

# pro bono & community service NEWS

September 2011

## Katten Donates \$15,000 in School Supplies to Two Chicago Public Schools

On September 30, Katten attorneys and staff delivered more than \$15,000 worth of school supplies to the firm's partner school [Jose de Diego Elementary Community Academy](#) and to [Orr Academy High School](#). Former Mayor **Richard M. Daley**, who is Of Counsel at Katten, has partnered with Orr through the Principal for a Day program for many years. As part of the donation, every student at de Diego (from Pre-K to 8th grade) received four composition books to be used in a yearlong journaling project. Juniors at Orr received calculators required for their math courses and both schools received other assorted school supplies for students at all grade levels.

Additional donations were made by individual attorneys and staff at Katten. The office supply company Staples generously provided a portion of the composition books and calculators, along with all of the pens, pencils and highlighters for both schools. Chicago Messenger graciously provided delivery services, ensuring that the supplies arrived at the school.



## Washington Office Assists Veterans in Obtaining Special Compensation

Under the leadership of Washington office *Pro Bono* Chair **Jane Cavanaugh**, 10 attorneys in that office are volunteering with the [Lawyers Serving Warriors™](#) *pro bono* program, a project of the National Veterans Legal Services Program, assisting veterans with their applications for "Combat-Related Special Compensation." This project enables each volunteer to represent an individual veteran in applying for benefits that might otherwise not be accessible to that veteran. The additional compensation can make a significant difference in the veterans' quality of life.

Tens of thousands of the men and women who served in Iraq or Afghanistan have developed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), often in addition to physical injuries, as a result of their exposure to life-threatening events that occurred in these combat zones. Under a relatively new law, many of these veterans who are forced to retire due to significant combat-related injuries are now entitled to compensation specifically provided for these injuries, in addition to disability or retirement compensation. "Combat-Related Special Compensation," or CRCSC, can provide hundreds of dollars a month in additional tax-free compensation to



veterans with qualifying disabilities. To obtain CRSC, the disabled veteran must complete a detailed application form and submit evidence and argument proving that his or her disabilities satisfy the statutory definition of “combat related.” Given the complexity of the CRSC application and the need to provide ample documentation to prove that disabilities are combat related, those suffering from PTSD and other serious disabilities are likely to need help in filing a persuasive application. Government lawyers are not available to assist disabled veterans in completing and supporting CRSC applications.

In addition to Jane, the attorneys involved in Lawyers Serving Warriors are **Matthew Fischer**, **Amy Harvey**, **Oonagh Deasy**, **Sean Gordon**, **Kristine Rembach**, **Michael White**, **Chris Ferenc**, **Brandon Hadley**, **Om Jahagirdar** and **Michael Murphy**.

## Appellate Victory in Prison Medical Needs Case

In collaboration with the [American Civil Liberties Union](#) (ACLU) and [Lambda Legal](#), Director of *Pro Bono* Services **Jonathan Baum** and Chicago litigation associate **Alyx Pattison** recently won a unanimous decision from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit invalidating a Wisconsin statute that bars treatment for Gender Identity Disorder (GID) in prisons, even for inmates identified by prison medical authorities as having a serious medical need for the treatment. For several years, prisons across the country have routinely provided hormone therapy and other forms of treatment for inmates diagnosed with GID, a well-recognized psychiatric disorder. The Wisconsin State Legislature, over the objections of its own Department of Corrections (DOC), passed the challenged law in 2005. This law appears to be the only one of its kind in the nation and Wisconsin has no other law prohibiting any specific medical treatment for inmates—even treatments that are far more expensive and whose efficacy is far more debated than hormone therapy for GID. ACLU and Lambda Legal attorneys won a trial victory over the law in a Wisconsin federal district court, which declared the law unconstitutional on its face as a violation of the Eighth Amendment’s ban on “cruel and unusual punishment.” The Eighth Amendment’s ban has long been held to bar prison authorities from displaying “deliberate indifference to serious medical needs” of the inmates in their custody. Jonathan and Alyx joined the ACLU and Lambda Legal attorneys in defending the district court’s decision when Wisconsin appealed it to the Seventh Circuit. The Court of Appeals issued a ringing affirmation of the district court’s decision, holding that the challenged law “serves no valid penological purpose and amounts to torture.”

