



Spring, 2007

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The Michigan State Bar Foundation provides leadership and grants to improve access for all to the justice system, including support for civil legal aid to the poor, law-related education, and conflict resolution.

Making a Difference

Programs accomplish more together.

Collaboration maximizes scarce resources, promotes long-term relationships between organizations, and reduces duplication of services. Michigan civil legal aid providers have a long history of working with other community partners. Below are a few examples which received funding from the Foundation.

Lakeshore Legal Aid (LLA) and Safe Horizons (a domestic violence shelter) spearheaded an effort to increase advocacy for non-offending parents in domestic violence situations. They partnered with the Michigan Poverty Law Program, the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, and the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board to train advocates to attend Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings where Child Protective Services reviews child placement options. The special advocates provided education about the dynamics of domestic violence and assistance available for

the family. They then used their experience from TDM meetings to work with government agencies toward improved policies, such as allowing attorneys to attend TDM meetings and assuring interpreters for parents with limited English proficiency, and to give input on statewide TDM meeting protocols. Families will continue to benefit from these results, like the mother who fled from her abusive husband with her children. At her TDM meeting, a trained advocate provided information about domestic abuse and identified help available to keep the family safely together. LLA and Safe Horizons

helped the mother get a Personal Protection Order, start divorce proceedings and obtain a custody order with supervised parenting time for the father, as well as obtained benefits to help the mother and children establish a secure home environment.

The **Center for Civil Justice (CCJ)** works with schools, homelessness organizations, courts, local agencies, and parents to provide education and legal assistance concerning the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The Act seeks to improve educational outcomes and stability for homeless children by requiring services, supplies, and transportation to/ and from a homeless child's original "home" school to be provided for the entire school year. CCJ collaborated with courts to include information about the Act with eviction notices and also works closely with Legal Aid of Eastern Michigan legal clinics to give out information to families threatened with losing their homes. The *One Year One School* project has helped more than 20 children stay in



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their "home" school, avoiding disruption that could interfere with their education. CCJ also convened trainings and roundtables of school districts and community organizations to improve how the community deals with homelessness. One positive result has been the local transportation authority appointing a staff person to work with school districts and homelessness advocates to expedite transportation arrangements for homeless students to their "home" school as required by the law. This has greatly reduced the time it takes to set up such arrangements.

MSBF Awards Administration of Justice Grants

AOJ grants total over \$2 million since 1998.

Administration of Justice (AOJ) project grants promote the administration of justice through law-related education, peaceful conflict resolution, or the delivery of civil legal services to low-income families in Michigan. The Foundation has recently awarded AOJ grants to:

Children's Charter of the Courts of Michigan – to implement a pilot project helping families in facilitated decision-making resolve selected juvenile delinquency cases without formal court intervention.

Community Legal Resources – to develop legal information and educational sessions for pro bono attorneys and community organizations to assist them with legal issues related to operating nonprofit youth programs.

Free Legal Aid Clinic – to update technology to enhance legal research, client communication and legal services by supervised law students assisting low-income clients with family law matters.

Henry Ford Museum – to provide student guides and teacher workshops related to the "With Liberty and Justice for All" Exhibit to help school children explore law-related concepts.

Lakeshore Legal Aid – to support civil legal services following the closure of another local agency and promote strategic and fund development planning with an emphasis on the Counsel and Advocacy Law Line.

Legal Aid and Defender Assn. of Detroit (LAD) – to provide technology to help LAD's Legal Aid for Children office at the Children's Hospital of Michigan obtain real time access to client information and legal resources.

Legal Services Computer Committee – to configure the statewide PIKA case management system to track and manage pro bono cases and lawyers and to support other statewide technology needs.

Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service – to support statewide training to juvenile

justice professionals about special education and mental health legal issues affecting parents and youth.

MSBF/Program and Planning Fund – to support grantee needs in training, organizational capacity building, legal education, conflict resolution, and state planning.

Michigan Supreme Court - SCAO/Office of Dispute Resolution – to develop training to increase the number of qualified domestic relation mediators available for low-income family law cases.

Midwest Center on Law and the Deaf – to create a video in American Sign Language about the legal system and individual rights and responsibilities to be made available to courts and posted on the Internet.

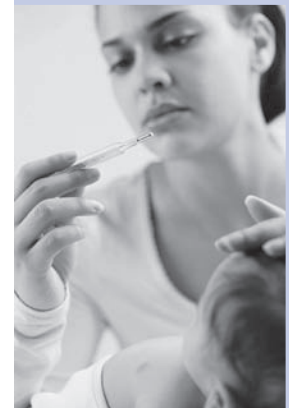
Schoolcraft College Foundation – to produce a training video helping first responders (police, fire, and emergency medical technicians) recognize child abuse, assess a child's welfare, and identify referral resources.

State Bar of Michigan/ Custodial Interrogation Task Force - to conduct a pilot project to research the use and benefits of video recordings in custodial interrogations and assess its effectiveness and feasibility.

University of Detroit Mercy School of Law – to educate juvenile justice professionals, attorneys and child advocates about legal relief passed by Congress to help abandoned, abused or orphaned immigrant children.

University of Michigan Law School Pediatric Advocacy Initiative (PAI) - to expand services and to educate medical personnel about legal issues that may be barriers to the health of foster children.

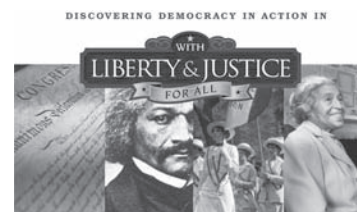
Washtenaw County/Eastern Michigan University Legal Resource Center – to support technology to allow additional court-based assistance in pro se matters by lawyer-supervised students.



