

PRO BONO MOMENTS

By: Alissa C. Lietzow, Esq.
Charleston Pro Bono Legal Services

Living in Charleston, South Carolina, many of us are all too familiar with the ever-present threat of a hurricane throughout the summer and fall. We dutifully watch the weather channels, tune into local and state-wide press conferences, and take precautionary but necessary steps to protect our property and family. Windows are boarded, insurance policies printed out, and family cars packed to the hilt as we evacuate our picturesque, yet vulnerable, Lowcountry. With Hurricane Irma turning West in early September, Charleston truly dodged a bullet. Even with the course change, many parts of our community flooded and experienced damage from both the wind and the rain. As we began to clean up from the storm, how many of us were counting our blessings at how bad it *could* have been?

Unfortunately, countless members of our community do not have access to the same resources needed for pre-storm safety measures nor post-storm cleanup. Flooded homes often lead to uninhabitable housing, missed work often means no paycheck, and fixed incomes prove prohibitive when it comes to accessing our justice system to remedy a wrong. We are dedicated to addressing these concerns.

Charleston Pro Bono Legal Services is thrilled to announce we have been selected as a grant recipient for a Bank of America grant administered and coordinated through the South Carolina Bar Foundation. This grant enables our small nonprofit to increase capacity by adding a full-time attorney position dedicated to housing-related issues. Nicole L. Paluzzi, a graduate of the Charleston School of Law, joins our team and will primarily focus on landlord-tenant disputes and other housing claims. Nicole will focus on providing educational clinics to the community on tenant rights, offering advice and counsel one-on-one in collaboration with numerous community partners, and serving as direct representation on legally meritorious claims.

But, we cannot do it alone. In anticipation of Hurricane Irma and likely need for post-hurricane legal assistance, Charleston County Bar Association President Scott Moïse asked Charleston Pro Bono Legal Services to spearhead a committee to address any post-storm legal aftermath. We agreed to coordinate with area attorneys interested in offering their services *pro bono* for qualified families. We anticipate needing assistance with landlord/tenant repair concerns, insurance claims, employment-related issues, price-gouging, and potential custody and probate cases. A very special thank you to the attorneys in our community and the Charleston School of Law who/that offered to provide such assistance. And, although the damage from Irma may have been relatively/comparatively minimal, hurricane season does not end until November 30, 2017. If you are interested in joining our efforts, please let us know by calling 843-853-6456 or e-mailing ALietzow@charlestonprobono.org. Your time and talents are not only greatly needed, but truly appreciated.

In the event you cannot sign up to accept one of our cases, I ask that you consider contributing to our #50For50Campaign. We are raising \$50,000 in honor of 50 years of public service. Or, attend our upcoming Art on the Beach – Chefs in the Kitchen fundraiser scheduled for November 12, 2017! Thirty artists will be on site during a home tour on Sullivan's Island to engage patrons and sell their creations ranging from sculptures to jewelry to paintings. We also have an incredible line up of talented chefs serving up delicious treats. Advance tickets are \$40.00 and available for purchase at: <http://artonthebeach.bpt.me>.

[include donation box]