

Rebirth and Renewal

WTP

Whiteford Taylor Preston^{LLP}

Pro Bono
and
Community
Service
Report

2007

Whiteford, Taylor & Preston LLP is dedicated to helping clients achieve their business goals through strategic legal counsel. Founded in 1933, the firm has grown to over 160 attorneys in offices throughout Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Virginia.

www.wtplaw.com

800.987.8705

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Technology
Trademarks and Copyrights
Trusts and Estates

In nature
we find
rebirth and
renewal
despite the
hardest of
conditions.

WE see these same qualities in our pro bono clients. People improving their lives. People caring about others more than themselves. People transforming their communities.

In 2006, our attorneys and paralegals handled cases *pro bono* ranging from helping a woman divorce a deadbeat dad to foreclosing on abandoned properties to facilitating communication between property owners and Section 8 tenants.

This calendar highlights several of our pro bono cases and the wonderful organizations we work with in Maryland and Virginia. Inside, we profile a grandmother's appeal for services and a young man's quest for asylum, among others. We hope their stories inspire you throughout the year.

For more information about our Pro Bono services, please contact James F. Rosner, Pro Bono Chair, at 410.832.2024 or jrosner@wtplaw.com.

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Obtaining Guardianship

FOR an 11-year old boy with multiple disabilities, the selfless love and compassion of his grandmother continues even in death.

With his father dead and his mother, who has developmental disabilities, unable to raise him, “B” lived with his maternal grandmother and grandfather. After being diagnosed with metastatic lung cancer, B’s grandmother decided that she and her husband should file for legal guardianship of their grandson. Her goal was to ensure a continued and supervisory relationship with their grandson if, because of their poor health, he was placed in foster care. As legal guardians, they would be able to monitor his foster care living arrangements and his special needs educational program.

Referred by the **Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service**, our firm helped the grandparents obtain legal guardianship prior to the grandmother’s death in December. As the family mourns their loss, her foresight guarantees the grandfather’s active, loving role as guardian no matter what the future holds.

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Protecting Privacy

WHEN the State of Maryland publicly released the home addresses of thousands of people who had received services funded by the Developmental Disabilities Administration and the Mental Hygiene Administration, **The Arc of Maryland** knew that something had to be done.

The Arc of Maryland's Legal Advocacy Committee, in conjunction with the Maryland Disability Law Center and our firm, developed the Personal Information about Individuals with Disabilities legislation (SB 1040/HB 1625). Our attorneys helped draft the legislation and testified in support of it during the 2006 Maryland Legislative Session. The bill was passed and went into effect on October 1, 2006.

For individuals with disabilities, it ensures that the State respect their rights to privacy. In Maryland, it sets a precedent for the careful treatment of sensitive client information.

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Assisting Victims

AT 20 years old, “P” experienced something few of us can even imagine: he was shot six times outside of a club in a Maryland suburb.

P applied for Crime Victim Compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CICB), but his claim was denied. This decision was made after an investigation by a CICB case worker consisting only of two phone calls to the police detective and an examination of police records. The CICB claimed that P had “consented to and unreasonably failed to avoid a physical confrontation” and suggested that he had failed to cooperate with the police.

At the request of the **Maryland Crime Victims’ Resource Center**, our firm assisted with P’s administrative appeal. At the present, we await the CICB’s decision as P attempts to move forward after such a life-altering event.

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Petitioning for Asylum

RATHER than politics as usual, it was politics at its worst for “E”, a twenty-something anglophone Cameroonian. As an activist during college, he led many student organizations and protests promoting the rights of anglophones. He was repeatedly arrested for his political activities, jailed, and tortured at the hands of the francophone Cameroonian government. Helped by his police officer cousin, he escaped prison and execution. (His cousin was later executed for assisting him.) E fled the country and arrived in the U.S. in 2004. Now living in Silver Spring, he seeks political asylum and citizenship.

Through our relationship with **Human Rights First**, our attorneys convinced a U.S. immigration judge in Baltimore to grant E’s petition for political asylum. The decision has been appealed by the Department of Homeland Security, and our attorneys will argue the case before the U.S. Board of Immigration Appeals.

