

Pro Bono & Community Service Report

December 2015

In This Issue:

- Chicago Team Wins Asylum in the United States for Iraqi Family Fleeing ISIS Attacks
- Another Federal Appeals Court Upholds Gun Restrictions Defended by Katten Team
- Cross-Practice Team Helps Reclaim13 End Cycle of Commercial Sexual Exploitation in Chicagoland
- Christopher Ferenc Wins Below-Guidelines Sentence for Pro Bono Client, Plaudits From Public Defender
- Sarah Bull Helps Defend Freedom of Press in Africa
- Chicago Intellectual Property Litigators Achieve Favorable Settlement for Pro Bono Trademark
- Washington, DC Attorneys Volunteer at the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program's Advice and Referral Clinic
- Chicago Attorney Observes and Reports on Border Crossing Trials
- Legal Services of Southern Piedmont Recognizes Charlotte Team at Pro Bono Awards Ceremony
- New Pro Bono Leadership in Charlotte and Texas Offices
- Aharon Kaye Elected to PILI Board of Directors
- Becky Lindahl Named to Safe Alliance Board of Directors
- Daniel Render Named to Anti-Defamation League's Civil Rights Executive Committee
- Los Angeles – Downtown and Century City Attorneys and Staff Volunteer at Holiday Party for Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services
- Katten Sponsors Young Professionals Board Fundraiser for LAF
- Houston Office Fulfills Wish Lists for Children From Child Protective Services
- Chicago Office Sponsors Fifth Annual Holiday Book Drive for José de Diego Community Academy
- Greg Dillard Leads Katten's Sponsorship of Charity 5K to Support Mothers Against Cancer
- Chicago Office Creates Care Packages for the Homeless, Donates to Toys for Tots for 13th Year

Chicago Team Wins Asylum in the United States for Iraqi Family Fleeing ISIS Attacks

A team of Chicago Litigation and Dispute Resolution associates led by **Peter Wilson** and supported by **Hannah Koesterer** and **Allison Freedman** has won asylum in the United States for a Christian family from Iraq. The family fled its hometown of Karakosh, Iraq after it was invaded by ISIS in the summer of 2014. The principal client, a pharmacist, previously had received a series of threats from Muslim fundamentalists who demanded that he stop selling medicine to non-Muslims. He ignored the threats, and his pharmacy was twice targeted by car bombs. The family attempted to stay in Karakosh but eventually was displaced along with most of Iraq's remaining Christian population after ISIS invaded Mosul and its surrounding suburbs, including Karakosh. Katten won the family asylum on the basis of religious persecution and on the grounds that ISIS has tortured and murdered non-Muslim women and children.



BECAUSE SMART GUN LAWS SAVE LIVES

Another Federal Appeals Court Upholds Gun Restrictions Defended by Katten Team

In the latest in a string of victories for gun safety forces, the US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit has rejected Second Amendment challenges to bans on assault weapons and large capacity ammunition magazines enacted by the states of Connecticut and New York in the wake of the Newtown tragedy. As it has in several other cases around the nation, a Katten team represented the [Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](#) and local gun safety organizations in defending the bans in both the consolidated appeals. The court held that because the bans leave citizens with numerous alternatives for self-defense, the burden on the right to keep and bear arms is not severe, and there is a substantial relationship between the bans and the compelling state interest in controlling crime. The Katten team on the Connecticut and New York cases consisted of Director of Pro Bono Services **Jonathan Baum** and New York Litigation associate **Mark Ciani**.



Cross-Practice Team Helps Reclaim13 End Cycle of Commercial Sexual Exploitation in Chicagoland

A team of cross-practice attorneys and staff from the Chicago office has provided [Reclaim13](#) with legal support since its founding and continues to do so as the nonprofit organization prepares to open the first safe house of its kind for minor victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Reclaim13 is dedicated to reclaiming the childhood experience for children

who—frequently beginning at age 13—are forced into sex trafficking. The agency works in the areas of healing, prevention, and equipping and engaging minor victims in and around Chicago. Since there are less than 15 beds available to minors in Illinois who are victims of sex trafficking, many rescued and escaped victims find they have no options and return to a life of commercial sexual exploitation. By opening [Cherish House](#), Reclaim13 will provide housing, education, trauma-informed therapy, vocational training and life skills to girls rescued from sex trafficking.

