



FORT BEND LAWYERS CARE

equal access to justice through volunteer lawyers

July 2008
Volume 2, Issue 3

1405A Main Street
Richmond, Texas 77469

154 cases closed

FBLC is proud to announce that through the dedicated efforts of our volunteer lawyers, non-lawyer volunteers, and our generous supporters, we have closed 154 cases, since June, 2006.



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REMINDER: Fort Bend Lawyers Care Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, August 28, 2008
5:30-7:00p.m.

Please RSVP to Holly Reyes @
281-239-0015

FBLC is Seeking Volunteer Lawyers

43 qualified pro bono cases are waiting to be matched with a volunteer lawyer. If you are interested in taking a civil pro bono case to help a low income citizen of Fort Bend County, please contact **Angela Oaks** at

281-239-0015



Letter from Executive Director Angela Oaks

Dear FBLC Supporters;

My message this month is simple: **THANK YOU.**

Thank you, Volunteer Lawyers, who have closed 154 cases as of July 16th. You answer LegalLine calls, attend Women's Legal Forum, and give community presentations. All told, you have helped over 1,500 low-income Fort Bend County residents who would not otherwise receive legal counsel.

And thank you, our non-lawyer volunteers. You witnessed 28 wills and other end-of-life documents for low-income seniors at our first wills clinic in June.

Thank you, our Guardian Angels. This summer, you donated funds to help a victim of domestic abuse subpoena records which will help her case.

Thank you, Fort Bend County Judges. With your support, we have offered two CLEs this quarter, and the volunteer lawyers who attended have agreed to take on 60 additional pro bono cases.

Thank you, Advisory Board, for volunteering your time and experience to the cause. Your support is vital to our mission.

Thank you, members of the Fort Bend County Bar Association, for your constant support and encouragement.

And thank you, FBLC Board of Directors. You are all heroes. Thank you for your vision, your passion, and your commitment to equal access to justice.

154 cases closed. We truly are making a difference in Fort Bend County.

Angela



FBLC gives thanks to the Volunteer Attorneys who have accepted pro bono cases in the last quarter.

Kathy Black
Kathy Carpenter
Will Colgin
Tony Duckett
Charles Huber
Brian Knipling
Chris McDaniels
John Millard
Jeff Novy
Mike Orsak

Matt Probus
Fred Riepen
Nina Schaefer
Andy Schreck
Sarah Springer
Sharon Steckler
Kyle Sweet
Corrine Vahalik
Wes Wauson



2008 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Watch your email box on August 1st for your 2008
FBLC Membership Application

Wills Clinic Fort Bend Gardens

In June, 2008, Fort Bend Lawyers CARE hosted our first Wills Clinic at the Fort Bend Gardens Apartments. FBLC volunteer lawyers had finalized the preparation of the wills and other-end-of-life documents throughout the month, and on June 27th, dozens of documents were signed by FBLC clients and witnessed by FBLC non lawyer volunteers. Fort Bend Gardens is the only HUD housing in Fort Bend that caters to aging tenants. FBLC volunteer lawyers assisted 14 low-income seniors, helping them prepare for the sunset of their lives.

We received much positive feedback from the clients who participated in the Wills Clinic. The clients thanked the volunteer attorneys for being such a great help, not only in drafting the documents but also in providing explanations and advice. Some expressed that a burden has been lifted off of their shoulders, knowing that this important step had been completed.

These are the types of differences being made every day by FBLC volunteer lawyers and non-lawyers. To participate in the next Wills Clinic, contact Angela Oaks or Holly Reyes at 281-239-0015.



Thank you, Tom Neal

Many thanks to Tom Neal, FBLC's Website Designer.
Tom has done a wonderful job with the Fort Bend Lawyers CARE website.

www.FortBendLawyersCARE.org

A Big THANK YOU to Advisory Board Member, Paula Moss

Paula Moss, FBLC Advisory Board Member, donated food for our July 2nd LegalLine. Five volunteers enjoyed sandwiches, potato salad, veggies and dip and cookies, "feeding" their commitment to pro bono legal services.

