

Newsletter

Catholic Charities Legal Network

Legal Network's 21st Annual Golf Tournament Celebrates a Memorable Milestone

Catholic Charities Legal Network's Annual Golf Tournament drew more than 100 golfers. The tournament, at Bretton Woods in Maryland, raised \$150,600 for the Legal Network, its highest amount raised in history. For 21 years, the Catholic Charities Legal Network Golf Tournament has been a tradition that supports the pro bono services the civil legal team provides to low-income residents. The 2024 golf event was chaired by Robert Shaffer of O'Melveny & Myers LLP and Denis Mitchell of Stein Mitchell Beato & Missner LLP.



The Catholic Charities Legal Network Golf Tournament is the program's largest fundraiser and a tradition that supports pro bono services provided to low-income residents of Washington, DC, and surrounding Maryland counties with legal issues such as debt, bankruptcy, employment, family law, housing, public benefits and more. Amidst the fun, the focus was on how valuable support for the Legal Network is for communities in need.

Golfers began to arrive at 11:00 a.m. for registration and attended a lunch before playing their rounds and concluding with an evening reception. The attendees were eager to play on the stunning Bretton Woods course.

Director, Jim Bishop, said, "I'm thankful for all of our supporters and players, who made the 21st annual Golf Tournament the most successful ever. I am also very pleased with Bretton Woods and how they provided their professional accommodation for our Golf Tournament this year. I would like to thank all of those involved in supporting our Golf Tournament."

For more information on supporting the work or to get involved in the Catholic Charities Legal Network, please contact Nam Mee Cho, CCLN Staff Attorney, at 202-519-2064 or via e-mail.



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Our 2024 Sponsors

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Thank You to Our Event Volunteers and Bretton Woods
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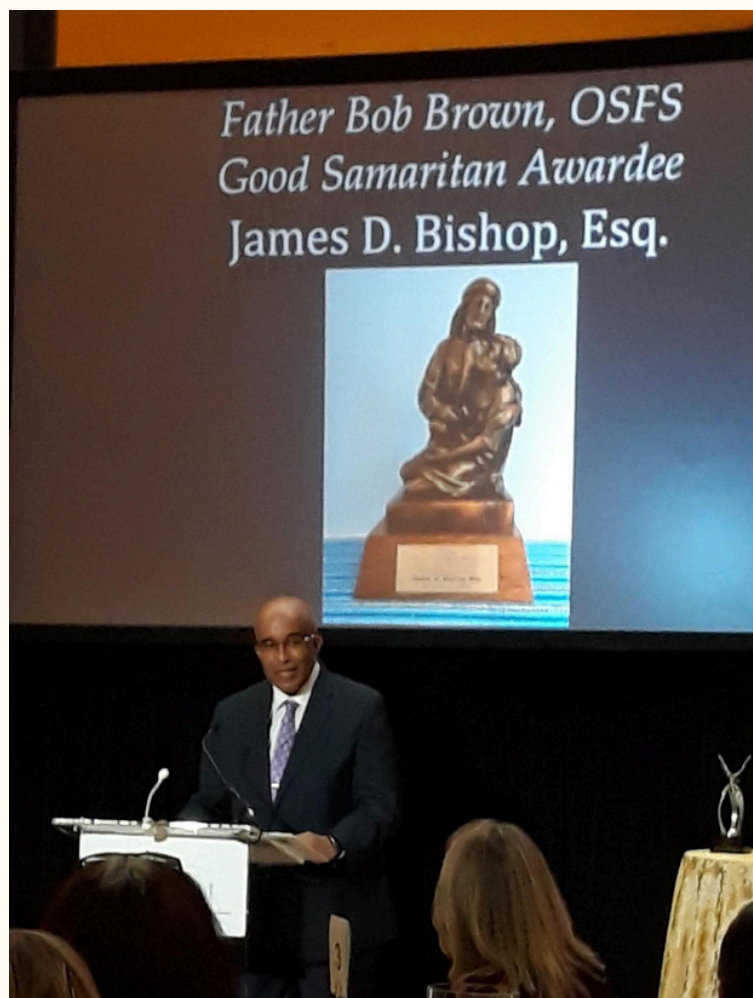
72nd Annual Red Mass Held On Sunday, October 6th



On Sunday, October 6, 2024, the John Carroll Society sponsored the annual Red Mass and brunch to mark the new Supreme Court term. Bishop John O. Barres of Rockville Center, NY, gave the homily at the Red Mass, celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in Washington, DC.

