“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.” —Dr. Seuss, The Lorax
Open Letter from Brooklyn Law School’s New Dean, Nick Allard

Dear Students,

Brooklyn Law School has a tradition of innovation, and this innovative spirit is clearly evident in the breadth of pro bono projects flourishing here. As the new Dean, I am thrilled to welcome five new pro bono projects to Brooklyn Law School. They are: LGBT Legal Assistance Project, Family Court Help Center Project, Civil Court Help Center Project, the Second Chance Project, and a non-legal project: Girls on the Run. They will join 20 other outstanding projects.

I am enthusiastic about the work students are doing in all these projects, and believe in their importance not only because of the positive impact they have on members of the community but also the practical experience students gain through the help they provide.

Finally, I am proud that BLS students have been working to fill the justice gap created by the economy and drastic cuts to legal services organizations since long before the 50 hour pro bono requirement for admission to the New York bar was mandated by New York’s Chief Judge.

I commend the students, law school faculty and staff, and partner organizations that make these projects possible. I look forward to following your accomplishments!

Nick Allard
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Support and Training from the Office of Public Service Programs

The Office of Public Service Programs offers guidance, funding and support to pro bono projects. The office promotes awareness of available opportunities, helps students brainstorm new projects and makes sure they are ready before being launched, provides essential training, and helps iron out issues as they arise.

Finding a Project

If you are interested in participating in a pro bono project, the best place to start is the Pro Bono Fair. The Fair is held once per semester, in September and January. At the Fair, each pro bono project staffs a table, answering questions and providing information on how to get involved. If you've missed the current semester’s Fair, don’t wait until the next one to get involved—look through this brochure and contact the Office of Public Service Programs to see which projects are best for you.

Developing a Project

The Office of Public Service Programs will provide you with step by step information on developing, launching, and funding a new project.

Training

Each pro bono project provides its own training, tailored to the type of work and the individuals being served. In addition, the Office of Public Service Programs has the following trainings scheduled for the 2012–2013 academic year. These trainings are focused on skills required when participating in nearly any project, skills which will also serve you well in a public service internship.

Intake and Interview Workshop

Offered in September and February
Learn about how to conduct successful interviews when working with pro bono project clients.

Living a Month in Your Clients’ Shoes: A Poverty Simulation

Develop cultural competency through this interactive simulation of the daily life of an individual living in poverty.

We look forward to seeing you at these events and many others throughout the year.
Civil Legal Advice and Resource Office (CLARO)

Assist volunteer attorneys advising consumer debtors, including victims of identity theft and predatory lenders and collectors. Help consumers through the daunting process of self-representation, learn New York civil procedure, gain experience working with clients, learn consumer law, and gain an understanding of financial justice issues affecting low-income Brooklyn residents.

ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: CLARO Student Action Group (CLARO/SAG).

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Brooklyn Bar Association Volunteer Lawyer’s Project (VLP), King’s County Civil Court.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN:
Thursdays, 2:30–4:30 pm and 6:00–8:00 pm at the Kings County Civil Court at 141 Livingston Street. Students may assist at as many or as few clinics as they like, but will benefit most (as will the clients) after attending four or more clinic sessions and developing familiarity with the issues and civil procedures involved. New participants, including part-time students, are welcome to begin participating year-round.

TRAINING: Because hands-on training has proven to be the best method to learn at CLARO, students are welcomed and encouraged to begin attending sessions as soon as they desire. They will be paired with attorneys who informally guide the law student through the process. In addition, a short, non-mandatory training is held at Brooklyn Law School in the early fall, which is conducted by CLARO attorneys and current law school participants. On-site mentoring and training manuals are available at each clinic for any students who are unable to attend the training, or choose to join CLARO throughout the year.

GETTING INVOLVED: Contact Cassidy Merriam, cassidy.merriam@brooklaw.edu, and Kevin Cooper, kevin.cooper@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Any full-time or part-time students with a desire to address the critical legal needs of low-income Brooklyn residents, as well as those with specific interests in debtor-creditor law, consumer protection, economic justice, direct services, or civil procedure. Student volunteers also get exposure to legal issues regarding banking and commercial paper.
Court Help Center Volunteers (CHC-Volunteers)

**Family Court Help Center** (Open to all students.)
Assist pro se litigants as they navigate the family court system. Students help parents fill out child support modification forms on the court’s online system.