Thank you, Paula, for recognizing that our volunteers are our most precious asset.

Also, a big thank you to Advisory Board members, Jacob Abraham and Bency Issac for intaking LegalLine callers.

If you would like to volunteer for LegalLine, please contact Holly Reyes at 281-239-0015. Non-lawyer volunteers are needed to intake callers; volunteer lawyers are always welcome to answer legal questions. Food donations are always welcome!



LegalLine Update

Thank You for Making LegalLine a Success

Thanks to our dedicated volunteers, LegalLine has met from 7 pm - 9 pm on the first Wednesday of each month for the last twenty four months. Since June 2006, 144 volunteer lawyers have donated more than 250 hours of billable time, answering hundreds of calls and legal questions for low-income Fort Bend County residents. Issues range from bankruptcy, to insurance, to personal injury, to wills, and back again. Callers remain anonymous, as do volunteer lawyers.

To volunteer for LegalLine, please contact Angela Oaks at angela@fortbendlawyersCARE.org.

18 Volunteer Lawyers attend Guardianship Seminar, June 20, 2008

Fort Bend County Bar Association and FBLC sponsored a 2nd Guardianship Certification CLE this summer, free to all attorneys in exchange for taking on 2 pro bono cases within the next 24 months. With guardianship certification, attorneys can be appointed as attorneys ad litem in any guardianship case.

Thanks to all of the attorneys that participated, and to our presenters:

- Kirk Monroe
- Virginia Lootens
- Hon. Susan Lowery
- Barbara Hartle
- Suzanne Kornblit



FBLC volunteer lawyer Matt Probus assists the Eubanks family with a guardianship; Judge Lowery presiding.

Lawyers on Steroids

By: Matt Howard, FBLC intern, Summer 2008

It is unlikely that when Fort Bend Lawyers Care was first founded, the original group of attorneys could imagine the progress that would be made in providing legal assistance for the less fortunate residents of Fort Bend County. As of July 16th, 2008, this group has closed one hundred and fifty four cases and is making a profound impact on the Fort Bend County community.

The speed with which FBLC has matured in its quest to bring legal help to those who need it and cannot afford it is truly astonishing. In its first year FBLC closed only seven cases and the outlook seemed to be one of a drawn out struggle for recognition and growth. In its second year however, FBLC made great strides, increasing the number of closed cases fourfold and it could be assumed that this success would continue to multiply as FBLC became more publicized in the general community.

What has happened in 2008 can best be described as an explosion. As of July 16th, FBLC has closed 154 cases: more than nineteen times the number of cases closed in their inaugural year. One hundred and fifty four cases closed are 154 problems set right and 154 clients who can go on with their lives more confidently. By closing these cases in such volume, FBLC is making a huge difference in the Fort Bend community, and is gaining a reputation as an organization that is willing to do the right thing.

As a non profit organization, FBLC relies totally upon the generosity of others to continue to function. It is through the donations of money from various foundations and the donation of time and hard work from FBLC's pool of volunteer lawyers that allows for such accelerated growth. If there were such a thing as lawyer steroids, FBLC would definitely be tested.

As a non profit organization, the FBLC is the complete package: its Legalline assists people who require legal advice, it holds clinics on different types of cases, and it closes cases. The development and maturing of this organization as a whole warrants congratulations for the president, board of directors, attorneys and everyone else involved in this growing organization as it makes a difference in Fort Bend County.