## New York Client Launches “Rooftop Farm of the Future”

Katten’s VOLS/NYC Business Solutions *pro bono* client [Gotham Greens](#) just launched its rooftop farming venture in Brooklyn. The firm is assisting the company with trademark applications and in securing rights to various other intellectual property through work-for-hire agreements, etc. Funded largely by public and private grants and loans, Gotham Greens is finally starting to distribute—to Whole Foods, Fresh Direct and Mario Batali’s Eataly, among others. Click [here](#) to read a recent *Fast Company* article about Gotham Greens.

## Making a Difference at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank

On August 27, a group of Katten employees and their friends and family helped sort food and prepare care packages for underprivileged families at the [Los Angeles Regional Food Bank](#). Volunteers included partners **Kristin Holland** and **Tiffany Hofeldt**, paralegal **Lisa Levinson**, secretaries **Paula Phillips** and **Julie Ford**, and administrative assistant **Christine Morrison**. Earlier this year, the Food Bank presented the Los Angeles office with a Bronze Partner Award for its efforts during the 2011 Food from the Bar Campaign. The office provided approximately 27 volunteer hours, donated over 200 pounds of food, and gave individual cash donations equaling \$1,025 in meals for the hungry men, women and children in Los Angeles.



## 12th Annual Pro Bono Service Awards

Nine attorneys were recognized this summer for their outstanding *pro bono* service as part of the firm's annual *Pro Bono* Service Awards. In addition, Katten's pro bono program founder, tax partner **Reid Mandel**, was honored with a special *Pro Bono* Leadership Award. The *Pro Bono* Service Awards include a \$1,000 honorarium, which recipients donated to the charities of their choice. Reid donated his honorarium to the Community Economic Development Law Project of the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

### *Charlotte*

The Honorable Richard D. Boner, Senior Resident Superior Court Judge, Mecklenburg County, presented trusts and estates associate **Diane Burke** with her award. Diane donated her honorarium to the Paula Takacs Foundation for Sarcoma Research.

### *Chicago*

The Honorable James R. Epstein, Justice of the Illinois Appellate Court, presented awards to litigation partner **David Benson** and public finance associate **Chad Doobay**. David donated his honorarium to the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and Chad donated his honorarium to the National Immigrant Justice Center.

### *Los Angeles*

Litigation associates **Noah Balch** and **Gloria Franke** received their awards from the Honorable A. Howard Matz of the United States District Court for the Central District of California. Noah donated his honorarium to Sheen Educational Foundation and Gloria donated her honorarium to Dress for Success Worldwide – West (Los Angeles).

### *New York*

Sarah Green, Director of Customer Support Services at NYC Business Solutions, presented awards to trusts and estates counsel **Robert Friedman** and litigation associate **Jovana Vujovic**. Trusts and estates associate **Jacqueline Garrod** received an honorable mention. Robert donated his honorarium to the Adirondack Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and the Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks, and Jovana donated her honorarium to Upwardly Global.

### *Washington, D.C.*

Charlie Barnett, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Maryland Youth Ballet, Inc., and Nancie Marzulla, a member of the Board of Directors, presented corporate associate **Seth Messner** with his award. Seth donated his honorarium to Maryland Youth Ballet.

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## Firm Begins New School Partnership with Day of Service

On July 8, the Chicago office kicked off its new partnership with Jose de Diego Elementary Community Academy by painting six classrooms at the school. Director of Operations **Rich Kozlowski** worked with vendors who supply the firm to secure the donation of paint, brushes and other necessary supplies for the project. Partner **Sheldon Zenner**, associate **Alyx Pattison** and Attorney Recruiting Manager **Grace Johnson** joined the entire 2011 summer associate class in painting.

Katten's partnership with de Diego offers numerous other opportunities for staff and attorneys to volunteer, including:

- tutoring students;
- teaching seventh and eighth grade students about the Constitution and preparing them for a mock trial in the spring;
- judging the school's history fair and science fair;



- volunteering at one-day fundraising activities; and
- participating in the holiday book drive.

The firm's Desktop Publishing team and the Copy Center in Chicago will also help de Diego organize and print their school newsletters, activity programs and other materials on an ongoing basis. We encourage you to get involved with de Diego in whatever way you can. For more information on the school and volunteer opportunities, please contact Alyx Pattison at x5549, Jason Gorczynski at x5239 or Keith Forrest at x8322.

## In the Classroom

Washington litigation associate **Joe Fiorill** recently taught a class on the Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination at D.C.'s Wilson High School as part of the [American Constitution Society's Constitution in the Classroom program](#), which is organized around Constitution Day. The program sends practicing lawyers and in some cases law students into elementary, middle and high schools to present lessons designed to increase basic constitutional literacy. If you would like to volunteer with Constitution in the Classroom, contact Joe.

