



**MINNEAPOLIS TEAM WINS 2005 CPBO/LEXISNEXIS™
PRO BONO PARTNER AWARD**

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The team of attorneys from U.S. Bank, Dorsey & Whitney LLP, Central Minnesota Legal Services, Inc. (CMLS), and Volunteer Lawyers Network, Ltd. (VLN), has been selected to receive a national pro bono partnership award for their formation and collaborative staffing of the Brian Coyle Legal Clinic, located in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis.

Washington, D.C.-based Corporate Pro Bono (CPBO) presented the cooperating organizations with the third annual CPBO/LexisNexis™ Pro Bono Partner Award at a Ceremony at the Pro Bono Institute's Annual Seminar/National Forum on In-House Corporate Pro Bono on March 4, 2005 at the Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C. The 2005 CPBO/LexisNexis™ Pro Bono Partner Award recognizes unique pro bono partnerships between in-house corporate legal departments, law firms and public interest organizations.

The Brian Coyle Legal Clinic partnership originated in discussions in the late 1990s between Karen Canon, a then-newly-appointed Senior Corporate Counsel at U.S. Bank, Jean Lastine, Executive Director of CMLS, Bricker Lavik of Dorsey & Whitney, and Brad Thorsen, Executive Director of VLN.

“The principals from the four organizations had worked together previously with low income populations through projects of the Minnesota State Bar Association,” says Lastine. “It was a matter of pooling the resources available in their current organizations to meet the community’s legal needs.”

The Cedar Riverside neighborhood was selected because of its fast-growing East African population. “There was a substantial need for legal services among the community’s “new Minnesotans,” recalls Canon, “resulting from their lack of familiarity with American institutions and limited English proficiency.”

The Brian Coyle Center proved to be an ideal site for the legal clinic because it was well known within the immigrant community and because of the availability of translators. “It can be a very difficult population to reach out to,” said Thorsen. “Because many new arrivals don’t speak English, they couldn’t just pick up the phone and call for help. But, they are aware of the Center because of its presence in the community.”

Legal Clinic operations began in 1999, with an initial roster of 12 private sector attorneys from U.S. Bank and Dorsey & Whitney alternating with a staff lawyer from CMLS or Legal Aid of Minneapolis, and with VLN providing eligibility screening and case placement services for the project. In addition to providing valuable legal services to hundreds of residents in need, the partnership between the Dorsey & Whitney attorneys and the U.S. Bank attorneys has also

resulted in a stronger relationship between the law firm and its corporate client.

“Communication with clients and cultural differences create the biggest challenges,” says Canon, “One day the staff had scheduled eight appointments and no one showed up – it was a religious holiday.” Yet, according to Lastine, “The longer the clinic goes on, the more informed staff is. And appropriate appointments are made at intake, so clients don’t need to come back to meet with the right attorney.”

While the vast majority of the clients receive “advice only” services, the pro bono attorneys have taken on full representation matters, including court cases. These cases have ranged from consumer fraud and credit rating matters to housing court cases. In a case commenced by a U.S. Bank attorney and then handled by one from Dorsey, the attorneys worked with a former landlord to expunge an eviction from a mentally unstable client’s housing record to allow her to get into subsidized housing.

In another case, a Somali woman obtained a judgment against a company that had employed her to provide translation services and failed to pay her. A large default judgment against an Ethiopian client arising from a car accident was vacated and his driver’s license was reinstated, enabling him to keep his job.

“This is an emerging, highly populated immigrant community,” says Lastine, “It has been amazing to see people getting on their feet. The Clinic is increasing the stability of people who are starting over in America. That is highly gratifying.”

The Clinic has also proven very popular among the four partner organizations. At U.S. Bank, the original team of six in-house lawyers has now grown to 12, and the project has impacted the company’s culture. “We have a very strong pro bono program [at U.S. Bank] today. Five years ago that wasn’t the case,” notes Canon. “And, we’re looking to add an additional partnership program later this year.”