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Cleaning House

IN June 2006, WTP summer associates and lawyers spent a Saturday in Baltimore's Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood, tackling projects from hauling rubbish to clearing lots to posting signs on houses to be gutted. The crew's "dirty" work helped **Sandtown Habitat for Humanity** prepare for its 15th Annual Summer Building week: 750 volunteers from around the region worked to rebuild 15 houses in West Baltimore.

For first-time homeowners, Sandtown's mission is a dream come true. For Sandtown Habitat for Humanity and New Song Ministries, it's a way to increase home ownership and improve the health of its community.

| <i>J</i> | <i>S</i> | <i>U</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>N</i> | <i>T</i> | <i>E</i> | <i>W</i> | <i>T</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>S</i> |
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Reinstating Hope

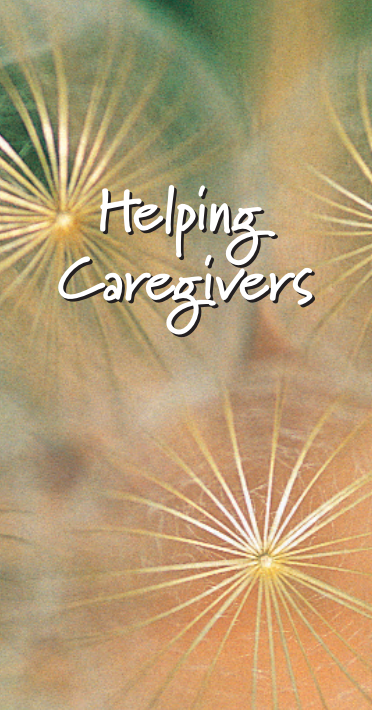
RAISED by her grandmother, “J” is 11 years old and autistic. A growing developmental disorder, autism affects 1 in every 166 births. For the caretakers of children and adults with autism, life is never the same, nor is it ever easy.

Two years ago, J was found ineligible for Maryland’s Autism Waiver and placed on the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s Autism Waiver waiting list. It appeared she would languish on the list while waiting for intensive services.

To reinstate her Waiver and services, the **Maryland Disability Law Center** referred J’s grandmother to our firm. We filed a Reply to the Motion to Dismiss from the Office of the Attorney General, including affidavits obtained from the girl’s grandmother and three of her health care providers. Through our actions and her grandmother’s conviction, J was reevaluated and her services were reinstated.

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Helping Caregivers

AS of December 2005, 29,116 cumulative cases of AIDS had been reported in Maryland. For those diagnosed with HIV or AIDS, medical care is critical. For those without health insurance, care is available in Baltimore at HERO.

The **Health Education Resource Organization, Inc.** (HERO) provides services for all Marylanders affected by HIV/AIDS. In their primary care medical clinic alone, physicians treats hundreds of individuals annually. From screening for HIV to prescribing medications, they help clients like “S”, an HIV survivor with a substance abuse problem. Her physician at HERO provided her with an immediate in-house referral for her addiction. By working with her to plan for her future, her doctor put her on the path to recovery.

Last year, HERO contacted our firm to review its medical healthcare provider contracts for potential errors. While it wasn't work on the front lines, serving as outside counsel to HERO and its “hero” staff was our small way of battling this terrible disease.

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Ceasing Collections

“V” thought he had the whole world as his oyster. Unfortunately, at the age of 17, he also thought that executing a series of contracts with his creditors was the path to fame and fortune. However, the creditors on the other side of those contracts were more interested in his money than in providing any real aid.

V came to our firm through our association with **Homestretch, Inc.** At the time he met with our attorneys, V was over 18 years old and being hounded relentlessly by collection agencies. To put him on the right path, our firm successfully defended the claims brought against him by his creditors and stopped the harassment by collection agencies.

At this point, V can begin to improve his credit standing and truly can take advantage of all the world has to offer him.

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Incorporating Kindness

MARYLAND currently has over 23,000 nonprofit organizations: about one for every 243 Maryland residents. With another 1,000 nonprofits applying for tax-exempt status each year, Maryland's nonprofit sector continues to grow and thrive.