At the brunch following the Red Mass, held at the Capital Hilton Hotel, Legal Network volunteer law firms and individuals received the John Carroll Society Pro Bono Legal Service Award for outstanding contributions to the program and service to low-income individuals in the Archdiocese of Washington. **Edward O'Connell** was the chair of the 2024 Red Mass Committee. This year's honorees included: John Carroll Society 2024 Pro Bono Legal Service Award recipients **Stephen Obermeier** representing the Wiley Rein law firm, **Thomas J. Kelly**, **Denis C. Mitchell**, **Fabian A. Zetina** and **Kathleen Merlo**; **Dr. Eileen Moore**, the president of the John Carroll Society; and **Msgr. Peter J. Vaghi**, the chaplain of the John Carroll Society and the pastor of the Church of the Little Flower in Bethesda, Maryland. (John Carroll Society photo above by Christopher Newkumet).

SOAR!



Support Our Aging Religious Community (SOAR!) is a non-profit organization which raises funds and provides grants to help Catholic religious congregations in the United States care for their aging members. These grants address practical immediate needs such as renovations for accessibility, automatic doors, hospital beds and assistive devices. This assistance ensures the safety, peace of mind, and dignity of aging Sisters, Brothers and Priests. (The above is from: <https://soar-usa.org/about/>)

On November 1, 2024 the 38th Annual Washington DC Awards Gala took place. **Kerry Alys Robinson** the President and CEO of Catholic Charities USA received the 2024 Saint Katharine Drexel Award. **Liz McCloskey** and **Peter Leibold**, community leaders, were the recipients of the 2024 Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Award. **James D. Bishop, Esq.**, Director of Catholic Charities Legal Network of DC, received the 2024 Father Bob Brown, OSFS Good Samaritan Award.

Interview with Timothy Schwarz, Blank Rome LLP



- **How long have you worked with CCLN?**

Since about 2018.

- **What motivated you to continue your volunteer relationship with CCLN?**

I believe in pro bono service and in applying my education and abilities to help others, particularly those most in need. CCLN is dedicated to serving those most in need and the screenings I perform for CCLN provide me with discrete opportunities to help people. Taking on open ended pro bono projects has been difficult in my current stage of life, but CCLN provides me with an opportunity to ramp up and down my volunteering as my schedule allows.

I also believe that the screenings are meaningful to the potential clients, even when we cannot represent them. I was trained early on at CCLN that our goal during the screenings is to put the potential new clients in a better position than they were when they called. This may seem like a small thing given the administrative aspects of the screenings, but I am often thanked by potential new clients just for taking the time to listen to them and validate their feelings about what they are going through. Moreover, there is room to help people without providing legal advice. I regularly encourage them to collect the materials that their attorney will need to help them, and explain that actively collecting these materials will go a long way towards getting help. Also, I have learned a great deal about various income assistance programs by asking the income questions for CCLN, and have used this knowledge to refer other potential new clients to the various programs to investigate whether they may be eligible for further assistance.

- **What have you gotten out of the work with CCLN that is different from your normal day-to-day work?**

Ability to help those most in need.

- **What advice do you have to a new volunteer completing the first stage interview process?**

Please try to identify the potential new clients that CCLN clearly cannot help during the first stage. It is difficult for some potential new clients to keep their appointments because of the demands on their time. If they have a legal issue that we cannot help with (e.g., modification of an existing custody order), let's try as hard as we can to catch it during the first screening.

- **What have you found the most surprising working with CCLN?**

How helpful we can be as screeners just by listening, being kind, and reserving judgment.

Many of the potential new clients do not have people in their lives that will listen to their problem. We can help by listening even when we cannot set them up for legal representation with CCLN.

- **What are the biggest challenges you face when handling pro bono cases at CCLN?**

Some of the problems potential new clients are facing are difficult to hear. Child custody cases in particular are challenging for me. But I will say again that the discrete nature of the screenings for CCLN is helpful for me. I have the utmost respect for family law attorneys that handle these issues on a regular basis. It takes a special person to be able to do that. I can do my part by at least giving the potential new client my full attention during the screening and trying to put them in a better position than they were when they called.