**Civil Court Help Center** (Open to 2Ls and 3Ls only.)
Inform low-income tenants and small landlords of their rights in housing court and the eviction process. Students will explain service of process, how to fill out legal forms, and how to access non-court resources. Students will get to see civil procedure in action!

**ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION:** Brooklyn Law Students for the Public Interest (BLSPI) and the BLS Office of Public Service Programs.

**PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS:** New York State Office of Court Administration.

**WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN:** In Family Court, students may volunteer Wednesday or Thursday afternoons. Civil Court days and times are to be determined. Contact the students below for additional information.

**TRAINING:** For Family Court, the Office of Court Administration will host a two hour training on basic issues in family law and how the help center works. For Civil Court, volunteers will attend two four-hour trainings on basic housing law.

**GETTING INVOLVED:** Contact Jana Hymowitz, jana.hymowitz@brooklaw.edu, and Adam Kubota, adam.kubota@brooklaw.edu.

**OF INTEREST TO:** Students interested in helping low income individuals while learning about family law, housing law, and the inner workings of the court system.
Courtroom Advocates Project (CAP)

Assist and advocate for victims of domestic violence seeking orders of protection in New York City family courts. Students help domestic violence survivors file petitions and maintain contact as necessary to ensure that the petitioner returns for his or her next court date. Students may also advocate for the petitioner before the judge on the return date.

ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Legal Association for Women.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Attorneys from Sanctuary for Families and New York Legal Assistance Group supervise volunteer advocates.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: One full day in family court on Mondays through Fridays, as well as an obligation to return to court with the petitioner on her return date.

TRAINING: One four-hour intensive training session is accompanied by a training manual. The training is generally offered once during the fall semester at Brooklyn Law School, and there are additional trainings in the fall and spring semesters at several other New York-area law schools. The training is a prerequisite for participation in the program.

GETTING INVOLVED: Look for notices of the Legal Association for Women or attend a meeting. Alternatively, contact Natalie Serra, natalie.serra@brooklaw.edu; Amy Drever, amy.drever@brooklaw.edu; and Emily Brandes, emily.brandes@brooklaw.edu for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Students interested in domestic violence law, wanting client contact and/or court experience, and exposure to NY civil procedure.

“There’s nothing better than knowing that this woman who has suffered so much has had her burden lifted, even the slightest bit, by the presence and support of an advocate. What a brave and intimidating thing it must be to apply for an order of protection, and what an honor it is to be part of that road to recovery.”

—CLAIRe ROgerS ’14
Education Law and Policy Society (Ed Law)

The Education Law and Policy Society seeks to strengthen education opportunities for all students, with particular emphasis on U.S. public education reform. Its aim is to advance dialogue, prepare leaders, raise awareness in the legal community, and create opportunities for students to effect positive change, by coordinating pro bono activities with other student groups, advocacy organizations, legal advocates and other schools. Ed Law will offer members opportunities to assist in litigation and policy research, service projects and gain access to education law leaders. Ed Law members have worked with Advocates for Children on the School Monitoring Project, an activity that seeks to gather information regarding school placement issues for special education students in the NYC public schools.

ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Education Law and Policy Society, a stand-alone group.


WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: Periodic as yet unscheduled activities.

TRAINING: Provided for each pro bono activity sponsored by Ed Law.

GETTING INVOLVED: Contact Alison Malloy, alison.malloy@brooklaw.edu and Melissa Martin, melissa.martin@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone interested in education law, children’s rights and policy work.
Elder Law and Guardianship Pro Bono Project (E-L-G)

Elder law is a quickly expanding field concerned with all legal issues related to the elderly. People are living longer lives than ever before. As a result, seniors and their families face many long-term planning considerations and decisions concerning a variety of personal matters. Elder law practice addresses these issues through the use of wills, estate planning, and health care directives; housing, public benefits, mental health and disability law; and, prevention of elder abuse and fraud.