Litigation and Dispute Resolution partner **Patrick Harrigan** serves as pro bono outside general counsel for Reclaim13 and recruited the cross-practice team. He has helped the organization obtain 501(c)3 status and advised the nonprofit on its licensure applications with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and in dealing with the FBI and local law enforcement agencies. Litigation associate Hannah Koesterer has helped to review licensure and guardianship laws and regulations. Health Care partner Ken Davis is coordinating with Loyola University Chicago to obtain free medical care for the girls from the university's physicians, and Real Estate partner **Devan Popat** and associate **Emily Thomas** have handled lease negotiations and addressed zoning issues for Cherish House. Technology partner **Leonard Ferber**, along with Commercial Finance associate **Julia Trotta**, are preparing the nonprofit's privacy policies, and Intellectual Property associate **Jeffrey Wakolbinger**, with help from paralegal **Deborah Wing**, prepared an application to the US Patent and Trademark Office to register its trade name and service mark. Additionally, **Rick de Anda**, a marketing desktop specialist, has worked with the team to create charts and other presentations to Reclaim13. In part due to Katten's support—which included a charity jeans day in Chicago—Reclaim13 has raised nearly \$1 million in funds.

Christopher Ferenc Wins Below-Guidelines Sentence for Pro Bono Client, Plaudits From Public Defender

Washington, DC Intellectual Property associate **Christopher Ferenc** received high praise from the Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Eastern District of Virginia for 14 months of work on a recent case. Chris' client entered a guilty plea for trafficking counterfeit Microsoft labels and his sentencing guidelines range was 21–27 months in prison. Chris persuaded the judge to instead sentence his client to four months of supervised probation in community confinement.

Following the sentencing, Kenneth Troccoli, Senior Litigator in the Public Defender's Office, wrote the following to Chris:

Thank you once again for your excellent pro bono work on [our client's] case. . . . Your allocution to the [District] Court today was eloquent, confident and persuasive, and it followed your excellent and convincing sentencing memorandum that we filed last week. And that work capped 14 months of dedicated work on [the client's] behalf. . . . Your work with all of these tasks was excellent, as the final result today bears out. . . . On behalf of the Federal Public Defender and on behalf of [the client], thank you for a job well done. Thank you for participating in our Pro Bono Counsel Program, and, as always, we appreciate Katten's continued support.

Sarah Bull Helps Defend Freedom of Press in Africa

London consultant **Sarah Bull** continues to donate her time as a trustee for [Media Legal Defence Initiative](#), a non-governmental organization based in London that helps journalists, bloggers and independent media outlets around the world defend their rights. In the last 12 months, the charity achieved its largest victory in a landmark ruling by the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. In the court's first judgment on free speech, it ruled that imprisonment for defamation violates the right to freedom of expression and that criminal defamation laws only should be used in restricted circumstances. This landmark case is significant for establishing press freedom in Africa.

The logo for Media Legal Defence Initiative (MLDI) is located in the bottom right corner. It consists of the acronym "MLDI" in a large, white, sans-serif font, set against a solid red rectangular background.

Chicago Intellectual Property Litigators Achieve Favorable Settlement for Pro Bono Trademark

Floyd Mandell, national co-chair of the Intellectual Property practice, and Intellectual Property associate **Matthew Holub** successfully enabled a local Chicago entrepreneur to avoid litigation while protecting her intellectual property rights. The client operates a cold-pressed juice establishment and delivery service aimed at health-conscious customers who enjoy fresh, organic products. While details of the settlement remain confidential, the client was extremely satisfied with the level of care and dedication exhibited by the Katten attorneys throughout the several rounds of negotiation.

