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Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation

Legal Aid Link

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A Dedicated Advocate

The Massachusetts legal services community lost a great advocate and friend this month with the sudden passing of **Deborah Marchand**. Deb worked as a staff attorney at Western Massachusetts Legal Services for many years practicing both family/domestic violence and elder law, and for the last few years was the managing attorney for Berkshire County.



Deb grew up in Medway, Massachusetts, and attended Framingham State College. She spent time at Oxford University, University of Wisconsin at Madison, and the University of Adelaide in Sydney, Australia. After graduating from the University of Oklahoma School of Law, Deb served as Assistant District Attorney for the state of Oklahoma for several years. She then returned to Massachusetts and took a position with WMLS as a staff attorney in the domestic violence/family law unit, and later became managing attorney for the Berkshire County office.

She cared deeply about her community and served on many civic boards and crisis intervention groups. She was a speaker for these groups on child abuse, domestic violence and women's rights. In recent years, she concentrated on the rights of the elderly in the greater Pittsfield area.

WMLS Associate Director Jon Lees says, "Deb's passion for helping others - whether it was her clients, her colleagues or her family - was truly the driving force in her life. While we will miss her counsel and friendship greatly, we have all been enriched by knowing her, and we will carry on her spirit of giving in our lives and work."

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Equal Justice Coalition

FY11 Budget Campaign

The [Equal Justice Coalition](#) is planning for what is sure to be a challenging FY11 budget campaign. EJC legislative committee meetings will start again in September, and soon planning for the 11th Annual Walk to the Hill will begin! We will keep you all posted with any developments in the coming months.

Diversity Coalition News

Four Generations in the Workplace

Joyce Allen-Beckford, director of the Diversity Coalition, has been busy visiting legal aid programs to facilitate a workshop called **Four Generations in the Workplace**. The purpose of the workshop is three-fold: to increase understanding of generational differences; to raise awareness about our own age-based norms and values; and to develop strategies to create constructive inter-generational relationships in the workplace. The discussions take place during an extended "business lunch" at the program offices.

After appearances at three programs with a combined 40 participants, the workshop has already generated some great feedback. One participant said "[the workshop] was all very helpful, by being an eye opener. I will be more conscious of my words and mannerism." Another found "speaking as a group and hearing other people's thoughts" to be enlightening. Someone else promised to be "more conscious of generational differences" as a result of the workshop, because "[generational difference] is not a lens of seeing people that I often consider or am aware of."

Joyce will continue visiting programs through the middle of September. If you would like to schedule a workshop at your program, you can contact her at jallen-beckford@mlac.org or 617-391-5631.

The Buzz

Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS)

[GBLS](#) Employment Law Unit Attorney **Sherley Cruz** (right) has been selected to serve a two-year term on the Boston Bar Association's Administration of Justice Steering Committee, as the "public interest representative".



Mithra Merryman (left), Family Law Unit senior attorney, was awarded the 2009 REACH (Refuge, Education, Advocacy and Change) Mary Young "Voice for Justice" Award for her creativity, vision and perseverance working with Latina victims of domestic



violence.

GBLS recently elected board officers and welcomed 13 new board members. **Julia Huston** was re-elected as President; **Myrnairis Cepeda** and **Daryl Lapp** will be co-Vice Presidents; and **Thomas DeSimone** will be the new treasurer. [Read the press release with a complete list of the new appointees.](#)

In July, the Massachusetts Appeals Court reversed a trespassing conviction of a Boston Housing Authority (BHA) tenant's invited visitor. **Amy Copperman** of the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI), **Stefanie Balandis** of GBLS, and **Susan**

Hegel of Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services (GBLS' Cambridge office) submitted an amicus brief on behalf of the tenant and the Massachusetts Union of Public Housing Tenants.

Legal Assistance Corporation of Central Massachusetts (LACCM)

The Supreme Judicial Court has agreed to hear an appeal that [LACCM](#) filed in a case challenging the denial of Commonwealth Care Health Insurance coverage to its clients. The case is *Provencal v. Commonwealth Health Insurance Connector Authority, et al.*, [SJC-10528](#). On behalf of the Provencals, LACCM challenged the agency's failure to implement a waiver program for low-income workers whose employer-subsidized insurance is unaffordable. After the Superior Court granted the defendants' Motion to Dismiss the Complaint, LACCM Litigation Director **Patti Prunhuber** and LACCM Senior Attorney **Young Soo Jo** filed an appeal at the Appeals Court and a request for Direct Appellate Review by the SJC. **Vicki Pulos** of MLRI has been working with LACCM on the case, and Lorianne Salisbury-Wong of Health Law Advocates has filed an amicus brief as well.

