

AILA's Pro Bono Newsletter

Pro Bono Is a Part of Professionalism ■
AILA Practice and Professionalism Center

Spring 2012
American Immigration
Lawyers Association
www.aila.org



The American Immigration Lawyers Association Presents
The Impossible Dream:
U.S. Visas for Foreign Entrepreneurs
A 4 minute cartoon

THE 'IMPOSSIBLE DREAM': Watch AILA's first [animation short](#) highlighting the plight immigrant entrepreneurs face when trying to keep themselves and their businesses in the United States.

IS TIME UP ON MY MEMBERSHIP? Members can check their membership status and even renew online via their [myAILA profile](#). Your expiration date is in the top left box. If you are up for renewal, there will be a red box titled "Click Here to Renew." While renewing, be sure to confirm or update your contact information. If you have other questions, [e-mail the membership department](#).



How You Can Get Involved in Pro Bono

By Stacy Cozart

"To the world you may be one person, but to one person you may be the world."

This quote summarizes the understanding behind the reasons to become involved in pro bono work. Primarily it makes a big difference in immigrants' lives, but also the experience gives the pro bono attorney an opportunity to improve the quality of life in our communities. Pro bono work also can be a learning experience about aspects of the law with which we might not otherwise be familiar. AILA National has many programs in which practitioners can become involved.

A newer program that AILA offers, [AD2](#), is a collaborative pro bono project that aims to provide expert immigration assistance and advocacy support to DREAMers.

GET INVOLVED with AILA's [Dream Defenders \(AD2\)](#), [Military Assistance Program \(MAP\)](#), or [Citizenship Day!](#)



AD2 is a way for members to support the movement to pass the DREAM Act and to provide much needed pro bono legal services to immigrant youth.

Established in 2008, the AILA [Military Assistance Program \(MAP\)](#) is a cooperative effort between AILA and the legal assistance offices of the United States Military Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps. Recently, JAG attorneys have been inundated with complex immigration legal questions. To resolve these cases successfully, they often need the assistance of seasoned immigration attorneys. AILA MAP has brought these two groups together to form a truly dynamic and effective partnership.

Many chapters offer programs in which members can get involved. One such event, [Citizenship Day](#), held nationally this year on April 21, is a one-day clinic which offers support and processing of naturalization applications to those who are eligible. The event is held in almost all fifty states and is a great way to get your feet wet.

Some chapters also offer case-centered pro bono work. If you are interested in [becoming involved](#), contact your local pro bono coordinator or [Susan Timmons](#) at AILA National.

[Stacy Cozart](#) is Pro Bono Liaison and Treasurer for the Ohio AILA Chapter, and serves on the National Pro Bono Services Committee.

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AILA InfoNet Doc. No. 12032663. (Posted 03/26/12)

Spotlight ►



Judge Jay C. Zainey
Los Angeles, CA

Federal Judge Offers H.E.L.P. to the Less Fortunate

Judge Zainey Is Also the Founder of SOLACE and Andrew's Village

On a rainy day in New Orleans, Federal Judge Jay C. Zainey, appointed to the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana in 2002, determined that he wanted to do more than serve meals at a local homeless shelter. Judge Zainey had spent many years as a criminal and civil attorney and always believed in helping those less fortunate. Using his connections as an active member of the community and

Louisiana Bar, he founded the [H.E.L.P.](#) and SOLACE programs. H.E.L.P. was created to help the homeless population have a voice in the legal system. Clinics throughout the U.S. staffed by attorneys help the homeless with criminal and immigration representation as well as other legal matters.

In addition to H.E.L.P., Judge Zainey established SOLACE, a program through which attorneys receive e-mail notifications concerning other attorneys who are in need, allowing

them to respond with assistance directly to the people who need it.

Finally, along with his wife, Joy, Judge Zainey co-founded [St. Andrew's Village](#), a long-term residential community for adults with developmental disabilities.