Washington, DC Attorneys Volunteer at the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program's Advice and Referral Clinic

On December 12, Washington, DC attorneys helped 60 walk-in clients at the [D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program's Advice and Referral Clinic](#) at [Bread for the City's Northwest Center](#), a local non-profit community service organization. The attorneys provided much-needed legal services, addressing issues ranging from housing concerns to bankruptcy to drafting motions for ongoing litigation. The attorneys who participated include Environmental partner **David Hoffmann**, Structured Finance and Securitization partner **Seth Messner**, Aviation partner **Jane Cavanaugh**, Aviation associate **Brett Seifarth**, Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate **John Kozak**, Real Estate associates **Schuyler Armstrong** and **Julia Schmidt**, and Litigation and Dispute Resolution staff attorney **Kyra Smerkanich**.



Chicago Attorney Observes and Reports on Border Crossing Trials

As part of a delegation from Loyola University Chicago, Chicago Government and Public Finance associate and [National Immigrant Justice Society](#) (NIJC) leadership board member **Chad Doobay** recently observed “Operation Streamline” criminal proceedings for persons charged with unlawful entry or re-entry to the United States in Arizona. Chad’s report, published by NIJC, is available [here](#).



Legal Services of Southern Piedmont Recognizes Charlotte Team at Pro Bono Awards Ceremony

After securing custody orders for the mothers of three unaccompanied minors fleeing violence in Central America, the Charlotte team at the [Safe Child Immigration Project](#) received recognition from [Legal Services of Southern Piedmont](#) at the annual Pro Bono Awards ceremony. The ceremony was jointly held on October 20 by the Council for Children’s Rights, Legal Aid of North Carolina and Legal Services of Southern Piedmont. This is the second straight year Katten, whose team consisted of former Litigation special counsel **Christopher Hicks**, Real Estate staff attorney **Gary Redwine** and paralegal **Sara Brown**, has been recognized. Last year, the Council for Children’s Rights awarded Katten the Pro Bono Firm Service Award for work by the Truancy Team.



New Pro Bono Leadership in Charlotte and Texas Offices

Charlotte Litigation and Dispute Resolution partner **Richard Farley** is the new pro bono chair for the Charlotte office. Additionally, Houston Environmental partner **Daniella Landers** is the new pro bono chair for Katten’s Texas offices. She is assisted by co-chairs and Environmental associates **Catherine Bennett Hobson** (Austin) and **Jon Reidy** (Houston).

Aharon Kaye Elected to PILI Board of Directors

Chicago Litigation and Dispute Resolution partner **Aharon Kaye** has been elected to the [Public Interest Law Initiative](#) (PILI) board of directors for a three-year term. PILI seeks to cultivate a lifelong commitment to public interest law and pro bono service within the Illinois legal community in order to expand the availability of legal services for people, families and communities in need. Aharon is an alumnus of PILI's graduate fellowship program, which connects summer and new associates to pro bono work from the beginning of their careers.



Becky Lindahl Named to Safe Alliance Board of Directors

Charlotte Litigation and Dispute Resolution partner **Becky Lindahl** was elected to the board of directors of [Safe Alliance](#) for a three-year term beginning January 1, 2016. Safe Alliance provides 24-hour crisis services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. Becky has represented domestic violence victims through Safe Alliance for the past five years.



Daniel Render Named to Anti-Defamation League's Civil Rights Executive Committee

Chicago Corporate associate **Daniel Render** was named a member of the [Anti-Defamation League's Civil Rights Executive Committee](#). The committee works to combat anti-Semitism, hate crimes and violent bigotry while protecting equality and religious liberty for all.