- **What advice would you give to lawyers who are considering pro bono work, but are not sure how it can fit into their current commitments?**

Please try volunteering with CCLN. It's a great way to get started with pro bono. Handling screenings is discrete, but helpful. And there are opportunities to grow from there.

Interview with Genevieve Moreland, Crowell & Moring LLP



- **How long have you worked with CCLN?**

About 10 years.

- **What motivated you to continue your volunteer relationship with CCLN?**

It's nice to be able to help people who need legal support, often in times of great need.

- **What have you gotten out of the work with CCLN that is different from your normal day-to-day work?**

The work I do with CCLN involves clients who are dealing with personal issues on limited budgets. This is very different from my everyday practice, and it makes me happy to be able to directly help someone in their daily life.

- **What advice do you have to a new volunteer completing the first stage interview process?**

I would advise that you take your time during the first stage interview process and make sure to get all of the information you can on the caller's issue and make sure they qualify for services. It can be hard to tell someone that they don't qualify, so if they do not, to the extent possible, try to refer them to someone else who might be able to help.

- **What motivated you to pursue pro bono work with CCLN?**

When I first joined the team, it seemed like a great way to help those in need on a regular basis. I liked that I could schedule my commitment to CCLN as I was available.

- **What are the biggest challenges you face when handling pro bono cases at CCLN?**

The biggest challenge for me is when you can't help someone on the initial intake call, either because they are outside of the Archdiocese, they are over-income, or their issue is not an issue we handle. People sometimes get very upset when that happens, and although I try to find a referral in those instances, it's not always possible.

- **What advice would you give to lawyers who are considering pro bono work, but are not sure how it can fit into their current commitments?**

Please consider joining the CCLN team! This is a great way to fit pro bono work into your schedule – because we work as a team, there is always someone available to cover for you if something comes up on the day of your shift, and you can plan your shifts around your own schedule.

Nick Mowbray Success Story

Client #1:



The Catholic Charities Legal Network (CCLN) serves individuals who live in extreme indigence, at 250 percent or below Federal Poverty Guidelines. Ms. S came to the Legal Network because she received a frightening letter from the federal Internal Revenue Service, incorrectly indicating that she owed money and that the IRS would move to collect the money through levies and liens if she did not submit payment. Ms. S was concerned about the consequences of the

allegations when she had in good faith been working and following tax guidelines, though indigent. She put her trust in CCLN to find an attorney to represent her.

Jim Bishop, Director of CCLN, has for 30 years been fostering long term relationships with the legal community and with private law firms in the Washington metropolitan area to assist CCLN clients. Jim's establishment of alliances with law firms allows the Legal Network to match clients with recognized experienced lawyers, providing the highest caliber of legal assistance.

Jim contacted a volunteer, Nicholas C. Mowbray, Counsel from the law firm of BakerHostetler, who was named by The Best Lawyers in America® in their "Ones to Watch" list in Washington, D.C., for Tax Law (2024 to 2025). Mr. Mowbray was also named by the JD Supra Readers' Choice Awards: Top 10 Author in Tax (2024).

Mr. Mowbray agreed to immediately take Ms. S's case and provide legal representation. Ms. S was fearful at the prospect of contesting the IRS's proposed assessment and stated that she had no financial resources and could not pay for an attorney to clear the mistake.

Upon successful resolution of her case, Ms. S writes:

"I am excited to share with you that my IRS Income Tax issue has been resolved in court and in my favor. Thank you for your support and prayers. Special thanks to Jim Bishop for referring my case to an Income Tax pro bono Counsel, Nick Mowbray from BakerHostetler... I am so blessed to have each of you and I deeply appreciate you all."

Nick Mowbray & Damar M. Butler Success Story



Client #2:

When he came to Catholic Charities unannounced, Mr. R was living in substandard conditions. He had gone to several other legal services programs in the District and was unable to find assistance. He thought that as a visibly disabled African American man over 60 and indigent, that no one would want to help him.

He also had no access to an email account for the other programs to reach him. He came in person to the Legal Network as his last resort for help.

Mr. R came with a letter from the DC Government that stated that his full-time caregiver, who is responsible for his life essential tasks, would be significantly reduced to two days a week. Mr. R was not fully ambulatory, which worried him if he were to have a caregiver's hours reduced so drastically. Jim Bishop, Director of CCLN, as a former caregiver himself to his late parents, understood the struggles that Mr. R faced. Jim agreed to take on this case through CCLN to find an attorney to represent Mr. R in order to restore incorrectly- reduced public benefits.