He has remained active in all of these as well as other charities and is a tireless crusader to help others. Currently, his H.E.L.P. program is staffed entirely by AILA attorneys in the [Los Angeles Cardinal Manning Center](#).

H.E.L.P. Is Here for the Homeless Immigrants of Los Angeles

By **Diana G. Fakhrai**

When federal Judge Jay Zainey decided he wanted to do more for the homeless men and women in New Orleans he did something that helped improve their circumstances and change their lives forever. Meetings with various leaders in the city, law firms and the ABA led to creating [The Homeless Experience Legal Program \(H.E.L.P.\)](#). Judge Zainey envisioned a group of lawyer volunteers who would visit shelters and help clients with legal matters ranging from immigration

issues to child custody and criminal issues, anything to help the homeless get back on their feet.

The program began in 2004 and has achieved great success. Eight years later, H.E.L.P. chapters have been established in more than twenty cities including Chicago, Detroit, Nashville, Atlanta, and most recently Los Angeles and Boston.

Attorney Jacob Poorman, who clerked for Judge Zainey shared his passion for helping those in need, and together

they sought to offer the homeless fair representation. When Mr. Poorman settled in Los Angeles following his clerkship, he and the Cardinal Manning Center staff developed a pro bono clinic. By adding Case Manager Conner Johnson, the H.E.L.P. program recently opened in Los Angeles. Los Angeles H.E.L.P. focuses primarily on immigration issues. Attorneys from the AILA Southern California Chapter offer pro bono assistance at the [St. Vincent Cardinal Manning Center](#). For over 50 years, the Center has provided shelter and



FOR MORE INFORMATION
please visit the [H.E.L.P. program website](#).

assistance for the homeless in the Skid Row Area of Los Angeles. Its primary goals are to help individuals regain self-sufficiency, permanent housing, and employment. To achieve its goals, the shelter's many programs include employment counseling, case-management, and counseling services. H.E.L.P. has become a vital addition to the shelter's programs.

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Diana G. Fakhrai and Alejandro Fernandez man the table at the H.E.L.P. clinic.

H.E.L.P. FROM pg. 2 >>

During the clinic, AILA attorneys help thirty to fifty individuals in a day and provide followup and assistance as needed. Attorneys, case managers, and other shelter staff collaborate to offer individuals either one consultation or more extensive services, enabling people to apply for adjustment of status, registry, work authorization, and permanent resident card renewals. Also, those living on the street may use the shelter address to receive these crucial documents and other documents.

Housing the clinic at Cardinal Manning is important because clients receiving clinic attorney assistance also have case manager attorneys. The latter maintain ongoing monitoring of the cases. Furthermore, the program's popularity is drawing clients of case managers and social workers from neighboring shelters to meet with the attorneys at Cardinal Manning for individualized immigration assistance.

The Cardinal Manning Center estimates the Los Angeles homeless population totals 43,000 with almost 20 percent representing families with children. This is the largest homeless population of any large metropolitan area in the United States. Conner Johnson, case manager, and critical to the clinic's implementation and success, stated: "... [T]he clinic gives clients who are homeless or living in poverty a chance to speak to an attorney who cares, [an experience] which can be very rare for many of them. I have witnessed them be treated with respect and dignity, which allows them to feel comfortable and heard."

Attorneys are also able to provide many people living on the streets a priceless gift: hope for the future. Mr. Poorman predicted the lasting effects H.E.L.P. will have on people's lives. "With the expansion into Los Angeles we can now reach more people, and attorneys reaching those people will reach out to more attorneys, and the cycle to provide quality services will continue."

Diana G. Fakhrai is a private immigration attorney in Los Angeles, California. She is currently a member of the National AILA Pro Bono Committee, Co-Chair of the SoCal AILA Chapter New Member Division and the Los Angeles Managing Attorney of the H.E.L.P. program. [E-mail Diana](#) for any H.E.L.P. questions.

