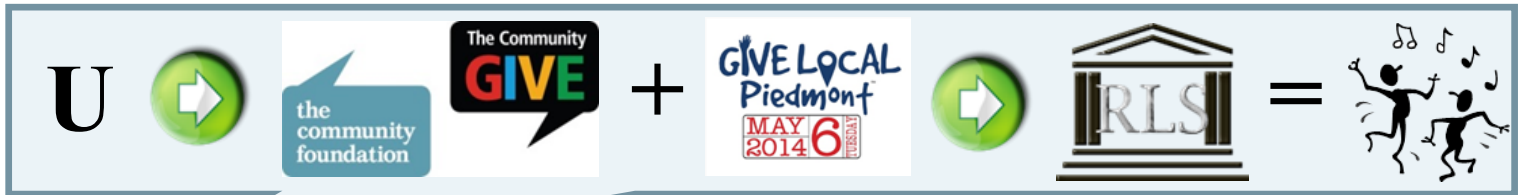
Then all at once, Ed went to the butcher block and retrieved a knife, which he chased Sue with as she fled the house out to the deck and down the stairs. Sue tripped and fell, injuring her leg quite badly, but she kept on running until Ed caught up with her in the yard. At that point, Sue was screaming as loudly as she could, hoping that a neighbor might hear her cries and call the police. In an eerily calm voice, Ed commanded Sue to return to the house. Using her hand to shield the blade of the knife from her neck while Ed was very much in control of the handle, Sue was coerced back to the house.

As they neared the residence, Sue saw their child, who had witnessed the violence, standing in the doorway. When they got to the door, Ed handed the knife to the child and told the child to put it away. In an abrupt about face, Ed became very concerned about Sue's leg and began tending to her wounds. What Ed did not realize is that another of his children had also witnessed this scene and called the police. After arrival and assessment, an emergency protective order was issued and Sue sought refuge at a domestic violence shelter until she was able to secure housing of her own.

Continued on Page 2.

Continued From Page One

When Sue contacted RLS, she already managed to successfully obtain a protective order, but her husband filed an appeal. It was clear to Sue that she needed professional legal expertise for the appeal, but did not have the resources to hire a private attorney. Fortunately, RLS was there to help. RLS assisted Sue in obtaining temporary custody of the children with supervised visitation by Ed. Additional litigation is currently pending in this case, and Sue has the security of knowing that RLS is representing her interests.



May 6th!

Ever Wonder What It Would Be Like to Be Warren Buffett For a Day?

The Community Give and Give Local Piedmont can help with that! OK, maybe giving day gifts are on a *slightly* smaller scale than Mr. Buffett’s philanthropic offerings, but your contribution to RLS through either The Community Give or Give Local Piedmont on May 6th is a very big deal to us. Combined with other small donations, your gift has the potential to earn RLS more than the sum of the total because The Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region and the Northern Piedmont Community Foundation (sponsors of these two separate giving events) have each lined up \$100,000 in prizes to be awarded to participating area nonprofits.

Why Give? The answer is simple. It’s good for you! Not only does giving demonstrate fidelity to the community, but it makes you feel good. That’s right. Studies show that giving increases happiness, and that happiness is maximized when the giving fosters a social connection. The Community Give and Give Local Piedmont are all about tapping into your social connections, so phone a friend, post on Facebook or send an email to someone you know. On May 6th, happiness will be downright affordable. And if that were not enough, there is more research showing that pro social giving can increase your wealth, too! Don’t believe us? Check out this TED Talk at http://www.ted.com/talks/michael_norton_how_to_buy_happiness.

Visit www.rapplegal.com for more information about The Community Give and Give Local Piedmont. Get links, and information about the best time to give to one or the other and how you can increase RLS’ chances to win a matching gift and prizes.

What Does Oklahoma Have In Common With Virginia?

Our newest staff attorney, Gary Godman, hails from Oklahoma, but he's spent his last four years in the Commonwealth at the Marshall-Wythe School of Law at the College of William and Mary and followed that up with a Postgraduate Fellowship in the New Kent County Commonwealth's Attorneys' Office. Luckily, RLS snapped him up before he had a chance to consider returning to the Sooner state.



With undergraduate degrees in Spanish and International Studies from the University of Oklahoma, Gary went to work for Human Services in Oklahoma in the food stamp office. There he assisted a wide range of individuals experiencing poverty, the newly poor who have suffered as a result of economic instability as well as those struggling to overcome generational poverty. The plight of the undocumented population, particularly those families whose breadwinners had been deported, was thrown into sharp relief for Gary during his stint at Human Services as well. Ultimately, Gary realized that in order to get closer to the root of the kinds of problems he witnessed, he would have to attend law school.

During his years at William and Mary, Gary landed a number of impressive internships and other positions providing him with a well-rounded legal foundation on which to begin his career in the law. During his first summer break, Gary was able to combine his nascent legal expertise together with his Spanish speaking skills to obtain work at the U.S. Embassy in Honduras as a Consular Affairs Intern. Later, Gary interned at a law firm in Newport News doing research, translation, and litigation support for the firm. He had a summer clerkship for Judge Charles Poston in Norfolk and also spent time working at the VA Department of Taxation delving into the mechanics of a very specific area of the state code. Upon graduation, Gary began his Postgraduate Fellowship in the New Kent County Commonwealth's Attorneys' Office where he acquired courtroom experience bringing misdemeanor and traffic cases before the court as well handling the preliminary hearings of defendants facing felony charges.

At RLS, Gary will be working in the areas of family law, domestic violence and immigration. As RLS' only bilingual attorney, Gary will be able to interact with Spanish speaking clients without an intermediary, a tremendous asset on many levels. In his first trip to court last week, Gary was successful; he won a protective order for his client. Congratulations on an excellent beginning, Gary; we are happy that you decided to practice public interest law and very pleased to welcome you to our little corner of that world.

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) allows battered immigrants to petition for legal status in the United States without relying on an abusive U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident spouse to sponsor their application. For many immigrant victims of domestic violence, battery and extreme cruelty, the U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident family member who would sponsor their application will threaten to withhold legal immigration sponsorship as a tool of abuse. The purpose of the VAWA program is to allow victims the opportunity to “self-petition” or independently seek legal immigration status in the U.S.



Pictured at left is Kerly Gaibor after receiving her U.S. Citizenship on April 16, 2014. It was an exciting day for Kerly, and RLS’ Christina Martinez was there to witness the ceremony and share in her joy.

Her long journey to this happy day began in 2008 when Kerly learned that she did not have to rely on her abusive partner to seek legal status in the United States. She asked RLS to assist, at which point RLS filed a self-petition under VAWA for Kerly. When the petition was approved, Kerly received a permanent resident card, and now she is a proud U.S. citizen.

Congratulations, Kerly!

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