Additionally, New York State law assumes that individuals who are age 18 and older are legally competent adults able to manage their own affairs. Guardianship vests adult children, relatives, or other designees with the legal authority to advocate for all necessary supports and resources for the benefit of those who require assistance in managing their affairs. This is also a powerful tool for parents whose children are aging into adulthood with pervasive developmental disabilities as well as caregivers whose adult relatives have disabling cognitive impairments.

E-L-G provides education, support, and aid to seniors and guardianship petitioners who face these issues from their unique perspectives. Working alongside attorneys as part of the Volunteer Lawyers Project, students will be trained to give presentations about advance medical directives, types of guardianships, the guardianship process, and the responsibilities of guardians. Students will assist clients in drafting documents such as health care proxies and guardianship petitions. There will also be future trainings on preventing fraud amongst the senior population. Initial trainings and projects will begin in fall 2012.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Brooklyn Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers’ Project.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: Students can volunteer as much or as little time as they wish throughout the school year. Students providing assistance with advance medical directives will visit area senior centers with practicing attorneys and will be asked to take part in scheduling senior center presentations. Students working with guardianship petitioners will meet with their clients at the Brooklyn Bar Association at 123 Remsen Street, just a few blocks from BLS.

TRAINING: A two hour training for each branch of the project will be held in early fall.

GETTING INVOLVED: Contact Diana Rosenthal, diana.rosenthal@brooklaw.edu; Peter Travitsky, peter.travitsky@brooklaw.edu; and Veronica Jackson, veronica.jackson@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Students interested in elder law, disability law, healthcare law and developing public speaking skills. Students will gain experience drafting legal documents.
Fair Hearings Representation and Assistance Project (FHRAP)

FHRAP advocates provide meaningful assistance to low-income New Yorkers in crucial public assistance matters while gaining experience in representation at administrative hearings. Student advocates work with clients regarding denial, delay, reduction, or termination of public assistance benefits and conduct research and interviews, draft written communications, negotiate with city and state agencies and appear on behalf of clients at hearings before administrative judges.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: FHRAP is administered in partnership with Legal Services NYC, the Legal Aid Society, Urban Justice Center, and Sanctuary for Families.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: Participation slots are periodically available at 14 Boerum Place, the Office of Administrative Hearings. As scheduling permits, student advocates will meet with a supervising attorney and receive direction in assisting and representing a client. The minimum time commitment is one half day assisting clients; further participation would allow for direct student advocacy at hearings and the ability to take on a greater level of responsibility in handling individual client matters.

TRAINING: On-site mandatory benefits advocacy trainings at BLS will be scheduled early in both the fall and spring semesters; voluntary advanced and/or topical trainings may be scheduled throughout the term.

GETTING INVOLVED: Look for flyers and e-mails with training dates, or e-mail Yekaterina Blinova, yekaterina.blinova@brooklaw.edu for more information at any time.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone interested in public benefits, administrative practice, assisting underserved families, oral advocacy, and client contact. Students will learn how to prepare for and handle hearings.
Foreclosure Legal Assistance Group (FLAG)

FLAG is a partnership between the students of Brooklyn Law School, the BLS Office of Public Service Programs, the Brooklyn Volunteer Lawyers Project, and Kings County Supreme Court. FLAG’s mission is to assist homeowners in Kings County facing foreclosure. FLAG provides homeowners entangled in foreclosure litigation with information about New York’s unique foreclosure process.

FLAG offers students an opportunity to provide meaningful assistance to members of our community, to learn about foreclosure law, and to sharpen essential interpersonal skills through hands-on experience.

ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Foreclosure Legal Assistance Group.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Brooklyn Bar Volunteer Lawyers Project.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons (2:00–4:30 pm) at the Kings County Supreme Court Building on the 9th floor. While regular participation is encouraged, we are flexible to students’ schedules and other commitments.

TRAINING: Students attend a one-hour training at Brooklyn Law School in the fall.

GETTING INVOLVED: E-mail FLAG.BLS@gmail.com or visit FLAG’s booth at the Pro Bono Fair. FLAG welcomes all full and part time students. Part time students should note, however, that FLAG only meets in the afternoon.

OF INTEREST TO: Those interested in foreclosure law, housing law, economic justice, and helping fellow members of our community.
Girls on the Run BLS

Girls on the Run is a non-profit program that encourages preteen girls to develop self-respect and healthy lifestyles through running. Their innovative wellness program combines training for a 5K with life skills and self-esteem building lessons throughout the season. We believe that every girl can: embrace who she is, define who she wants to be, celebrate differences, rise to any challenge and change the world.