A New Resource from AILA for Chapter Pro Bono Programs

AILA recently released a new resource, the [AILA Chapter Pro Bono Manual: A Guide for Developing and Sustaining Effective Pro Bono Programs](#). The Manual, developed by the AILA National Pro Bono Services Committee, presents guidelines, ideas and suggestions for organizing Chapter pro bono programs.

It includes suggestions for generating greater chapter commitment to pro bono service, for developing an annual agenda of pro bono activities responsive to local community needs, for effectively communicating the chapter's pro bono goals and accomplishments to chapter members and for institutionalizing chapter pro bono programs. "We hope the Manual will help our Chapters create and sustain a professional culture that values pro bono service," said Ken Mayeaux, a member of the National Pro Bono Services Committee involved in the manual's development.

DOWNLOAD NOW!

**Stop
Notario
Fraud!**
stopnotariofraud.org

SPREAD THE WORD: In response to the proliferation of immigration scams (notario fraud and the unauthorized practice of immigration law) across the nation, in 2009 AILA launched its stand-alone consumer protection website: www.stopnotariofraud.org. Aimed at providing useful facts, up-to-date news, and comprehensive resources for both consumers/victims and licensed attorneys, this site has proven an invaluable source of information. The website is also available in Spanish (www.parefraudenotarial.org), with plans for translation into additional languages in the upcoming year. We invite you to use the badges to link to it from your practice's website, as well as for an addition to your e-mail signature block. You can [download the badges on InfoNet](#). Help spread the word and keep fighting against fraudulent immigration consultants in your part of the world.

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AILA Training Addresses Children at Immigration Crossroads

By **Madhu N. Sharma**

In response to an overwhelming need to educate practitioners serving unaccompanied minor children, the [Southern California Chapter of AILA](#) (SoCal AILA) with the help and support of local nonprofit advocates at [Kids in Need of Defense \(KIND\)](#), [Public Counsel](#), and the [Immigration Center for Women and Children \(ICWC\)](#), conducted a CLE training on January 22, 2012, to teach private practitioners about the underused benefit of Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS). The training was coordinated by KIND and SoCal AILA's pro bono liaisons at the request of three immigration judges at the Los Angeles Immigration Court who serve the juvenile docket. Its purpose was to increase detection and effective representation for unrepresented children in removal proceedings.

The Los Angeles Immigration Court is one of few jurisdictions in the nation that has a separate juvenile docket. The three participating judges are especially knowledgeable and able to recognize legal and practical issues affecting unrepresented children. The juvenile docket judges saw the need to properly screen children in removal proceedings for SIJS eligibility. They were concerned that children who were unrepresented by counsel, or who were represented by members of the private bar, seemed unfamiliar with SIJS benefits and issues. Their concerns are confirmed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, [Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2010](#), March of 2011, which reports only 1,492 children gained permanent residency through SIJS in 2010. Despite the concern that SIJS

opens a floodgate for migrant children to gain benefits, the number of children reportedly gaining residency through SIJS is incredibly low as compared to the number of unaccompanied minor children in removal proceedings throughout the country. This is caused in large part by the fact that many children go undetected.

Los Angeles County has many programs designed to recognize and screen for SIJS eligibility. Its major metropolitan legal and social services communities have spearheaded SIJS reform. Because so many children are undocumented in Los Angeles, advocates have been innovative and responsive in detecting SIJS eligibility. The detection system includes the [Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services \(DCFS\)](#), Public Counsel, KIND, ICWC, [Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project](#), and [Southwestern Law School](#), all of which are staffed with attorneys who have expertise in SIJS law. Still, their coordinated efforts leave children undetected because many either do not meet their criteria for service or fail to find their way into the system.

AILA's SoCal Chapter Pro Bono Network is committed to do its part in detecting children who are SIJS eligible. The Network conducts intakes on a weekly basis in the pro bono room at the immigration court and seeks to place unrepresented SIJS eligible children with pro bono counsel.