The U of M Law School PAI program and LAD's Legal Aid for Children office provide education and advocacy to identify and resolve legal issues that are barriers to children's health.*



The statewide Legal Services Computer Committee supports case management and other technology to help legal aid programs operate efficiently.*



Student study guides teach about the rule of law and core democratic principles using the Henry Ford Museum's "With Liberty and Justice for All" exhibit.

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Casa Richard Academy receives ABA Award.



Left to Right: Janet Welch (SBM), Candace Crowley (SBM), Kim Cahill (SBM), Ron Keefe (SBM), Arielle Ramirez (student-CRA), Linda Rexer (MSBF), Rolando Benitez (student-CRA), W. Anthony Jenkins (SBM), and Timothy Constant (teacher-CRA).

Of Special Interest

Detroit alternative high school receives ABA Law Day Award.

Casa Richard Academy received an American Bar Association (ABA) award at an ABA meeting in February, 2007. Financial support for travel costs was provided by the Foundation, the State Bar of Michigan (SBM) and pro bono lawyer Marjorie B. Cohen.

Only five ABA Outstanding Law Day Activity Awards were given nationwide to organizations which found creative ways in 2006 to illustrate

the importance of the rule of law. As the ABA noted, "Casa Richard Academy students, under the guidance of teacher Tim Constant, compared and contrasted the U.S. Constitution with the temporary constitution of Iraq and sent recommendations to the government of Iraq about how to improve and strengthen the language in their constitution regarding separate branches of government to balance powers. The students received responses back from the Vice President's office, from Senators and Representatives, and from other U.S. government officials."

Bringing People and Resources Together

I-CAN! E-filing project helps low-income workers.

written at a 5th grade literacy level, I-CAN E-file is available in English and Spanish.

Many low-income employees are eligible for a federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). For the past 4 years, the Michigan Poverty Law Program (MPLP) has been working on a project to help more low-income workers claim the EITC. The EITC can be a significant help to low-income Michigan households. The money received can help with costs for job transportation, rent, medical expenses or other critical needs.

In 2002, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) estimated that approximately 1.46 million EITC-eligible Michigan workers left over \$400 million EITC refunds unclaimed. At the close of the 2006 tax season 2,316 returns had been filed for low-income Michigan workers using I-CAN, garnering over \$2.5 million for those in need.

The project is called I-CAN E-file, and it uses web based software that helps low-income workers complete their taxes and claim the EITC for free. Developed by the Legal Aid Society of Orange County, California, and

MPLP receives funding from the Foundation for these and other services. Recently, MPLP also received a grant from the Michigan Department of Human Services to work with the Michigan League for Human Services and Michigan State University to lead and support another EITC coalition next year.

For 2006, over \$2.5 million in federal earned income tax credits were obtained for Michigan low-income workers using the I-CAN! E-file system through assistance from MPLP and others.*



YOU... Are Our Foundation

State Bar honors Foundation Fellows with 50 years in the legal profession.

Each year the State Bar of Michigan holds a special celebration to honor attorneys who have been licensed to practice law for over 50 years. In 2007, fifteen Foundation Fellows are among those being honored. MSBF congratulates the following Michigan State Bar Foundation Life Fellows who have given so much to the legal profession.

Y. Gladys Barsamian, Plymouth; William R. Brashear, Livonia; Shirley J. Burgoyne, Ann Arbor; David L. Denn, West Bloomfield; Lee B. Durham, Jr., Greensboro, Georgia; Rodger T. Ederer, Okemos; John H. Fildew, Detroit; B.J. Humphreys, Saginaw; James J. Kobza, Muskegon; Hon. Claudia Morcom, Detroit; Eugene D. Mossner, Saginaw; Charles R. Rutherford, Bloomfield Hills; James A. Timmer, East Lansing; Robert J. Van Leuven, North Muskegon; and Charles T. Zimmerman, Grand Rapids.



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Funding and Leadership for Justice



Lynn K. Richardson, CCE President (L) and Linda J. Start, CCE E.D. (R), present MSBF E.D. Linda K. Rexer with the 2006 Mary S. Coleman Award.



Photo Courtesy of State Bar of Michigan

Thomas W. Cranmer is elected MSBF Trustee.

Thomas W. Cranmer, a principal at Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, has joined the MSBF Board of Trustees. Mr. Cranmer is past president of the State Bar of Michigan, the Oakland County Bar Foundation and the Eastern District of Michigan Federal Bar Association. Involved in many state and national organizations, Mr. Cranmer is a charter Fellow and a current Trustee of the Oakland County Bar Foundation, a Life Patron Fellow of the Michigan State Bar Foundation, and of the American College of Trial Attorneys, and a member of the International Academy of Trial Attorneys, International Society of Barristers, the American Bar Association, and an associate of the American Board of Trial Advocates. He has also been an instructor of trial advocacy at the National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA), as well as the Institute of Continuing Legal Education (ICLE) in Ann Arbor, The Rutter Group, and Thomas M. Cooley Law School.

MSBF receives Mary S. Coleman Award.

At the 22nd annual Law and Civic Education Conference, the Michigan Center for Civic Education (CCE) presented MSBF with the 2006 Mary S. Coleman Award. The award was established over 20 years ago in honor of Justice Mary S. Coleman who was Michigan's first woman Supreme Court Justice and who was instrumental in establishing CCE. The award acknowledges MSBF's leadership and funding for law-related education. During the award presentation, MSBF Executive Director Linda Rexer noted that the Foundation's assistance to CCE goes beyond grant funding to encompass a long partnership in developing and facilitating law-related education throughout Michigan.

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