PRO BONO
IMPACT

EVERY VOICE COUNTS!

Jessica Daye, NYLPI Disability Rights Advocate, speaks at the Every Voice Counts! press conference

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest fights for all parents to have full access to information regarding their children's educations. This spring, NYLPI launched our newest campaign "Every Voice Counts/Cada Voz Cuenta!" to challenge the New York City Department of Education's (DOE's) discrimination against tens of thousands of limited English proficient (LEP) parents whose children receive special education services. The DOE has repeatedly failed to provide legally mandated interpreters and translated documents to these tens of thousands of LEP parents, which prevents them from playing a meaningful role in their children's education. Without translation services, parents are unable to understand important special education-related documents, including meeting notices, evaluations, and administrative hearing orders. In the absence of interpreters, LEP parents are isolated and humiliated, unable to ask critical questions, and racked with doubts about whether their children are succeeding in school.

In June, NYLPI held a joint press conference with Advocates for Children to announce the filing of a U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) complaint against the DOE for failing to provide language services. The complaint was filed on behalf of nineteen families, who are speakers of Cantonese, Mandarin, Khmer, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. These families, as well as dozens of other affected LEP parents, came out in full force to support the demonstration on a very hot June day.

Parents spoke of the challenges they have faced and the impact this discrimination has had on their ability to secure appropriate educational services for their kids. In the coming months, we will work with the OCR to demand that the DOE end its discriminatory practices against LEP parents of children with disabilities.

NYLPI FIGHTS FOR THE SOUTH BRONX

NYLPI, along with co-counsel **Schindler Cohen & Hochman LLP**, is representing South Bronx Unite, a coalition of local residents and community organizations formed in response to the proposed New York City and State subsidized relocation of Fresh Direct, the online grocer, from Long Island City, Queens to the Harlem River Yard in the South Bronx. With its truck intensive business, Fresh Direct would introduce 3000 daily vehicle trips to the already overburdened community of the South Bronx, where residents suffer from asthma at a rate eight times the national average. In a totally undemocratic process that excluded the local community from the decision-making process, the City and State announced the proposed $130 million subsidies package prior to holding public hearings on the project. Moreover, based on a highly inadequate environmental assessment, the City and Fresh Direct declined to conduct a full environmental review of the project in violation of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The case, filed with Bronx County Supreme Court, seeks to compel the City and Fresh Direct to prepare a full environmental review of the proposed project as required by SEQRA.

NYLPI IN THE NEWS

NY 1 NEWS

Bronx Residents File Suit Against Fresh Direct Move

Milestone Hearing in Segregated Care Campaign

Community members attend a public hearing before the New York State Assembly Health Committee

Over the last several months, NYLPI has sought multiple opportunities to raise awareness and gain support for our segregated care bill. The bill prohibits hospitals from engaging in discriminatory insurance-based steering practices and calls for a unified system of care in which all patients receive the same high quality of care regardless of their insurance status. Our efforts culminated in early May in a public hearing before the New York State Assembly Health Committee, chaired by Assembly Member Richard Gottfried. The hearing represented a milestone in our advocacy efforts, bringing together over 60 supporters, including community members, health advocates and providers. Several members of Bronx Health REACH, our community partner, and NYLPI staff members provided compelling testimony articulating the need for the bill and the impact of discriminatory steering on health disparities and outcomes. Our Assembly sponsor for the bill, Nelson Castro, who is a member of the Assembly Health Committee, participated in the hearing, and staff members of Senator Gustavo Rivera, our Senate sponsor, attended. The hearing came on the heels of our other efforts to raise the profile of this issue, including participating in health access presentations before New York State legislators in Albany, appearing on local media outlets, and holding a town hall meeting, which brought together over 100 community members from the Bronx to address health disparities. Following the hearing, we have continued to build our coalition around this issue and look forward to increasing momentum for the campaign.