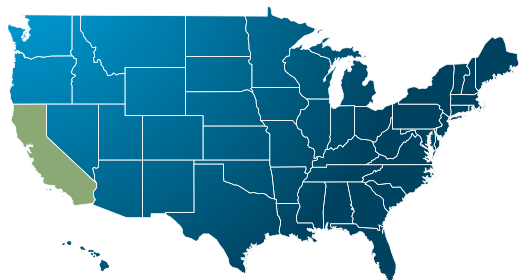
If you wish to **LEARN MORE ABOUT SIJS** or represent a SIJS eligible child in removal proceedings please [contact Ms. Madhu N. Sharma](#), Stone & Grzegorek LLP

AILA SoCal's recent SIJS training, titled "Children at an Immigration Crossroads," provided AILA attorneys with basic training and resources needed to understand SIJS and detect a child's eligibility for relief. Approximately 50 immigration and family law attorneys attended the training. Presenters included a panel of advocates from KIND, Public Counsel, ICWC, and an international adoptions expert. The training sought to inspire attorneys to undertake pro bono representation of children in removal proceedings. In addition the training provided a forum for attorneys to learn SIJS basics, gain access to training resources and materials, and network with key advocates and nonprofits in the field. The collaboration of Los Angeles-based immigration judges, nonprofit advocates, and the private bar signifies a small step toward improving SIJS detection and representation for children in removal proceedings.

Madhu N. Sharma is an attorney at Stone & Grzegorek LLP in Los Angeles, California and serves as a pro bono co-liaison for the SoCal chapter of AILA.



CHAPTER HAPPENINGS: SAN DIEGO



AILA San Diego Builds a Future for Habitat

The AILA San Diego Chapter volunteered last spring 2011 in a novel skills project for which law school training does not prepare us. Our Pro Bono Committee decided to start a new spring tradition by exchanging our laptops, pens, paper, briefs and motions for hammers, circular saws, nails, and drills. Early one Saturday, 10 AILA attorneys met up at a [Habitat for Humanity](#) building project in a predominantly immigrant neighborhood. Our task was to work with contractors and builders to help rebuild destroyed houses and other buildings.

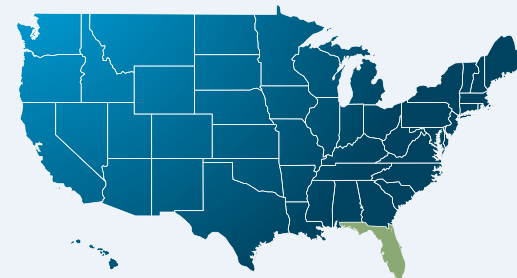
After a long day of manual labor, we had erected walls on a second story building and elevated a roof of a second building. This successful construction effort led to Habitat asking us to take part in another construction job this spring, 2012. We hope that this event becomes an annual opportunity for our members. The Habitat project created respect for AILA attorneys who then helped many contractors, laborers, and other workers obtain immigration status.

In addition to our work with Habitat, chapter members volunteer as mentors, pro bono representatives, board members, and trainers. We collaborate with local nonprofit organizations including [ABA Immigration Justice Project \(ABAIJP\)](#), [Jewish Family Service of San Diego \(JFSSD\)](#), [San Diego Volunteer Lawyers Program \(SDVLP\)](#), [Casa Cornelia Law Center \(CCLC\)](#), [Legal Aid Society of San Diego \(LASSD\)](#), and [San Diego Naturalization Collaborative \(SDNC\)](#). Our most recent collaboration was a joint effort with ABAIJP, JFSSD, [International Rescue Committee](#), and [Catholic Charities of San Diego](#) to present a “Know Your Rights” talk to a growing population of Haitian immigrants.



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CHAPTER HAPPENINGS: JACKSONVILLE



AILA Jacksonville Partners with Florida Law School

For the past four years, the [Immigrants Rights Clinic](#) (IRC) at Florida Coastal School of Law (FCSL) under Professor Ericka Curran planned and ran Citizenship Day in Jacksonville. As the event became larger and larger each year, the IRC was unable to provide the necessary support for the event, although IRC remains as supportive as its resources allow.