Girls on the Run BLS will work with a local, low-income elementary school, to coach their program and to be a role model to the girls and to the community.

NO RUNNING IS REQUIRED BY COACHES. Girls on the Run only asks that its coaches be reliable, honest, have a positive outlook on life, and have an interest in the issues facing young girls today.

ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Girls on the Run BLS.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Girls on the Run Manhattan.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: Team meetings are held twice a week, for 12 weeks in the Fall and 12 weeks in the Spring, and generally last 60–90 minutes. Head coaches are asked to attend both practices each week and assistant coaches are asked to attend one practice per week (but are welcomed to attend both). The days of practice are set by the coaches but are generally held after the elementary school day.

TRAINING: There is a formal training process for coaches in the early Fall. The sessions are usually in the evenings and there are typically a few options to fit into your schedule.

GETTING INVOLVED: Fill out a coaching application online at gotrm.org and contact Veronica Jackson, veronica.jackson@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: All students are encouraged and welcome to volunteer at the end of the season 5k. Currently, coaching and weekly volunteer positions are for female students only.
“This project is an opportunity to defend a critical right—the right to shelter—which is uniquely enforceable in New York City. In other parts of the country, when shelter space runs out, homeless individuals can be turned away into the streets. In New York City, everyone has a right to a roof over his or her head, and HARP helps to ensure that this right is real.” —Beile Lindner ’13

Homeless Appellant Rights Project (HARP)

Provide critical advice to homeless families who have been denied access to the City’s homeless shelter system. Meet face to face with families to discuss this denial, to advise them of how best to make their case to City workers and administrative law judges, how to gather the best evidence to make their case for shelter, and to apprise them of their rights during the hearing process and beyond.

ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Homeless Appellant Rights Project (HARP).

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: The Legal Aid Society’s Homeless Rights Project and Project FAIR, Inc.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: From 12:00–3:00 pm right next to school at 14 Boerum Place. Students are expected to volunteer for one day per month, but are welcome to come more often.

TRAINING: Students will attend a three-hour training in the fall to familiarize them with the New York City shelter system, the history of the important litigation in the area that shapes shelter applicant’s rights, and the strategies that students use to assist applicants as they reapply for shelter and prepare for their hearings.

GETTING INVOLVED: Contact Beile Lindner, beile.lindner@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone seeking experience providing direct services to low-income populations. It will be particularly compelling to those interested in public interest advocacy, administrative law, public-benefits law, homeless rights, and housing law.
Immigrant Visa Assistance Project (IVAP)

Students participating in IVAP assist immigrant crime victims with their U-visa affidavits. U-visas are a form of immigration relief available to victims of enumerated crimes who have cooperated with law enforcement. This project provides students with the opportunity to interview clients, write affidavits, and learn practical lawyering skills related to immigration practice. Students will be supervised by upper-class students and attorneys through Justice for Our Neighbors.

**ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION:** Immigrant Visa Assistance Project.

**PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION:** Justice for Our Neighbors.

**WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN:** 15 hours total over the course of the semester, for interviews and writing the affidavit.

**TRAINING:** Attendance at one training session, offered at BLS, is required.

**GETTING INVOLVED:** Contact Sarah Udashkin, sarah.udashkin@brooklaw.edu and Venus Bermudez, venus.bermudez@brooklaw.edu.

**OF INTEREST TO:** Anyone interested in immigration law.
Immigration Court Observation Project (ICOP)

Participants observe and document proceedings at the 26 Federal Plaza and Varick Street Immigration Courts, gaining insight into immigration procedures while safeguarding due process for respondents. They complete courtroom observations forms, enter data into a web form for analysis, and write reports. Formed in response to the post-9/11 mass immigration roundups, ICOP has since expanded to ensure the fairness of immigration hearings for all respondents. The reports help to keep judges and court officers accountable for any abuses or unfairness in the system.

