

# THE SUMMIT



The official newsletter of AppalReD Legal Aid



[www.ardfky.org](http://www.ardfky.org)

120 N. Front Ave. Prestonsburg, KY 41653

(606) 886-9876

## IN THIS ISSUE

**ROSENBERG CIRCLE**

**CORE VALUES  
STATEMENT**

**APPALRED  
HONORED WITH  
NOSSCR AWARD**

**UPDATE ON CONN  
CASES**

**PRO BONO  
ATTORNEY  
RECRUITMENT DRIVE**

**FEMA TIPTOES OUT  
OF EASTERN  
KENTUCKY**

## From the Executive Director's Desk: Collaboration and Community

*Dear friends,*

I have just returned from our Hazard office where three “new” attorneys have joined us. We are so fortunate to have the talent and expertise of this team serving the Hazard region. Devon Skeens has returned to AppalReD Legal Aid to serve as Directing Attorney, while Monica Rice-Smith and Emma Jones bring a combined 45 years of legal knowledge to the office.

The future is not without challenges. A recently completed Legal Needs Assessment highlighted the lack of affordable housing in the region. This has been greatly exacerbated by the July '22 flooding and is an ever present challenge for clients and staff. Aging buildings and infrastructure. Dwindling American Rescue Plan funds used to serve victims of domestic violence. The end of FEMA assistance in our region. The list goes on.

Yet we have every reason to hope for a bright future for AppalReD and our region. At a recent expungement clinic, AppalReD Legal Aid helped a student pursue her dream of nursing. Another woman expressed gratitude, saying that an expungement clinic opened up custody options for her.

(Cont. pg 2)

# Rosenberg Circle



Join our community of monthly donors advancing equal access to justice across Appalachian Kentucky.

DONATE NOW



## From the Executive Director's Desk: Collaboration and Community

She told us she got to hug her her children for the first time in three years. Another woman reclaimed her children from an abusive ex and parent. Our Project Renew clients display such grit everyday.

This spring, our staff was energized by a meeting of Project Renew attorneys and paralegals from the state's four legal aid programs. The collaboration and innovation of Project Renew is making a real difference for families impacted by the opioid crisis. On page 7, we share one client's story.

As our entire team of sixty gathered in the Red River Gorge this April, I was struck by the many years of experience in the room, the range of skills and talents, and how deeply committed to the mission our staff are. Together we crafted a value statement that will guide us into the future as we embark on strategic planning. I'm excited to share the values statement with you.

Finally, I want to take a moment to thank YOU. Just this month, four attorneys answered the call to take on pro bono cases. We also launched the Rosenberg Circle, a monthly giving society, to honor John and Jean and ensure the sustainability of AppalReD well into the future. So far we have 25 founding members. It is not too late to join!

 *Angeleigh Dorsey*  
AngieD@ardfky.org

## THE ROSENBERG CIRCLE

### *Founding Members*

John and Jean Rosenberg

Nina Beattie  
Patrice Blanchard  
Bertram Brown  
Charnel Burton  
Joe Childers  
Sarah Curry  
Kellie Dingus  
Charles DiSalvo  
Angeleigh Dorsey  
Eric Edwards  
Lorie Elam  
Tom FitzGerald  
William Gottlieb  
Tammy Hatfield  
Melissa Henke  
James T. Hesterberg  
Robert Jones  
Katherine Kendall  
Lynda and Terry Manon  
Tia Marie Murphy  
Col Owens  
Amelia Pickering  
Charly Sholty  
Jim Straus  
Justice Daniel Venters

# APPALRED LEGAL AID CORE VALUES



## EMPATHY

We strive to understand our client's perspectives.



## SERVICE

We strengthen our communities by providing high quality legal services.

## JUSTICE

We fight to give everyone a fair chance at a just outcome.



## ACCESSIBILITY

We think creatively to continually improve access to legal services. We are available and responsive to clients.



## DIGNITY

We see the value in each person and treat everyone with respect.



## EXCELLENCE

We employ talented and dedicated legal professionals with decades of experience.

## EQUITY

We provide fair and equal treatment to all clients.



## INTEGRITY

We treat everyone with honesty and hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards.



AppalRed  
Legal Aid





**Staff worked  
together to  
define and  
author our  
values this  
spring at  
Cliffview.**





# AppalReD Legal Aid Honored At NOSSCR Conference

AppalReD Legal Aid and Ned Pillersdorf were honored at the National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives (NOSSCR) Conference in Nashville, TN. AppalReD was awarded the prestigious Nancy G. Shor Leadership Award for the leadership displayed in response to the Conn crisis. Pillersdorf has represented countless Conn victims, while AppalReD Legal Aid has served as the clearinghouse for recruiting and coordinating hundreds of volunteer lawyers over nearly a decade.

## Update on Conn Cases

The Eric C. Conn Social Security fraud resulted in thousands of low-income and deserving eastern Kentuckians losing their Social Security benefits. The Conn crisis has been devastating for low-income disabled people in our communities. Hearings continue nearly a decade later.

Perhaps the only bright spot has been the thousands of law students and attorneys from Kentucky and across the country who have volunteered over the past nine years to represent former Conn clients. Recently, AppalReD Legal Aid has been getting another round of hearing notices for former clients of Eric Conn. The victims of Eric Conn and the Social Security judges' bribery scheme still need help.