To respond to the tremendous growth and popularity of Citizenship Day, Professor Curran came up with the excellent idea of a skills lab class at FCSL to teach students about Citizenship/Naturalization, provide them with the experience of screening applicants, and introduce them to major event planning. Professor Curran recommended Kara Roberts, an immigration attorney for Jacksonville area [Legal Aid's Refugee Immigration Project](#), to teach the Naturalization Skills Lab. The course was immediately successful, and now for the first time, the law school is offering a two-credit class. The course will focus exclusively on Citizenship/Naturalization, with emphasis on planning and running AILA's Citizenship Day in Jacksonville. Six students are enrolled in the class, and the class will require much more work than the required hours suggest. Nevertheless, the students are dedicated and motivated. This program illustrates just one of the creative solutions ensuring that dedicated people will coordinate important events like Citizenship Day. At the same time, the course creates an ongoing, consistent method for planning Citizenship Day in any area with access to a local law school. **Jacksonville's Citizenship Day will be held on Saturday, April 14, 2012.**

Mark Your Calendars: Upcoming Pro Bono



Leap Into Action With Natz

Gear up for Year Six! [AILA Citizenship Day](#) is right around the corner.

During the month of April, AILA chapters across the country will once again partner with community organizations and stakeholders to host citizenship workshops throughout the nation.

As a single-day, nationwide event, AILA Citizenship Day provides free or low-cost assistance to eligible legal permanent residents who wish to apply for U.S. citizenship.

Each workshop will need attorney & non-attorney volunteers, and local community support. Get involved! Contact your chapter's [Citizenship Day Coordinator](#) today!

Turn Up the Heat in Nashville

Share the spirit of volunteerism as AILA members come together in Nashville for the Second Annual AILA Pro Bono Clinic.

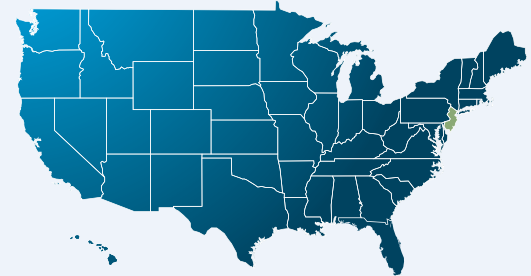
Enjoy the collegial atmosphere—learn from your fellow members while giving back to the local community AILA “adopts” during Annual Conference.

Spend quality time temporarily expanding the wonderful pro bono services that Justice for Our Neighbors of Tennessee and others provide, bringing expertise that only AILA members can offer.

Last year's inaugural event in San Diego was a great success. Be a part of the pro bono action in 2012! For more information, send an email to probono@aila.org.



CHAPTER HAPPENINGS: NEW JERSEY



The New Jersey AILA Chapter has partnered with [Kids in Need of Defense \(KIND\)](#) to offer pro bono representation to unaccompanied immigrant children facing removal. To date, chapter members have accepted 28 cases. Many of the child clients are eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) because of histories of abuse, abandonment, or neglect. In these cases, members usually provide representation in family court proceedings to ensure the child has a legal custodian before moving forward with the immigration component of the case. SIJS requires that the family court judge makes findings that reunification with one or both parents is not viable on account of abuse, abandonment, or neglect, and that it is not in the child's best interests to return to his or her home country.

AILA members Elsy Segovia, Rafael Figueroa, and Asma Warsi Chaudry have obtained the necessary predicate findings in family court, submitted their clients' SIJ petitions, and succeeded in terminating removal proceedings. The children now await a decision on their SIJS and adjustment applications from USCIS. Attorney Elizabeth Trinidad won approval of her client's SIJ petition after favorable family court adjudication, and Marguerite Marty's SIJ client happily received his residency card as a result of her efforts. Chapter member Lauren Anselowitz has risen to the challenge of accepting cases of unaccompanied children detained in federal custody. This effort is commendable as it ensures legal representation to this particularly vulnerable group of children.

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