



The Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County

Pro Bono Publico September 2019

When you work on a case as a pro bono you share your legal expertise with people who have an urgent legal need and who cannot possibly afford a market rate attorney. You make our community a better place.

Read about the recent experiences of your peers and click [here](#) to visit our website to learn more about our Pro Bono opportunities or contact Janet Seldon, *Director of Pro Bono* at jbseldon@legalaidsmc.org or (650) 517-8912

Helping Some of the Most Vulnerable Persons in Our Community



When a severely developmentally disabled child turns 18, the child retains all the legal rights of an adult even though he or she is cognitively unable to exercise those rights. Families who have made decisions on behalf of their child before, need to obtain a conservatorship in order to continue to make determinations about issues such as where the child will live or what medical treatment they will receive.

Michael Joshi, an associate at Dechert accepted his first ever conservatorship matter. Michael's client was seeking to be appointed as the conservator for her sister, an adult with Down syndrome who is unable to make medical and other decisions and needs assistance with most aspects of daily life. Michael recalls "It was a joy to watch the two of them interact and see how much our client cared for her sister. I'm very glad we were able to help them through this process and provide assistance they otherwise may not have had. They were very pleased with the result and tremendously appreciative."

Michael noted the excellent training materials and support he received. "I found the resources and training materials provided by Legal Aid to be incredibly useful and make it possible for someone with no prior experience with this type of work to handle everything. The timing of the conservatorship petition process was also quite flexible, which made it easy to fit in with my other matters. Janet and Ruby at Legal Aid were also very helpful, and it was great to work with them. I look forward to working with Legal Aid again in the future."



Meera Balat, an associate at Aaron, Roehert, Carpoll & Riffle feels that the opportunity to serve her clients was a gift." I was afforded the advantage of a small glimpse into the sacrifice a mother and brother provide to their daughter/sister on a daily basis, as well as their personal struggles. It was truly a gift to hear about how much the conservatee has grown through the course of the conservatorship and, ultimately, to meet this bright, happy young woman who takes such

joy in her family.

Legal Aid provided me with a tremendous amount of support through this case. My clients are Spanish speakers, and since I did not speak Spanish, Legal Aid assigned a translator to my case. Ruby scheduled every appointment, came to every meeting to translate, helped my clients fill out paperwork they had questions on, and contacted my client to ask questions I had.

Additionally, Legal Aid helped answer any questions I had regarding the court documents. I could not have done this without the help of Legal Aid and the support they provided. I am grateful This experience reminds me how we, as attorneys, touch the lives of our clients and can impact them so directly and positively. to have been able to participate and to gain such insight and guidance through this referral.



Tom Feledy is one of our consistent "go to" pro bono attorneys when it comes to Limited Conservatorship cases. This was his interest when he first came to us as a volunteer after retiring from the SF police department. Tom's enthusiasm has included taking 10 limited conservatorship cases and he has also been instrumental in updating our Limited Conservatorship Training Manual.

In one of Tom's recent cases, the family came to Legal Aid as their child was about to turn 18 and his medical provider told them that without a legal conservatorship, they would not be able to make medical decisions for

him. Their child is in Special Education, is verbal but cannot be without assistance in most of his activities of daily living and cannot make his own medical decisions.

Legal Aid's, Director of Pro Bono, Janet Seldon was able to connect this family with Tom, who represented them throughout the legal process. At the court there were smile all around when the final Letters of Conservatorship were granted to Tom's clients.

Pro Bono Training: Helping Families Obtain Conservatorships During National Pro Bono Week!

When: Thursday, October 24th at Noon

Where: Morrison & Foerster, 755 Page Mill Road, Palo Alto

CLE Credit: 1.5 Hours

Please join us for a training by our expert in the field for the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo's Pro Bono Conservatorship Project.

When a severely developmentally disabled child turns 18, the child retains all the legal rights of an adult even though he or she is cognitively unable to exercise those rights.

This Project will assist families with obtaining a limited conservatorship when their child turns 18 in order to make important decisions for their disabled child, including fundamental decisions such as where the child will live or what medical treatment they will receive.

For those of you who have taken guardianship cases over the years, the Judicial Council forms will be familiar and the cases are also heard at a short hearing in the Superior Court in Redwood City in the Probate Department.

The time-commitment for these cases is typically 25-30 hours. Some of the clients will be Spanish speaking and we have a translator who can work with your attorneys!

Email Janet Seldon at jbseldon@legalaidsmc.org to register



Corporate attorneys can participate in pro bono cases. Want to become a pro bono volunteer like the team at Gilead? Sign up online today at www.legalaidsmc.org/pro-bono-programs/ today! Questions? Contact Janet Seldon, Director of Pro Bono at jbseldon@legalaidsmc.org or (650) 517-8912.

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OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

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