New York intellectual property associate **David Sherman** has been lecturing regularly across the city at [NYC Business Solutions](#) Center business courses for low-income entrepreneurs and small businesses. In September he presented "Intellectual Property Basics" in Brooklyn and this month he'll lead a class on "What Entrepreneurs Need to Know About Intellectual Property" in the Bronx. The courses are all provided as part of Katten's involvement with the award-winning Volunteers of Legal Service (VOLS) Microenterprise Project.

## Building Libraries in Africa

Chicago trusts and estates partner **Jonathan Graber** helped area resident Marium Baker launch Ubuntu Literacy Project, a nonprofit public charity to raise funds to help build libraries in developing countries, primarily in Africa. Marium's goal is for the libraries to serve as community resources and as training centers to upgrade local skills and foster microenterprising. It was a long road to tax exempt status, as public charities raising funds to be used overseas come under intense scrutiny from the IRS. Marium was inspired to take on the challenge of forming Ubuntu because of her love for education and children and her prior experience as a Peace Corps volunteer.

## Los Angeles Office Participating in Second Annual Bike Ride Benefitting LIVESTRONG

Last year, along with a number of his cycling teammates, others from our firm and many other generous organizations and individuals, Los Angeles partner **Zia Modabber** created and organized a charity bike ride that raised more than \$100,000 for *pro bono* client LIVESTRONG. This year's bike ride, [Malibu Canyons Gran Fondo](#), will take place on Sunday, October 30. Katten returns as a sponsor of the event, along with new firm client RadioShack. Members of the Los Angeles office will be riding and providing volunteer support at the event. If you would like to make a donation on behalf of "Team Katten," click [here](#).

## Bringing the Performing Arts to All

Chicago partner **Reid Mandel** and associates **Devan Popat** and **Jason Gorczynski** provided *pro bono* representation to the [Wilmette Theatre Education Project](#) in connection with the acquisition and financing of the historic Wilmette Theatre in Wilmette, Illinois. The WTEP was formed to promote the visual and performing arts and make them available to all populations regardless of age, race, income or ability. Built in 1913 and renovated in 2006, the Wilmette Theatre offers both first-run and art films as well as variety of live events, and also is home to an actors training center.



## Kazakhstani Teen Granted Asylum

Chicago public finance associate **Chad Doobay** won asylum for his client, a 17-year-old who fled Kazakhstan after being the target of brutal beatings, harassment and intimidation on account of his homosexuality. Our client's parents sold their family home and moved several times within Kazakhstan to ensure the safety of their son, but he was subjected to violence wherever they went. **Irina Birman**, a financial systems analyst in the Accounting Department, assisted in the matter by providing translation services.

## Donate Your Old Phone to Cell Phones for Soldiers

Washington paralegal **Renee Lessner** is currently collecting old cell phones for the [Cell Phones for Soldiers](#) campaign, which sells the phones to a recycling company and uses the funds to purchase prepaid calling cards for U.S. troops stationed overseas. During the last collection Renee coordinated in 2008, she collected 98 phones from across the firm—or 98 hours of talk time for soldiers and their loved ones. So far, Renee has collected 13 phones. If you are interested in donating your old phone(s) (with or without the charger), please send them in an interoffice envelope or box to Renee's attention in the Washington office by November 11. Donated phones do not need to be in working condition, and Renee will clean all phones and erase all data before sending them out. She will also send you a donation receipt for your tax records.

## Victory in Employment Discrimination Matter

Chicago intellectual property partner **Michael Dorfman**, employment law partner **Jim Gecker** and litigation associate **Blake Mills** obtained a favorable result for a court-appointed client in an employment discrimination case in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. Our client worked for several years at a major food processing plant and was denied advancement and overtime opportunities based on her gender. Following submission of position letters and a conference before the magistrate judge assigned to the case, a settlement was reached providing a significant award to our client to compensate her for lost wages.

## Katten's Pro Bono Program Featured in Chicago Lawyer

Katten's *pro bono* program was featured in the article "Large firms take strategic approach to pro bono," which appears in the September 2011 issue of *Chicago Lawyer*. Katten partner and Director of *Pro Bono Services* **Jonathan Baum**, partner **David Benson** and associate **Chad Doobay** all were interviewed for the article, which examines how large law firms currently are working to increase *pro bono* participation. >>[read more](#)

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Please send comments, suggestions and news about interesting *pro bono* cases and matters you've been involved with, as well as any non-legal community service work you're doing, to [jonathan.baum@kattenlaw.com](mailto:jonathan.baum@kattenlaw.com).