“This is a prime venue to help meet the needs of the disadvantaged in our community for legal services,” stated Joe Genereux, a Dorsey partner and co-founder and weekly volunteer at the Clinic, “It provides solid work experience for our lawyers, and builds good relationships in our community and with other service providers.” Genereux continued, “At Dorsey, pro bono work has always been an integral part of the firm’s culture. We [Dorsey] took the Pro Bono Challenge[®] [copyright, Pro Bono Institute] as a charter signatory in 1993 and we have met the challenge for twelve consecutive years.”

The co-founder of the Pro Bono Partner award, with LexisNexis[™], CPBO is itself a partnership between the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) and the Pro Bono Institute at Georgetown University Law Center. CPBO is a national outreach program designed to enhance the participation of in-house lawyers in pro bono service. More information is available at www.cpbo.org.

About U.S. Bank

U.S. Bancorp, with assets of \$195 billion, is the sixth largest financial services holding company in the United States. The company operates 2,370 banking offices and 4,620 ATMs providing a full line of banking, brokerage, insurance, investment, mortgage, trust and payment services products to consumers, businesses and institutions. For more information, visit www.usbank.com.

About Dorsey & Whitney LLP

With over 600 lawyers in 19 locations in the United States, Canada, Europe and Asia, Dorsey provides an integrated, proactive approach to its clients' legal and business needs. Dorsey represents a number of the world's most successful Fortune 500 companies including leaders in the financial services, investment banking, life sciences, securities, technology and energy sectors, as well as nonprofit and government entities. For more information, visit www.dorsey.com.

About Central Minnesota Legal Services, Inc.

Central Minnesota Legal Services, Inc. (CMLS) provides civil legal services to low-income persons in 20 counties in Central Minnesota. Its mission is "to provide in a highly professional manner for the basic legal needs of families and children vulnerable to abuse, violence, neglect, homelessness or major economic disruptions in their lives." Clients receive legal services at no cost, unless there are court fees that cannot be waived. CMLS helps eligible clients through direct representation, brief advice, and through participating in community legal education programs. For more information about Central Minnesota Legal Services, Inc., call 612.332.8151.

About Volunteer Lawyers Network, Ltd.

Volunteer Lawyers Network, Ltd. (VLN) was established as the Legal Advice Clinic in 1966 by a group of 28 lawyers. Their mission is to advise and represent economically disadvantaged people with legal problems, through volunteer attorneys and without charge to the clients. Today, VLN is the primary pro bono legal service provider in Hennepin County, serving the largest poverty population in Minnesota. Over time, VLN has expanded beyond its original core of legal advice clinics to provide legal services through a variety of programs, including telephone advice panels, outreach programs at homeless shelters, schools and community centers, statewide programs such as the bankruptcy screening and federal *pro se* projects, and Legal Access Point – a joint effort with the Hennepin County Bar Association and the District Court to provide legal assistance to *pro se* clients at the court. For more information about Volunteer Lawyers Network, Ltd., call 612.752.6655.

About Corporate Pro Bono

Corporate Pro Bono (CPBO) is a national outreach project cosponsored by the Association of Corporate Counsel (www.acca.com) and the Pro Bono Institute (www.probonoinst.org). Through online services, technical assistance to the in-house community, and educational outreach, CPBO encourages and supports the participation of in-house counsel in pro bono services. For more information, visit www.cpbo.org.

About the Pro Bono Institute at Georgetown University Law Center

Established in 1996, PBI is a non-profit organization with a mandate: to explore and identify new approaches to the poor and disadvantaged unable to secure legal assistance to address critical problems. In doing so, the Institute identified and develops innovative programs and undertakes rigorous evaluations to ensure that these new approaches are workable and effective. The Institute administers a number of projects designed to enhance access to justice, including: the Law Firm Pro Bono Project, Corporate Pro Bono, and the Reinventing Pro Bono Project for public interest organizations. For more information, visit www.probonoinst.org.

About Association of Corporate Counsel

The Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) is the in-house bar associationSM, serving the professional needs of attorneys who practice in the legal departments of corporations and other private sector organizations worldwide. The association promotes the common interests of its members, contributes to their continuing education, seeks to improve understanding of the role of in-house attorneys, and encourages advancements in standards of corporate legal practice. Since its founding in 1982, the association has grown to more than 16,800 members in 51 countries who represent more than 7,400 organizations. For more information, visit www.acca.com.