Jim Bishop contacted the law firm of Jones Day, with which CCLN has a long and deep history of volunteer engagement. An attorney, Associate Damarr M. Butler, who is the recipient of the 2020 National Black Lawyers' Top 100 Lawyers in D.C. award and member of the Law360 Benefits Editorial Advisory Board (2020–present) agreed to take Mr. R's case.

Mr. Butler was able to successfully restore Mr. R's caregiver's hours so that he could fully function in his home and find restored dignity and peace of mind. Mr. R stated that: "I am very grateful to Catholic Charities Legal Network for finding the law firm of Jones Day to help me."

Radio America



Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, the Honorable **Kenia Seoane López** joined Catholic Charities' Radio America broadcast on August 27, 2024 in Spanish to discuss the services of the Superior Court and the Legal Network. The interview also highlighted Judge Kenia's journey to becoming an Associate Judge and emphasized the importance of mentorship and volunteerism.

This show and other outreach efforts are crucial for bridging the gap between low-income and underserved communities and accessing legal support. By actively engaging with the community through seminars, resource fairs, and media, CCLN not only raises awareness about

common legal issues but also empowers underserved communities to seek the assistance they need. Our partnership with the Superior Court, the bilingual services provided by paralegal Emma Johnston, and our collaborative approach with other service providers demonstrate a commitment to breaking down barriers and ensuring that everyone, regardless of language or background, can access the legal support they require. These efforts are vital for promoting equity and justice within the District.

Welcome Interns



Lauren Tepper is the Senior Intern at the Legal Network. She is a recent graduate of The George Washington University, currently working with CCLN during her gap year before law school. At GW, she was actively engaged in the Pre-Law Community, including her contributions as an Editor-In-Chief of the Undergraduate Law Review, and she earned a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs. Originally from Los Angeles, California, Lauren is passionate about giving back to her community through pro bono work. During her time at the Legal Network, Lauren has gained

a comprehensive understanding of the cases and processes involved. She has participated in events and conducted research that supports the Legal Network in delivering essential guidance and resources to those in need. Lauren looks forward to continuing her work with Catholic Charities in the coming year, doing her part to advocate for individuals and ensuring their voices are heard.



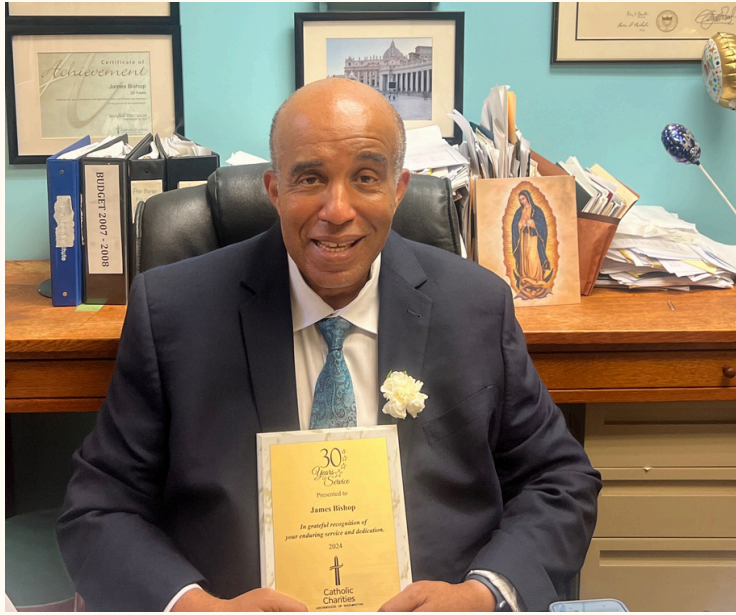
Joyce Chung graduated with her bachelors and master's in public health from The Johns Hopkins University in 2023. She now serves as a Volunteer Legal Outreach Coordinator, helping to evaluate CCLN's legal services and Know-Your-Rights seminars through a creation of needs assessments, satisfaction surveys, and data analysis to assess program outputs and outcomes. She developed and standardized quarterly data collection and analysis procedures to enhance continuous quality improvement (CQI) efforts and ensure

consistency across reporting cycles. She also supported legal services by drafting closing letters and researching and writing legal memos. She loves working with the team at CCLN and is looking forward to continuing to work together towards our mission!

