

March 2013

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## LA Attorneys Win Order Securing Affordable Housing Funds

In association with [Public Counsel](#) and the [California Affordable Housing Project of the Public Interest Law Project](#), Los Angeles Real Estate Partner **Allan Abshez** and Special Counsel **Elizabeth Camacho** are representing the [Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing](#) (SCANPH) to obtain an injunction against the State of California. SCANPH, a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to producing, preserving and managing affordable homes, is attempting to prevent the State from taking the City of Industry Funds, a crucial source of funding for affordable housing in the Los Angeles region. A Sacramento judge has issued a temporary restraining order, prohibiting the funds from being disbursed for purposes other than affordable housing for low- and moderate-income people. The case is set for a hearing on the merits on April 12.



## NY Attorneys Aid Hurricane Sandy Victims

Through its ongoing relationship with [VOLS](#) (Volunteers of Legal Services), Katten was approached and asked to volunteer in providing real estate advice to various commercial tenants whose premises were damaged by Hurricane Sandy. VOLS identified two business owners in need of pro bono counsel, and Of Counsel **Andrew Wu** and Associate **Eugene Lerman** of Katten's New York Real Estate Department offered to provide assistance with such tenant matters. One of the business owners has a dental office in Coney Island that was forced to remain closed for more than a month due to damages to the leased premises. Although the landlord has already agreed to a two-month rent abatement, the tenant is continuing to pursue its entitlement to reimbursement for its out-of-pocket costs in repairing and restoring the leased premises. Katten's New York Real Estate Department has also offered to conduct a presentation regarding commercial leasing matters to VOLS.

## Chicago Attorneys Provide Small Business Guidance



On March 6, Chicago Corporate Partner **Diane Bell** and Labor and Employment Special Counsel **Nineveh Alkhas** were presenters at the "Small Business Clinic" organized by [The Law Project](#), a provider of high-quality legal counsel for nonprofit organizations and small business in need to transactional legal assistance. The clinic focused on the legal steps an entrepreneur should consider when starting and conducting business in Illinois. Diane and Nineveh covered topics such as forming a corporation, protecting ideas, hiring employees and independent contractors, and legal liabilities.

## Century City Team Drafts Unusual *Amicus* Brief Opposing Proposition 8

Century City Litigation Partner **David Kettel** and Associates **Justin Ford** and **Rebecca Ganz** drafted a brief on behalf of *amicus curiae* Dr. Maria Nieto in *Hollingsworth v. Perry*, the US Supreme Court case challenging the constitutionality of California's Proposition 8. Dr. Nieto, a professor of biological sciences at California State University, East Bay, shared how the existence of intersex conditions in the human genome and the distinction between biological sex—which is a genetic classification—and gender—which is an identity expression—show that classifications like those employed in Proposition 8 are not rational.

*Hollingsworth* was argued March 26 before the Supreme Court. An opinion is expected in June.

## Washington, D.C. Office Donates Computer to Duke Ellington School of the Arts

As part of Katten's school supply initiative, the firm's Washington, D.C. office donated a new Apple computer to [Duke Ellington School of the Arts](#) on January 11. One of the District of Columbia's top-ranked high schools, the public school's location in Georgetown, close to the Katten office, made it an obvious choice for a donation, offering an opportunity to make a local educational impact.

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*Staff members at Duke Ellington School of the Arts unpack the new computer donated by the Washington, D.C. office to the school's Visual Arts Department.*



## Chicago Team Negotiates Return of Security Deposit for Nonprofit Theatre

Chicago Real Estate Associates **Ari Krigel** and **Evan Epstein** helped [Northlight Theatre](#) recover its security deposit from its former landlord for its scene shop, where the theater builds its sets. After Northlight moved the scene shop to a new location, the landlord refused to return any of Northlight's security deposit. The landlord responded to frequent requests for refunds with invalid, erroneous reasons for retaining the security deposit. Once the Katten team was involved, they secured Northlight's entire security deposit without the need for litigation.

NORTHLIGHT  
THEATRE

## New York Office Teams with Start Small Think Big to Support Entrepreneurs

On March 6, the New York office held an orientation to discuss opportunities to get involved with [Start Small Think Big](#), a nonprofit organization that helps individuals in New York City's most underserved communities build assets and increase their personal financial security. Jennifer DaSilva, founder and executive director of Start Small Think Big, explained how the organization brings high-quality financial development services and small business legal assistance to low- to moderate-income entrepreneurs in New York City, enabling them to accumulate assets, increase personal financial security and contribute to the economy. Volunteer opportunities include helping small business clients with entity selection issues, contract and commercial lease drafting/negotiation, employment/HR issues, taxes or intellectual property questions (copyrights, trademarks, patents).



## Jose de Diego Book Club Provides Mentoring/Tutoring Opportunities in Chicago



In January, Katten’s Chicago office resumed the [Jose de Diego Community Academy](#) book club. Six groups of students from grades 4–6 meet with firm volunteers on a biweekly basis for tutoring and mentoring. Together, the students and volunteers discuss chapters of a pre-selected book and develop creative projects such as videos, posters and plays.

In related news, the Katten Legal Clinic at Jose de Diego is scheduled to open in mid-April. Approximately 30 attorneys and 5 staff members have volunteered for this project, which will provide free legal assistance to the families of de Diego students once each month in conjunction with [LAF](#) (formerly the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago). For more information, or to volunteer, please contact [Jonathan Baum](#).

## Appointment

Director of Pro Bono Services **Jonathan Baum** has been appointed to a newly created Public Interest Advisory Board at the University of Chicago Law School.

## From a Grateful Client: Office of the Federal Public Defender of the Eastern District of Virginia

Washington, D.C. Litigation Associate **Robert T. Smith**, volunteering with the pro bono attorney program of the Office of the Federal Public Defender of the Eastern District of Virginia, assisted in a defense representation regarding wire fraud. The defendant was acquitted on all 10 counts, with Rob drafting a motion to dismiss, opening statement and jury instructions. First Assistant Federal Public Defender Jeremy Kamens expressed appreciation for Rob’s time and efforts, stating that Rob “devised the legal strategy that was the basis for our defense” and “put in many hours late into the evening. . . including over the weekend.” Mr. Kamens concluded, “I do not think that [the client] would have been acquitted but for Rob’s extremely fine work, and I am very grateful that your firm agreed to allow him to participate in our pro bono program.”