“I happened to observe a hearing where the immigrant was lucky enough to have excellent counsel... The attorney happened to be a BLS professor, who graciously invited me to observe and explained the background to the case. I received an ad hoc one-on-one lesson in immigration law right there in the courthouse... All of a sudden I had a real experience connecting myself to the law and to BLS. And that’s what ICOP is: experience with your school, with your peers, with attorneys, and most importantly, with immigration law.”

—Gideon Martin ’14

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: BLS–ICOP works in collaboration with law students at several NYC schools and the National Lawyers Guild.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: At the student’s convenience; any weekday in either the morning or afternoon court sessions.

TRAINING: 1 hour training session required, as well as opportunities for advanced trainings.

GETTING INVOLVED: Watch for notices around school or contact Becky McBride, rebecca.mcbride@brooklaw.edu. General trainings are usually held in September and January.

OF INTEREST TO: Those wanting to deepen the law school experience and gain a broad view of immigration law and issues, as well as those dedicated to immigrant rights and those wanting a writing experience.
Law Students for Veterans’ Rights

Law Students for Veterans’ Rights is devoted to the representation of veterans throughout the New York City area. We will create awareness and work to obtain the basic necessities that American veterans have earned, including VA benefits, housing, health care and income. We work in coalition with the following groups: Urban Justice Center, Legal Services New York and a clinic of New York City law firms at the City Bar Justice Center. Opportunities include research projects with pro bono attorneys, representing veterans at public benefits fair hearings through the Urban Justice Center in front of Administrative Law Judges, and assisting at the City Bar Justice Center’s Veterans Assistance Project for an afternoon.

ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Law Students for Veterans’ Rights.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: NY City Bar Justice Center’s Veterans Assistance Project; Urban Justice Center’s Veterans Advocacy Project; Legal Services NYC.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: Students can volunteer as much or as little time as they wish. Full-time and part-time students welcome!

TRAINING: For the Urban Justice Center program, a Brooklyn Law School alumnus will provide a one to two hour training in the fall on representing veterans at fair hearings. For the City Bar Justice Center, a short, informal training will be provided at the beginning of any trip to their clinic.

GETTING INVOLVED: Contact Ryan Marcus, ryan.marcus@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone seeking to provide direct services to veterans. Of particular interest to those interested in working with the mentally ill and handling public benefits issues. Students will gain hands on experience advocating for clients as they represent them in administrative court.
Legal Observing at Protests through the National Lawyers Guild

The Legal Observer program is part of the comprehensive legal support coordinated by the NLG to ensure people can express their political views without unconstitutional disruption or interference by the government. Legal Observers work with NLG attorneys who represent individual activists and political organizations, and play a distinct role separate from participants at demonstrations and protests. They are trained to witness and document police actions, violations of rights, and arrests and to provide factual information for evaluation by attorneys. The presence of Legal Observers helps discourage police abuses, and the information collected by Legal Observers is used in all stages of defending arrestees and in lawsuits against the police or other government agencies when rights violations occur.

“This project gives students an opportunity to protect free speech and the right to political dissent by being a visible presence and monitoring police activity at protests. I’ve learned a lot about the First Amendment, how to deal with police and what to do when someone is arrested, and how to document events for potential litigation.”

—Cristina Lee ’12

ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: BLS National Lawyers Guild (NLG).

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: New York City Chapter and the National Office of the NLG.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: As appropriate and as each student chooses prior to and during elections and protests or street actions.

TRAINING: Held at BLS each semester, date TBA. Contact brooklynnlg@gmail.com with questions.

GETTING INVOLVED: Contact the BLS National Lawyers Guild at brooklynnlg@gmail.com.

OF INTEREST TO: Those interested in progressive politics and First Amendment issues.
LGBT Legal Assistance Project

The LGBT Legal Assistance Project is devoted to serving the local LGBTQ community. This project seeks to provide increased legal assistance and access to a broad range of resources and advocacy organizations to members of the LGBTQ community who face significant legal challenges due to a legacy of public and private discrimination, continuing inequality under the law and, too often, ostracism from biological families that results, among other things, in disproportionate homelessness among LGBT youth. The project aims to provide assistance on a broad range of legal issues impacting the LGBTQ community of modest means whether such issues turn directly upon one’s sexual orientation/identity or not.