At the request of the **Community Law Center**, our firm assisted Ascend International, Inc., in filing for incorporation in Maryland and is preparing to file its tax-exempt paperwork. Ascend International was founded by a young woman from Nigeria now living in Maryland, and is devoted to helping women and children in Nigeria and other African countries who are victims of rape and abuse. She also hopes to provide medical services, counseling, and financial assistance.

Ascend's compassionate service to others began a few years ago when its founder collected clothing and supplies and sent them to Nigeria. Like all new nonprofits, Ascend International's vision for a better tomorrow will guide its way as it grows.

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Profiled Partner Organizations

Community Law Center

Mission: *The Community Law Center provides legal services and technical assistance to improve the quality of life and economic viability of communities.*

2500 Maryland Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21218
410.366.0922
www.communitylaw.org

Health Education Resource Organization (HERO)

Mission: *HERO helps and supports people affected by HIV/AIDS by advocating for and providing direct care services, community prevention and health education, and resource development to other AIDS service organizations, both domestic and international.*

1734 Maryland Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21201
410.685.1180
www.hero-mcrc.org

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Profiled Partner Organizations

Homestretch, Inc.

Mission: *Homestretch, Inc. is the largest transitional housing provider for homeless families with children in Northern Virginia.*

370 South Washington Street, Suite 400
Falls Church, VA 22046
703.237.2035
www.homestretch-inc.org

Human Rights First

Mission: *Human Rights First is a nonprofit, non-partisan international human rights organization based in New York and Washington D.C.*

Washington Office
100 Maryland Avenue, NE, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002
202.547.5692
www.humanrightsfirst.org

Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center

Mission: *The Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center ensures that victims of crime receive justice and are treated with dignity and compassion through comprehensive victims' rights and services.*

14750 Main Street, 1B
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
877.842.8461
www.mdcrimevictims.org

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Profiled Partner Organizations

Maryland Disability Law Center

Mission: The Maryland Disability Law Center, a private, nonprofit organization staffed by attorneys and paralegals, serves as the protection and advocacy organization for Maryland.

The Walbert Building
1800 N. Charles St., 4th floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
800.233.7201
www.mdlcbalto.org

Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service

Mission: MVLS provides free or reduced fee representation to low-income individuals and nonprofits who have civil legal problems throughout Maryland.

One North Charles Street, Suite 222
Baltimore, MD 21201
800.510.0050
www.mvlslaw.org

Sandtown Habitat for Humanity

Mission: Sandtown Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit Christian housing organization in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood of West Baltimore committed to rebuilding the vacant housing in Sandtown, increasing homeownership, and improving the health of the community.

1300 N. Fulton Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21217
410.669.3309
www.sandtownhabitat.org

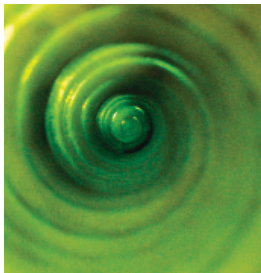
The Arc of Maryland

Mission: The Arc of Maryland works to create a world where children and adults with cognitive and developmental disabilities have and enjoy equal rights and opportunities.

49 Old Solomons Island Road, Suite 205
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410.571.9320
www.thearcmd.org



We are proud
to partner with
the following
organizations to
help those in
need:



Bar Association of Baltimore City's Legal
Services to the Elderly Program
By Kids for Kids
Community Law Center
Health Education Resource Organization (HERO)
Homestretch, Inc.
House of Ruth
Human Rights First
Law Foundation of PG County
Legal Aid Bureau
Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center
Maryland Disability Law Center
Maryland Lawyers for the Arts
Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service
Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland
Public Justice Center
Sandtown Habitat for Humanity
Sandtown Winchester Senior Center
St. Ambrose Legal Services
The Arc of Baltimore
The Arc of Maryland



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Columbia, Maryland 21044
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Towson, Maryland 21204-4515
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Fax: 410.832.2015

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Fax: 703.836.3558