Merrimack Valley - North Shore Legal Services (MVNS)

MVNS welcomes two new attorneys. **Marta Brooks**, a former attorney at SeniorLAW Center-Philadelphia and Legal Services-Queens, will work on elder law. Marta brings with her an expertise in housing and elder issues, with more than 15 years experience representing low-income seniors. **Zona Sharfman** will focus on family law. Zona is a graduate of the Brooklyn Law School and has worked for Boston area law firms. During her last year of law school, she completed a year-long internship with an immigration law firm.

MVNS is also pleased to announce two new volunteers. **Joan Zabbo**, who will assist in the elder law unit and various clerical duties, brings with her many years of administrative experience in law firms and in law departments of various corporations and real estate offices. **Johanna Monsalve** comes to MVNS through the Youth Training Program of the Career Center of Lowell. Johanna has been a great help with clerical duties and Spanish translations.

Albert Wang, AmeriCorps Volunteer with MVNS, has completed his service. He has left to begin his studies at Harvard Law. Good luck, Albert!

Finally, **Jen Wan**, a family law attorney has left MVNS to move to Toronto with her family and spend time with her new baby.

Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS)

NLS is holding its [First Annual Golf Tournament](#) on Monday, September 21, at Andover Country Club. Anyone interested in playing, sponsoring a hole or purchasing raffle tickets should contact Cathy Willard at 781-244-1404 or cwillard@nlsma.org. For the raffle: first prize is 50 bottles of wine and a wine refrigerator; second prize is a 2 night/3 day trip to Atlantic City; and third prize is a round of golf for four at Andover Country Club. Please join the fun!

NLS was fortunate to have **Jeffrey Schneidman** as an Equal Justice Works Fellow for the summer in the Lawrence office with the NLS Housing Unit. Jeffrey was just recognized as one of the [top 10 outstanding fellows](#) in the country. NLS would also like to thank the following summer interns for their outstanding work on behalf of NLS clients: **Lily Lockhart & Nadia Hasan** (Consumer), **Jenna Bergamo** (Housing),

Michelle Kohanloo (Family Law), **Naya Pessoa** (Immigration), and **Anwell Lanfranco** (Benefits/Employment).

NLS is proud to announce the addition of AmeriCorps member **Laura Robbins**. Laura is a graduate of Vassar College and has experience working with legal clinics in the Middle East. She will start at the Lynn office in September and assist with the administration of the Consumer Debt, Pro Se Divorce Clinics and Pro Bono Programs as well as the Housing Unit.

[South Coastal Counties Legal Services \(SCCLS\)](#)

[SCCLS'](#) Equal Justice Works Fellow **Heather O'Connor** (along with NLS' Jeffrey Schneiderman, above) was selected as one of the country's top 10 outstanding fellows. Read about her great work in foreclosure relief [here](#).

[Volunteer Lawyers Project \(VLP\)](#)

[VLP](#) was sorry to see **Jessica Rubin-Wills**, referral coordinator, and **Caitlin Loftus**, staff paralegal, leave on August 5. Both are going to law school. Jessica will attend New York University, and Caitlin will be at University of Connecticut.

On July 27, VLP welcomed two new staff members: **Kennell Sambour**, referral paralegal, and **Nicole Lin**, staff paralegal.

MLAC News

[Staff Updates](#)

Heather Catherwood's last day at MLAC was August 14. For the past two years, Heather served as a program assistant playing a crucial role in supporting MLAC's work and the Equal Justice Coalition budget campaign. Everyone here will miss her hard work, talent, and positive attitude. Heather will attend Northeastern University School of Law starting this fall.

Colleen Krisulevicz will join MLAC in September as a part-time program assistant. She will take on some of Heather's former duties, such as assisting with the EJC budget campaign and Walk to the Hill. Colleen is a 2008 graduate of Saint Michael's College, where she majored in political science and minored in gender studies. She has worked for VermontCARES, participating in its fundraising and event planning activities. She has also conducted HIV-prevention research in Tanzania. We're excited for Colleen to join us!

Important Dates

September 24 - MLAC Board Meeting (7 Winthrop Square, Boston)

October 22 - MLAC Board Meeting (7 Winthrop Square, Boston)

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