

# VOLUNTEERS SHINE BRIGHTLY DURING ANNUAL NATIONAL CELEBRATE PRO BONO WEEK

BY KRISTINA MARZEC, DIRECTOR, ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION



Nevada's fourth annual National Celebrate Pro Bono Week, which took place in October, was a huge success. The Access to Justice Commission greatly appreciates the support of the State Bar of Nevada's Board of Governors, UNLV Boyd School of Law, Young Lawyers Section and, as always, the tireless work of the state civil legal aid attorneys and the many dedicated private bar volunteers who donate their time, expertise and resources to help Nevada's most vulnerable citizens.

## PROJECT SALUTE INAUGURAL EVENT HELPS NEVADA VETERANS

On Monday, November 12, while most Nevadans were enjoying a day off, more than 20 volunteer attorneys were helping 30 of Nevada's veterans at Project Salute's inaugural event.

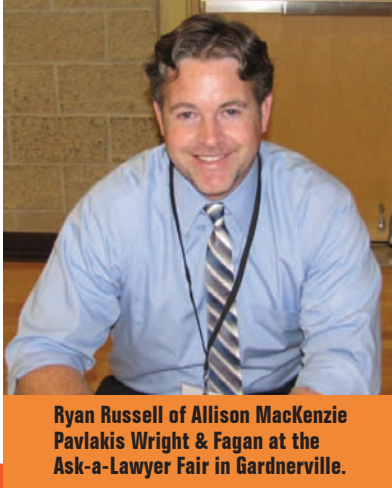
The Young Lawyers Section and Nevada Legal Services are especially to be commended this year. Both groups responded to the Access to Justice Commission's call to expand resources for Nevada veterans, which they did by joining forces to launch Project Salute, a new ABA initiative. Attorneys Jordan Davis, Kevin Kam and Heather Anderson-Fintak took the lead to ensure volunteers received the requisite training and certification needed to make this event a huge success.

Attorneys were available to answer any and all questions on subjects including general veterans' assistance, VA denial appeals, VA disability assistance, increasing VA medical disability ratings, consumer protection, employment rights, tenant rights, mediation and obtaining military records.

In Las Vegas, the event took place at Nevada Legal Services. Volunteers from the William S. Boyd School of Law Public Interest Law Association assisted by greeting the veterans as they entered and creating an intake sheet with a short description of the assistance requested. Then each veteran was matched with the volunteer attorney best suited to his/her needs; veterans with consumer protection issues were referred to volunteer attorneys with consumer law experience, for example.

In northern Nevada, volunteers and vets gathered at the Reno Veterans' Center for an unbelievable experience. The volunteer attorneys had the privilege of sitting down with representatives from the camps of Senators Heller and Reid, with whom they discussed both their personal experiences and the overarching issues they observed throughout the day. After the clinic, the group debriefed; they discussed the possibility of working as consulting attorneys for individual veterans and the VA Regional Offices, in order to help identify and analyze legal issues for Project Salute to revisit in the near future.





Ryan Russell of Allison MacKenzie Pavlakis Wright & Fagan at the Ask-a-Lawyer Fair in Gardnerville.



Attorney Kathleen Kelly at the fair in Gardnerville.

*“This was an incredibly rewarding experience that we hope to expand upon in the upcoming future. Veterans are an integral part of our community and Project Salute is one way we can give back to our veterans who have given so much for us all.”*

**Jordan A. Davis**



**Thanks to Project Salute volunteer attorneys:**

- |                  |                         |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Millie Barfield  | Dawn R. Miller          |
| Lorrie J. Haug   | Heather Anderson-Fintak |
| Nichole Duru     | David Ortiz             |
| Dylan Ciciliano  | Krissta Kirschenheiter  |
| Rebecca Blood    | Young Kevin Kam         |
| Lisa Szyc        | Jordan A. Davis         |
| Ken Hogan        | Charity F. Felts        |
| Sheri Cane Vogel | Edmund J. Gorman Jr.    |
| Carol A. Kingman | Carli Kinne             |
| Jason Gerber     |                         |