The Michael Rothenberg Memorial Golf Outing

NYLPI held its tenth annual golf outing in July at Bethpage State Park. This outing was conceived by Michael Rothenberg, our beloved executive director, to bring together avid golfers from New York City's legal community for a day of golf and to support the work of NYLPI. We have renamed it the Michael Rothenberg Memorial Golf Outing in celebration of Michael's vision and passion for bringing people together. Over 150 dedicated golfers participated on the Red Course with 20 golfers challenging the famed Black Course, home to the US Open in 2002 and 2009. The event raised over $100,000 to support NYLPI's critical work. NYLPI sincerely thanks all of this year's participants and supporters.

The winning foursome: John Gaffney of **Bank of America Merrill Lynch**, Jeffrey Chapman and Michael Simes of **McGuireWoods LLP** and Keith Berger of **Goldman Sachs & Co**.

The Pro Bono Clearinghouse Proudly Announces a New Initiative for Startups!

In an effort to better serve small and startup nonprofits, the Clearinghouse has introduced *So You're Thinking of Forming A Nonprofit Organization?* and *So You're Considering Fiscal Sponsorship?*, two guides to help clients navigate the complicated legal and practical implications of starting a nonprofit organization. Please visit our website to view the manuals and to learn more. In a further effort to expand our services and to help build the nonprofits we serve, the Clearinghouse is working with partners Community Resource Exchange and The Foundation Center to host workshops on the legal issues affecting nonprofits. Course topics range from legal issues for new nonprofits to partnership agreements and employment issues. Join us soon!

A profound thank you to the following volunteers and teachers:

Jennifer Franklin, Lisa Freeman and Drew Rabe of **Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP**
Tiffani Brown and Sabrina Conyers of **Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP**
Stephen Besen and John Marzulli of **Shearman & Sterling LLP**
Eric Raphan of **Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP**
Anita Pelletier of **Nixon Peabody LLP**
Laura E. Butzel and Jean Tom of **Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP**
Carolina DeSouza Andrade Santos

A SUMMER OF PRO BONO

NYLPI Kicks Off Visiting Summer Associates Program

For over twenty years, NYLPI has coordinated its Visiting Summer Associates Program, which places summer associates from our member firms at public interest law offices in New York for two-week externships. This program provides summer associates with an invaluable experience as they assist public interest organizations with a large range of legal needs and discover the rewards of pro bono services. This summer, 12 law firms sent 44 summer associates to 23 public interest law offices.

Our hope is that the externship program will serve as a foundation for a lifetime commitment to pro bono work. NYLPI thanks our member firms, the public interest legal organizations, and the summer associates for supporting the program and contributing to its success. A special thank you to **Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP** for hosting a warm reception to kick off the program.

Summer associates with their host, Lauren Axelrod of the Office of the General Counsel of New York City Council and Jessica Lauredan of NYLPI

Highlights from Pro Bono Matters

Chocolate Chip Chamber Music introduces young children and families in Brooklyn to the wonder and beauty of live ensemble music through interactive concerts. **White & Case LLP** is assisting the organization in drafting MOUs.

The Vera Institute of Justice combines expertise in research, demonstration projects, and technical assistance to help leaders in government and civil society improve the systems people rely on for justice and safety. **Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP** is assisting Vera with a lease negotiation.

Move for Hunger is a nonprofit that has developed a network of moving companies that have agreed to take donations of nonperishable food items from moving clients to facilitate the donations to food pantries. **American International Group, Inc.** is helping the group explore intellectual property issues.

Men Having Babies is a peer support network for gay surrogacy fathers and prospective parents that offers conferences, workshops, educational and practical information, networking opportunities and financial assistance to gay couples seeking to become biological parents. **Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy LLP** is assisting them with incorporating and obtaining tax-exempt status.

Washington Heights Corner Project's mission is to significantly decrease behaviors among drug users that put them at the highest risk for HIV and hepatitis transmission. ***SNR Denton*** *is assisting them in a dispute with a contractor.*

The Coney-Brighton Boardwalk Alliance is a coalition of community residents and organizations that is working to preserve the historic Coney Island Boardwalk. **Goodwin Procter LLP** is assisting the coalition in its efforts to save the boardwalk.

Model Partnerships

nomi NETWORK

"Harold and Henry have been exceedingly kind and generous with their support and services. We now run all of our legal issues by them and they are always ready to help. We now call Harold and Henry our family. We have the best!"