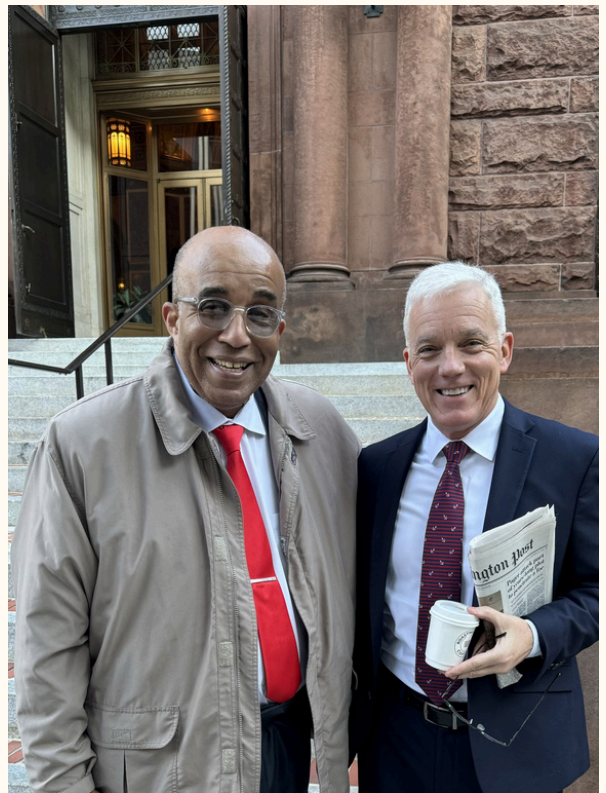
Reminders for Volunteers

- Remind the potential client that CCLN does not guarantee legal assistance
- Record correct contact information
- Obtain accurate income information
- Thank the potential client for sharing their story
- & Listen

Pictures



Jim Bishop with his 30 Years of Service Award from Catholic Charities



Jim Bishop and Jim Malloy at the Red Mass



Nam Mee Cho, Joyce Chung, Lauren Tepper, and Ignacio Gomez (from the DCVLP a partner organization) at the Best Practices in Pro Bono event at Fried Frank



Lauren Tepper, Nam Mee Cho, and Joyce Chung at the Catholic Charities' Health and Resource Fair



Former intern Hank Hyatte and Nam Mee Cho



Former intern Mark Kormos and Jim Bishop at the Red Mass

Will you volunteer?

CCLN Seeks Volunteer Attorneys to Offer Time and Talent:

Do you have time to give your talent to low-income members of our community?

CCLN is actively seeking volunteers for the following roles:

- Accepting pro bono cases in Maryland and Washington, DC, by representing low-income clients especially in civil law areas of custody, will drafting and landlord-tenant matters;
- Offering attorney training for new volunteers interested in accepting pro bono cases from the Legal Network;
- Conducting community education seminars to low-income clients either in-person or virtually on topics related to will drafting and advanced healthcare directives/financial power of attorney, custody, government entitlements such as SSDI and landlord-tenant matters; or
- Serving as a mentor attorney to volunteers representing pro bono clients.

Please contact Nam Mee Cho, via e-mail, if you can help.

To subscribe to our monthly case summary list, please email nammee.cho@cc-dc.org

Legal Network Staff

James D. Bishop, Director, james.bishop@cc-dc.org

Emma Johnston, Bilingual Paralegal, emma.johnston@cc-dc.org

Deacon Darryl A. Kelley, Staff Attorney, darryl.kelley@cc-dc.org

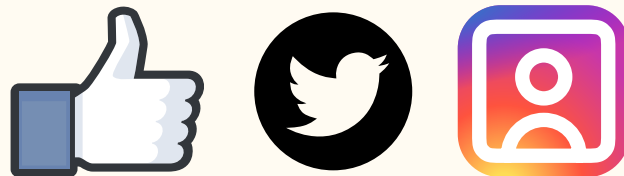
Nam Mee Cho, Staff Attorney, nammee.cho@cc-dc.org

Please remember Catholic Charities Legal Network in your Year-End Planning! Thank you, as always, for your support for our organization. Your generous support helps us to assist those in need of legal representation in the Washington, DC, area.

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This edition of the Newsletter was composed by Lauren Tepper, Senior Intern