Los Angeles – Downtown and Century City Attorneys and Staff Volunteer at Holiday Party for Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services

On December 1, the Los Angeles – Downtown and Century City offices held its fourth annual holiday party for 33 children at [Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services](#), a nonprofit agency that provides social, educational, and behavioral health services to children and families throughout Southern California. Katten volunteers decorated the agency's gym with Oscar Night-themed décor and lighting, provided a taco bar and chocolate fountains, and filled the space with music from a live DJ and holiday movies streamed on a large screen. Partygoers also enjoyed a photo booth and won Starbucks gift cards during games of bingo. **Zia Modabber**, head of the Los Angeles Litigation and Dispute Resolution practice, served as the event's Masters of Ceremonies, and Century City Litigation associate **Nicolas Gross** welcomed partygoers and led bingo games. Additionally, volunteer attorneys and staff paid for each child to receive a \$50 Target gift card, which also went to nine additional children unable to attend.



Katten Sponsors Young Professionals Board Fundraiser for LAF



Equal justice starts here.

The [Young Professionals Board](#) of [LAF](#) (formerly Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago) hosted its annual Autumn Affair fundraiser in November. Katten was the lead sponsor of the event, which raised more than \$26,000 in unrestricted funds to support LAF's services. LAF provides free legal services in non-criminal matters to people living in poverty in metropolitan Chicago. Unrestricted funding is money LAF can allocate wherever it is most needed, often to support individuals dealing with life-crippling civil legal issues. Chicago Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate Jared Heck and Intellectual Property associate T.J. Maas serve on the Young Professionals Board.

Houston Office Fulfills Wish Lists for Children From Child Protective Services



Katten's Houston office participated in the annual gift giving program for [BEAR](#), a nonprofit organization that provides emergency goods and services directly to children under the care of Child Protective Services (CPS) in Harris County. This year the Houston office was honored to sponsor 15 children and came together with a mission to fulfill each child's wish on his/her Christmas list. In doing so, Katten gave away a variety of gifts, including bikes, karaoke machines, LeapPad learning tablets and MP3 players.

Chicago Office Sponsors Fifth Annual Holiday Book Drive for José de Diego Community Academy

The Chicago office surpassed its goal of donating 900 books to [José de Diego Community Academy](#), which hosts Katten's legal clinic. Each of the 650 students at the school received a book and Katten donated an additional 357 books to De Diego's limited library. Litigation paralegal supervisor **Keith Forrest** worked with the school and Barnes & Noble to ensure each child received his/her requested book. Volunteers designed gift tags, wrapped books, and distributed the books to the school before the students departed for winter break. One hundred eighty-five Katten employees contributed to the book drive.

Greg Dillard Leads Katten's Sponsorship of Charity 5K to Support Mothers Against Cancer



Led by Houston Environmental and Workplace Safety partner **Greg Dillard**, Katten joined forces with [Mothers Against Cancer](#) (M.A.C.) to sponsor its annual 5K Run and Walk in September. M.A.C. is a non-profit charity that is supported by volunteer mothers to raise funds for children's cancer research, specifically for [Texas Children's Hospital Cancer Center](#). Greg's mom, Nancy Dillard, formed M.A.C. in honor of Ann Denman, a spirited two-year-old who lost her battle with cancer in 1984.



Chicago Office Creates Care Packages for the Homeless, Donates to Toys for Tots for 13th Year

In November, attorneys and staff in the Chicago office participated in a community service project to benefit the city's homeless. Volunteers donated products such as scarves, hats, bandages and lip balm and helped assemble 67 care packages. The packages will be distributed to those in need by the [Chicago Coalition for the Homeless](#).

During the Chicago office holiday party, attorneys and staff donated approximately 30 toys to the [Toys for Tots Foundation](#) and hosted a charity jeans day to raise funds for the agency. The US Marine Corps Reserve program collects new, unwrapped toys during October, November and December each year, and distributes those toys as Christmas gifts to less fortunate children in the community. This is Katten's 13th year donating to Toys for Tots.



coalition
for the
homeless