Upcoming Events

Fish City Grill 1st Tuesday - all day
Sugar Land Town Square, next to the Marriott
August 5th

Legal Line
August 6th, September 3rd, & October 8th

Advisory Board Meeting
August 28, 2008

Women's Legal Forum
September 17th, November 19th

30th Annual Fort Bend County Bar Association
SIENNA PLANTATION GOLF TOURNAMENT
September 19, 2008

Walk in Legal Clinic @ The George Library
September 20, 2008

Jewels of Fort Bend
SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES STILL AVAILABLE
Honoring the JEWLES of Fort Bend County: Carol Browne, Dee Koch, Tami
McGuire, Billie Wendt and KK West
All proceeds to benefit FBLC
September 25th

Strategic Partners Updates

Fort Bend Lawyers CARE Approves New Strategic Partnerships with three Fort Bend County organizations: Asians Against Domestic Abuse, Fort Bend Habitat for Humanity, and the Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse, Inc.



Asians Against Domestic Abuse (AADA) is a non-profit organization that serves battered women in the Asian American community. They provide culturally sensitive peer counseling, interpretation, legal advocacy and limited financial assistance for rent, utilities, childcare and education. They collaborate with all the shelters and women's centers in the greater Houston and surrounding counties. Please join us at AADA's fundraiser on October 16, 2008 at the Stafford Centre.

Brazos Bend Guardianship Services



BBGS is very excited to announce the matching of our first Money Management Client to a Money Management Volunteer. The volunteer will meet with her assigned client in her home a minimum of twice a month to assist her in preparing checks for the client's bills, help her keep her checkbook balanced and help her develop a spending plan. The Money Management Program is designed to assist low income elderly and/or disabled adults who are living independently and are in need of Money Management Service. This is an AARP Foundation Program. The volunteers complete a thorough application process that involves an application, an interview, reference checks, a criminal history check and a training session. The volunteers will be monitored by BBGS Staff. The clients' funds are protected by a limited liability insurance thru AARP. For more information contact Kirk Monroe at 281-494-5928.

Child Advocates of Fort Bend



Strategic Partners Updates

Fort Bend County Women's Center



Once a month, FBLC volunteer lawyers present Women's Legal Forum at the Fort Bend County Women's Center, an in-person legal clinic designed specifically for women whose lives have been affected by domestic abuse. The Forum provides an intimate setting where participants can feel comfortable asking questions and receiving counsel. Participation in the clinic is limited to FBCWC clients and experienced family lawyers. To participate in a future Forum, or to accept a pro bono domestic violence divorce case, please contact Angela Oaks at Angela@FortBendLawyersCARE.org, or 281-239-0015.

Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse:

FBRC has provided drug and alcohol prevention programs to thousands of students in Fort Bend County and treatment services to families struggling with substance abuse issues.

The evolution of a Strategic Partnership will be beneficial for both organizations; bringing needed civil legal services to FBRC clients who are also low-income Fort Bend county residents. John Robson, Program Director for FBRC stated; "Access to legal assistance and counsel is a necessity for many individuals that walk through our doors."

Fort Bend Seniors, Meals on Wheels



Habitat for Humanity

Beginning in June 2008, Fort Bend Lawyers CARE volunteer lawyers will draft legal wills and other end-of-life documents for all qualified Habitat for Humanity homeowners. To apply for pro bono services, please contact Holly Reyes at 281-239-0015.



FBLC Board of Directors

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 Rashmi Sharma
 Sarah Springer
 Rubina Wahid, MD

THANK YOU FBLC Guardian Angels and non-attorney volunteers!

Kimberly Renshaw

Paula Moss

Holly Reyes

Pavithra Mahesh

Angela Vasquez

Mendy Williams

Pamela Renshaw

Madison Probus

Ed Chitty-Boe

Karon Hamrick

Shelby Wauson

Evelyn Traylor

Philip Bartholomew

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Joanie Parr

Paula Moss

Linda McClellan

Peggy Jackson

Sevie Dean

Eleanor Burgess

Jacob Abraham

FBLC July 2008 Newsletter

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A Project of the Fort Bend County Bar association

FBLC, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is funded in part by grants

The George Foundation

Baxter Trust

Texas Access to Justice Foundation

Fort Bend Junior Service League

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.fortbendlawyersCARE.org