—Lisa Kim, Nomi Network

Nomi Network is a New York City based nonprofit organization that seeks to increase the financial independence of women who are vulnerable to sex trafficking by leveraging the fashion industry to create employment and career development opportunities. Nomi Network came to NYLPI in 2010, and we connected the organization with Harold Nathan and Henry Lee Mann of **Schiff Hardin LLP**. Harold and Henry helped Nomi Network in drafting a contract and have continued to help the fledgling group with their legal needs. Over the past two years, the attorneys have helped with numerous contracts, trademark issues, bylaws, and with their board policy, sometimes drawing from Schiff attorneys in other practice areas and even from offices outside of New York.

Henry Lee Mann of Schiff Hardin says that the relationship has been mutually beneficial. "Lisa and Diana [Mao, Nomi Co-founder] are such driven and passionate people. They inspire me because I believe they are working towards something that is truly great."

A very special thank you to the following attorneys who have volunteered their time and efforts through the NYLPI Pro Bono Clearinghouse in the last three months. We appreciate your hard work on behalf of nonprofits.

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
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Profound Thanks to Shelley J. Dropkin, Outgoing Board Chair

Christopher K. Tahbaz, NYLPI Board Member, **Debevoise & Plimpton LLP** and Shelley J. Dropkin, former Board Chair, **Citigroup Inc.**

We would like to thank Shelley J. Dropkin, Deputy Corporate Secretary and General Counsel at **Citigroup Inc.**, for her work as NYLPI's Board Chair, a position she held from 2010 through 2012. We would especially like to recognize her efforts over the last six months in skillfully guiding the organization through the unexpected and devastating loss of our beloved executive director, Michael Rothenberg. Shelley has gone far above and beyond the call of duty in numerous respects, most recently by representing NYLPI on Chief Judge Lippman's Task Force to Expand Access to Civil Legal Services in New York. Her committed leadership and steady presence helped staff and board members cope with our grief and move forward with renewed resolve to advocate for New York's underserved. We are confident that our new Chair, Hector Gonzalez of **Dechert LLP**, will continue this extraordinary standard of leadership, and we enthusiastically welcome him.

What they say about Shelley…

"Shelley's love for NYLPI's mission and staff, her deft and clear judgment, and her bedrock determination have been utterly essential to us. Shelley, we can never thank you enough."

—Miranda Massie, Interim Executive Director

"I speak for the Board when I say that everyone on it stands in awe of Shelley, and keeps her as an example to look to should we ever find ourselves challenged in such profound ways. Thank you Shelley for your loyalty, for your unrivaled leadership, and for your deep and unshakable commitment to NYLPI and the public good."

***—Edward F. Maluf, NYLPI Board Member,* Bingham McCutchen LLP**

NYLPI welcomes Cheryl-Lyn Bentley, the Bingham McCutchen Education Fellow. Cheryl-Lyn is a graduate of Yale Law School and holds a Master's degree in Education, making her a great fit for our Education Program. We thank **Bingham McCutchen LLP** for making this opportunity possible.

NYLPI welcomes the following new board members:

Michael H. Barr, SNR Denton
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Paula Garrett Lin, Mayer Brown LLP
Philip D. Robben, Kelley Drye & Warren LLP
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Miranda Massie, Interim Executive Director

Alyssa Aguilera, Community Organizer, Health Justice
Jennifer Barrow, Staff Attorney, Disability Justice
Cheryl-Lyn Bentley, Bingham Fellow/Staff Attorney, Disability Justice
Marnie Berk, Director, Pro Bono Programs
Jessica Daye, Disability Rights Advocate, Education
John Dumey, Development Associate
Shena Elrington, Director, Health Justice
Keren Farkas, Staff Attorney, Disability Justice
Mindy Friedman, Equal Justice Works Fellow/Staff Attorney, Disability Justice
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Katherine Terenzi, Taconic Policy Fellow
Jenny Veloz, Program Assistant, Disability Justice

PRO BONO MATTERS / Fall 2012

Editor: Heidi Kim

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Shena Elrington, David Hofmayer, Jessica Lauredan, Katy Naples-Mitchell

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If you work for a nonprofit or community-based group working with underserved people and your organization needs legal assistance, please contact Heidi Kim at 212-244-4664.

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