

Thanksgiving 2022



Our Annual Celebration

Did you join us on October 6? Perhaps win something at our silent auction? If not, you can see what you missed. Thanks to our special guest Carolyn Harper for sharing her art and her work to give identities to the homeless population of Philadelphia.



The Value of Legal "Aide"

Rhonda is raising three young grandchildren on her monthly social security payment. Some years ago she took out a second mortgage to pay off a lien on her house left by the prior owners. At some point she stopped paying the second mortgage under the mistaken belief that the prior owners were responsible for it. Interest and penalties accumulated to the point that, according to the finance company, she owed twice the original amount of the mortgage. They threatened to foreclose on her house.

Several agencies were available to offer financial assistance but Rhonda had difficulty connecting with them because she was distressed over this financial crisis and became easily overwhelmed by any conversation surrounding the possibility of foreclosure. In addition, she does not use e-mail, is a bit hard of hearing and allowed her grandchildren to play with her cell phone, all of which made it virtually impossible for any agency (or us) to communicate with her by any method other than in person. Fortunately, Rhonda lived around the corner from one of our monthly clinic locations, so we were able to speak with her in person on a regular basis. When we attempted to talk to her about a proposal from the finance company to reduce her debt that involved a hefty one-time payment, however, she walked out, claiming she just could not handle the pressure of the situation.

It became apparent to us that what Rhonda needed was not "legal aid" – given that her legal issues were very straightforward – but a "legal aide" -- that is, someone who could help her to navigate various legal and technological obstacles and steer her to an agency that could provide financial relief to her. After several meetings, discussions with Rhonda's son, and a fortuitous court conference that was also attended by a representative from just such an agency, we were able to arrange a face-to-face meeting between Rhonda and a financial provider who had access to the funds she needed. The representative even made a follow up visit to Rhonda's house so she could sign the necessary forms.

While there is no doubt that many non-lawyers could have engaged in the same "legal aide" services we performed for Rhonda, the fact that we were available to meet with her in person close to her house turned out to be of critical importance. We were of more use to Rhonda in opening doors than the agency that had funds at its disposal but was not able to connect with her. Practicing lawyers learn the value not only of legal precedents but also of persistence in dealing with bureaucracy and impatient clients. We can be useful not only in dispensing legal aid but also in acting as "legal aides."

A Thank-You to Our Hosts!

Each month we are hosted by churches and community organizations throughout the Delaware Valley who give us time, space, and a good wifi connection so that we can meet with people in need. They also publicize our visits and promote our work. They provide us with a trusted introduction to our clients that puts our clients at ease and gives them the confidence to speak to us about their issues and concerns.

Our hosts include:

- Chester Eastside, Chester
- Christ Episcopal Church, Pottstown
- Darby Mission & Rec Center, Darby
- Episcopal Cathedral, University City
- Holy Innocents/St. Paul Church, Tacony
- Norristown Hospitality Center
- St. James School, Allegheny West
- St. James Outreach House, Collegeville
- St. Barnabas (ECS), West Philadelphia
- St. Gabriel's Church, Olney
- St. Luke's Church, Germantown
- St. Mary's Church, Ardmore
- St. Stephen's Church, Center City

The calendar on our website is updated monthly with clinic locations and times. You are welcome to stop by and say hello!
How to Make a Donation

We can't do our work without your help. To make a donation, please send a check to the address above. You can also donate electronically by using the secure location on our website. Go to www.episcopallegalaid.org and click on the "Donate" button in the upper right corner. Or you can use the link below.