Thankfully, new volunteers have stepped up to the plate as long-term volunteers retire or take on other efforts. This spring, Florida attorney Kara Skorupa joined AppalReD Legal Aid's Pro Bono Program as our newest volunteer and took 13 Conn cases! We are so grateful to Kara for her willingness to help. A former SSA staff attorney, she has subsequently represented claimants privately for years. She says, "I just want to make sure these people actually get the help they need in a timely manner."

**"When I look at the incredible attorneys who have won this award, I can't make sense of a scrappy legal aid from Appalachia up on this stage. But then I realized, the reason is YOU. All of you at NOSSCR who have defended a Conn victim. We would not be up here without you. And we still need you."**

Evan Smith



## Pro Bono Attorney Recruitment Drive

THANK  
YOU  
😊

AppalReD Legal Aid's Pro Bono Program launched a pro bono attorney drive on Law Day, May 1. Charnel Burton, Pro Bono Director, issued a big challenge to AppalReD's staff attorneys. She asked each attorney to recruit one attorney who will agree to take one pro bono case per year.

Currently, AppalReD Legal Aid is grateful to have 30 attorneys who take cases through private attorney involvement contracts. This involvement from the private bar is critical.

But AppalReD's pro bono program is striving to help even more clients, and to do so we need more attorneys willing to take a case pro bono.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact CharnelB@ardfky.org. She'll ask you more about your geographic preferences and what type of case you're most interested in helping with. Family law is the highest need but she will work to match you with a client that needs your expertise.

There are also opportunities to help at pro se family law clinics (in-person and virtual), expungement clinics, and will clinics. Law students and law groups are welcome to help at these events too.



UC Berkeley Law Students volunteered this spring.

### *Pro Bono Attorneys*

Marsha Taylor  
Adam Hall  
Brandi Hurley  
Tammy and Melissa Howard

### *Clinic Volunteers*

Beverly "Boo" Shea  
Marilyn Neumann  
Steve Bailey  
Daryle Ronning  
James Doug Holliday  
Holly Coleman

### *Private Attorney Involvement*

Jesse Moberg  
Don Bailey  
Whitney Howard  
Tim Despotes  
Jennifer Taylor  
Annie Francis  
David Hicks  
Ron Diddle  
Marcus Fannon  
Jill Haste  
Tammy and Melissa Howard  
Mary Beth Wesley  
Marsha Taylor  
Brian Reed  
Daryle Ronning  
J. Clair Edwards  
Susan Ham  
Kenneth Stepp  
Ryan Mosley  
Marilyn Neumann  
Eric Dixon  
Shelby Crawford  
Holly Coleman



## With Project Renew People Can and Do Recover



Teresa had hit rock bottom when she met an AppalReD attorney while in jail. She was suffering from Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and knew when she was released, she would need help. Like many inmates, Teresa lacked basic I.D. documents. Her attorney helped her obtain a birth certificate while

she was in jail. After her release, she contacted Project Renew for housing resources. Teresa became employed but was still unhoused, couch surfing at relatives. She contacted her attorney, hoping to regain custody of her children. Her former spouse was also harassing her, trying to take her car and showing up where she was staying.

With the help of her attorney, she won joint custody of her children! Her custody order moved her up the waitlist for public housing. Soon, she moved into an apartment big enough for her and her three children. Her attorney also got an order that Teresa had legal rights to the car.

Today, Teresa has graduated drug court and been promoted at work. With the help of her attorney, she titled the disputed car and surprised her daughter for her 16th birthday. Now she can drive to work and school!



Photo by Justin Hicks Susan Hall looks through binder of FEMA paperwork she's file and received to repair her home in Hindman.

## FEMA Tiptoes out of Eastern Kentucky

In late April, Kentucky journalist Justin Hicks released a news piece weeks in the making. Many eastern Kentucky flood survivors logged into the FEMA Portal to find their appeal closed with no decision. His investigation began with a simple question: is there a deadline for FEMA appeals?

Hicks spent weeks interviewing eastern Kentucky flood survivors, speaking with recovery organizations across the country who work with FEMA, and examining FEMA regulations. What he found: **FEMA often exits communities without publicizing deadlines.** Hicks writes that FEMA said "they rely on the media to spread press releases about FEMA processes" but no press releases were issued.

Further, when Disaster Resource Project Director Whitney Bailey spoke about the deadline on WYMT and published an op-ed in *The Herald-Leader* a FEMA spokesperson contacted both media sources and asked them to retract the piece.

Angeleigh Dorsey says, "This is heartbreaking and entirely avoidable. Sadly, this will not be eastern Kentucky's last natural disaster. Disaster relief and recovery necessitate transparency and accountability. Eastern Kentuckians deserve better."



*NPR's All  
Things  
Considered*



*Louisville  
Public  
Radio*





**AppalReD**  
Legal Aid

120 N. Front Ave.  
Prestonsburg, KY 41653

Non Profit  
Org.  
US Postage  
PAID  
Permit #9

FUNDED BY THE LEGAL  
SERVICES CORPORATION,  
THE COMMONWEALTH OF  
KENTUCKY, KENTUCKY IOLTA  
FUNDS, OTHER FEDERAL  
FUNDS AND PRIVATE  
DONATIONS  
[WWW.KYJUSTICE.ORG](http://WWW.KYJUSTICE.ORG)

**LSC**  
America's Partner  
for Equal Justice  
LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

Join our  
community of  
monthly donors  
advancing  
equal access to  
justice  
across Appalachia

*founder  
member*  
**PERK**



**[ARDFKY.ORG/DONATE](http://ARDFKY.ORG/DONATE)**