**Special Thanks to:**

- David Olshan of Nevada Legal Services (NLS)
- Heather Anderson-Fintak, formerly of NLS
- Art Merl, NLS
- Katelyn M. Franklin, UNLV Law Student volunteer
- Katelyn Cantu, UNLV Law Student volunteer
- Samantha Bilbao, UNLV Law Student volunteer
- Shannon Phoenix, UNLV Law Student Volunteer
- Michael Schilling, UNLV Law Student Volunteer
- Kristyne Shaaf, UNLV Law Student volunteer
- Amanda Stevens, UNLV Law Student Volunteer
- Scott Katherman, JAG with the Nevada Army National Guard
- Renee Kelly, Nevada Legal Services
- Scott Drew, Team Leader at the Reno Vet Center
- Roxanne Eaton, Nevada Legal Services

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## LEGAL AID FAIRS OFFER LEGAL TRIAGE

In southern Nevada, Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada (LACSN), Nevada Legal Services and the Southern Nevada Senior Law Program came together, for the first time, to create one large-scale Ask-A-Lawyer fair on the Tuesday of Pro Bono Week. **More than 25 attorneys volunteered to provide assistance to 120-plus people, during this three-hour event,** and two Spanish-language television stations covered the event.

### *Southern Nevada Volunteer Attorneys:*

Amber Adams, Angela Dows, Arun Gupta, Carol Kingman, Damon Dias, Darlene Arnd, Dawn Miller, Doreen Spears Hartwell, Edward Ewert, Erik Severino, Gerad Constantian, Hardeep Sull, James Clafin, Jennafer Wagner, Jon Erick Garde, Julie Arnold, Kari Molnar, Krissta Kirschenheiter, Kristine Bergstrom, Mario Fenu, Michael McKelleb, Michele Roberts, Naomi Arin, Nedda Ghandi, Nelson Segel, Patricia Lee and Sugar Vogel.



Nevada Legal Services Assistant Executive Director Odessa Ramirez (l) and legal assistant Esmeralda Velazquez (r) working the intake desk at a legal aid fair in Carson City.



Volunteer attorney Kari Molnar (r) assists a visitor at one of the Pro Bono Week Ask-A-Lawyer events.

Access to Justice Commission Co-Chair, Justice James Hardesty, stopped by the Northern Nevada Legal Aid Fair to lend his support to the 16 volunteer attorneys helping the more than 75 attendees with a wide variety of legal issues. Nevada Legal Services, Washoe Legal Services and Volunteer Attorneys for Rural Nevadans teamed up with the following attorney volunteers to make the day a huge success:

### *Northern Nevada Volunteer Attorneys:*

Muriel Skelly, Marta Presti, Anna Zarndt, Ryan McElhinney, Roger Harada, Linda Bowman, Greg Jensen, Keith Tierney, Sarah Carrasco, Rodney Sumpter, Pat Phair, Celeste Luce, Ernie Neilson, Brett Kandt, Sarah Carrasco, Brenoch Wirthlin and Mark Mausert.

Drawing attention to the ever-present need for volunteers to help children in Nevada's foster care system, LACSN placed 14 cases through its Basics of Representing Children in Abuse/ Neglect Cases CLE seminar during Pro Bono Week. There are still many children in need of representation, so please contact LACSN if you'd like to help.

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

The Access to Justice

Commission thanks Ballard Spahr and Bank of Nevada for their generous support of the Celebrate Community Pro Bono Mixer. Eighty lawyers and law students enjoyed a wonderful evening of food, libations and soothing music by Bill Swick, while networking and learning about the many pro bono opportunities available throughout the year.

*“Project Salute is important to me because I believe America should love its veterans as much as veterans love America. I am a veteran of [the war in] Iraq and I think America needs to do more for its veterans. I was happy to help our veterans on Veterans’ Day. There were a lot of businesses that were giving away free meals to veterans on Veterans’ Day weekend. That’s great and I really appreciate these businesses helping out veterans during these days, but the volunteer attorneys have the chance to help veterans for the rest of their lives. An increase in VA medical disability rating is one example of how a volunteer attorney can have a positive impact.”*

**Kevin Kam ■**



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1995. She can be reached at (702) 317-1404.