The LGBT Legal Assistance Project will consist primarily of a walk-in legal clinic held on a bi-weekly basis. It consists of direct legal counseling by project attorneys with community visitors and referrals to appropriate community organizations for additional legal and social services assistance. Students will assist practicing attorneys in conducting intake, interviewing and providing critical legal information and referrals to clients.

The work of the project is made possible, in part, by the generous support provided to the LeGaL Foundation by The New York Community Trust.

**ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION:** OUTLaws.

**PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS:** LeGaL Foundation (The LGBT Bar Association of Greater New York) and The Brooklyn Community Pride Center.

**WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN:** The LGBT Legal Assistance Project will be held twice per month on Wednesday evenings from 6:00–8:00 pm at 1 Boerum Place. Students may volunteer as much or as little time as their schedule permits throughout the semester. A sign-up sheet for specific dates will be provided following the training sessions.

**TRAINING:** A one-hour training will be held in the early fall and spring semesters at Brooklyn Law School and will be conducted by a LeGaL attorney. Following completion of the training, a minimum of two students will be assigned to each of the walk-in sessions.

**GETTING INVOLVED:** Contact Kathryn Hensley, kathryn.hensley@brooklaw.edu.

**OF INTEREST TO:** Anyone interested in human rights, LGBTQ rights, elder law, family law, immigration, estate planning, transgender rights, public-benefits law, and advocacy for low-income populations. All BLS students are welcome to participate.
Motivating Youth Through Legal Education (MYLE)

BLS students coach high school students to prepare for three constitutional law debates throughout the year. Coaches help the students read and understand Supreme Court decisions and craft an argument to be delivered to a panel of law students and attorneys who act as judges at the debate competition.

**ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION:** BLS MYLE.

**PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS:** Legal Outreach, a non-profit providing support to low-income junior high and high school students, runs the debate program.

**WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN:** There are three debates throughout the school year, each requiring six hours of preparation with your student, and three hours to judge each debate. Scheduling meetings with the high school students is flexible. Both full and part-time students are welcome.

“*When I received my MYLE student assignment in the fall of my first year, I met a quiet, shy fifteen-year-old girl who had no confidence in her intelligence or speaking ability. She was reluctant to even ask questions about what she didn’t understand. Since then, I’ve watched her grow and mature into a remarkable college-bound woman.*”

—Rachel Seelig ’12

**TRAINING:** Brief mandatory coach training at the beginning of the year.

**GETTING INVOLVED:** Contact Kendall Sale, kendall.sale@brooklaw.edu and John Moore, john.moore@brooklaw.edu.

**OF INTEREST TO:** Those interested in youth, teaching, constitutional law, debate or mentoring.
Brooklyn Law School National Lawyers Guild
Street Law Team (A Know Your Rights Project)

In 2011, New Yorkers were stopped by the police 685,724 times. The NLG–NYC Street Law Team is a group of law students from various New York City law schools who travel to schools, workplaces, and other locations to present workshops titled, “Know Your Rights: What to Do if You’re Stopped by the Police.” The workshop gives attendees a chance to talk about the police and people’s rights when the police stop or search them. During workshops, law students give practical advice for getting through a police encounter safely and calmly, explain constitutional rights and why they are important, learn to answer tough questions, and lead role-playing exercises of typical encounters with the police.

ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: BLS National Lawyers Guild.


WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: Whenever is convenient for you! To give a Know Your Rights Presentation takes 2 or more hours, depending on the size of the group. The initial training takes approximately 2 hours.

TRAINING: Times and locations of trainings at Brooklyn Law School and around NYC to be announced.

GETTING INVOLVED: If you are interested in learning more about your rights and joining the Street Law Team, attend a training! Check BLSConnect or attend an NLG meeting to sign up for upcoming trainings. Questions? Contact Mary Bruch, mary.bruch@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Students concerned about civil liberties, civil rights and police practices.
NYCHA Tenant Eviction Prevention Project

Participants advocate for New York City Housing Authority residents in administrative hearings to help tenants stay in their homes and avoid homelessness. Students defend against evictions and help tenants to avoid settlements with unfavorable stipulations. Students investigate charges against tenants, interview witnesses, and negotiate settlements. During hearings, students cross-examine witnesses, present mitigating evidence, and submit written closing statements.

ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Participation is ad hoc.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: South Brooklyn Legal Services.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: Two to three students will be assigned to each case. Students should commit enough time to investigate their assigned cases, prepare for the hearings, and draft written closing statements.

TRAINING: Students attend a short training at Brooklyn Law School in the early fall and receive additional training and moot preparations prior to the administrative hearings.

GETTING INVOLVED: Contact Steven Hasty, steven.hasty@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Students wanting client and court experience, those interested in housing and homelessness prevention, or in litigation, negotiation, administrative law and/or NY civil procedure.
Resilience Advocacy Project (RAP)

The Resilience Advocacy Project’s Youth Leadership Empowerment and Advocacy Project (Youth LEAP) is a free, yearlong program serving low-income high school students from under-resourced schools throughout Brooklyn and Manhattan. The program trains these young people to become “peer advocates” for other teens in their communities, providing legal rights information and basic referrals for critical anti-poverty social services like health care and tutors. Law students teach Youth LEAP participants about NYC government, constitutional and poverty law, and advocacy skills in 2-hour workshops. In addition to leading the workshops, law students are able to meet with dynamic and engaging lawyers and legal academics from throughout New York who come and share their personal and professional stories.

ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: BLS Resilience Advocacy Project.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Resilience Advocacy Project.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: Students should be willing to commit to working with RAP for two semesters: Fall semester for training teen advocates, Spring semester for providing community advocacy teaming with the new peer leaders. The training sessions are once a week, for two hours. The community advocacy work is also done in 2 hour shifts, according to a student’s availability.

TRAINING: Law students are prepared by a thorough training at the beginning of the year, and are given ongoing support throughout the year. The trainings culminate in the design and implementation of community-based youth-led advocacy clinics—managed by the law students—for the other teens in their schools and communities.

GETTING INVOLVED: Sign up for training in the fall. Contact Sarah DeVita, sarah.devita@brooklaw.edu, with questions.

OF INTEREST TO: Students interested in any of the following areas: youth, education, family law, benefits and housing, general public interest.
Second Chance Project

The Second Chance Project helps parents with a finding of neglect on their record to move forward. Students in this project will help clients to request and conduct fair hearings to amend their record with the State Central Registry, and to file motions to vacate neglect findings or request suspended judgments so their record does not limit their employment opportunities.

Brooklyn Family Defense Project’s (BFDP) clients usually have neglect cases filed against them for issues related to their poverty, domestic violence, mental illness, or addiction. During the court proceeding, families engage in supportive and rehabilitative services to help them address the challenges they face, such as parenting classes, individual or family therapy, or drug treatment. In many cases, parents consent to a finding of neglect because the court process is so long and difficult and they want their cases to be resolved quickly. Especially for clients who work, or for young clients who hope to get a GED or go to college, findings of neglect and reports on the State Central Registry can interfere with their work opportunities – even where the reports are unrelated to their employment. Reports of child neglect are entered in New York’s State Central Registry which is searchable by employers in fields such as child care, teaching, social work and nursing.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Brooklyn Family Defense Project.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: 10–12 hours total for writing and attending the hearing, plus 2 hours of training.

GETTING INVOLVED: Contact Anna Park, anna.park@brooklaw.edu, for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone interested in family law, criminal defense, or poverty law, or those wanting to work directly with clients and get experience in court.
**Suspension Representation Project (SRP)**

Students who get suspended from school are at heightened risk of entering the “school-to-prison pipeline.” SRP’s goal is to advocate for students and their families to keep them in school and on the path to success.

SRP is a consortium of student organizations from ten New York City law schools that is dedicated to ensuring the educational rights of NYC public school students in grades K-12 by helping them navigate through the complex system of superintendent’s suspension hearings. SRP provides advocates with comprehensive training on hearing procedures, rules of evidence, burden of proof, and developing a “theory of the case, so that they can effectively represent these high school students.”

SRP sent more than 160 student advocates to represent students at approximately 140 hearings in all five boroughs during the 2011–12 school year. Our advocates are frequently able to help students get reduced suspensions and, in some instances, get the charges dropped altogether. New advocates are always paired with experienced advocates, a great chance to collaborate with students at BLS and other area law schools.

**ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION:** BLS Suspension Representation Project.

**PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION:** Suspension Representation Project, citywide.

**WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN:** Each case requires roughly 8 hours of time, including preparation and the hearing itself.

**TRAINING:** Advocates must attend one training session before they can take a case. Trainings are held in the fall and spring at BLS as well as at other law schools in the consortium. All Suspension Hearings are scheduled for 8:30 am on weekdays. Advocates must be available between 8:30 am and 4:00 pm. Hearings are usually finished by 1:00 pm, but it is possible for them to go longer. Part-time students with flexible day-time commitments are able to participate in SRP.

**GETTING INVOLVED:** Contact Danielle Levine, danielle.levine.bls@gmail.com, and Marty Schubert, martin.schubert@brooklaw.edu. You can also visit www.suspensionrepresentation.org for more information.

**OF INTEREST TO:** Anyone interested in education law, children’s rights and direct client representation. Students will learn how to prepare for and conduct a hearing.
Street Vendor Pro Bono Project

The Street Vendor Pro-Bono Project is a partnership between Brooklyn Law School and the Street Vendor Project (SVP) of the Urban Justice Center, a non-profit organization that advocates for a more equitable environment for vending in New York City. Policy objectives range from lifting the cap on vending permits and licenses to reducing the excessive fines on vending violations. Participants analyze violations against vendors issued by the Department of Health, the Parks Department and the Police Department, and defend the vendors before the Environmental Control Board (ECB). Preparation involves direct interaction with street vendors, site visits, evidence gathering, and an analysis of Administrative Code provisions and the Rules of the City of New York. Students will refine their legal research and oral argument skills as they present their defenses before Administrative Law Judges at the ECB.

ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Environmental Law Society.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Urban Justice Center.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: The Street Vendor Pro Bono Project has general meetings two to three times a semester. Students can volunteer for a minimum of one case per semester; each case takes 5–6 hours to complete. The cases are argued in front of the Administrative Law Judges at the Environmental Control Board located at 66 John Street, New York, New York. Most cases are in the morning, between 9:00 am and 11:00 am.

TRAINING: Mandatory training sessions sometime in early fall.

GETTING INVOLVED: Contact Lee Wellington, leslie.wellington@brooklaw.edu and Ben Stark, benjamin.stark@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Students interested in community organizing, direct services and administrative law. Students will learn how to prepare for and conduct a hearing.
Uncontested Divorce Project for Battered Women and Indigent Clients

Following a training by a Sanctuary for Families attorney, students are assigned a client and then conduct interviews, prepare divorce petitions, file the court papers, and meet with clients to follow-up. A separate training, conducted by an attorney with the Brooklyn Bar VLP, will enable students to regularly assist clients in pro se uncontested divorces. Students will aid their clients from initiation of their uncontested divorce through entry of judgment. Male and female volunteers are welcome.

ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Legal Association for Women.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Sanctuary for Families (SFF) and the Brooklyn Bar Association Volunteer Lawyer’s Project (VLP).

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: The trainings are offered in the fall in order to allow sufficient time for students to complete all the necessary steps during the academic year. Students may choose between working with SFF or VLP. The SFF pro bono project works exclusively with battered women, while the VLP project serves low-income clients. To complete either pro bono project, students need an average of about 10 hours for their petition. Two students will partner to meet with a client approximately twice throughout the academic year, and can complete the divorce paperwork on their own time. Both projects are flexible and can be done at the student’s and client’s convenience. Part-time students can also participate in either project.

TRAINING: Two-hour trainings for both projects take place in the fall at BLS, usually during October (domestic violence awareness month).

GETTING INVOLVED: Look for flyers and e-mails in the fall for the training date. Alternatively, contact Jessica Peck, jessica.peck@brooklaw.edu, and Dominic Saglibene, dominic.saglibene@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone interested in public interest work, family law, helping low-income members of our community or working with victims of domestic violence. Students will develop skills in interviewing, direct client contact, and preparing all petitions for divorce actions.
Unemployment Action Center (UAC)

Unemployment Action Center advocates appear in hearings in front of Administrative Law Judges at the New York State Department of Labor on behalf of claimants seeking unemployment benefits. Volunteers handle all aspects of the case: interviewing and advising the client, researching, and representing the claimant at a hearing—including direct & cross-examination and a closing.

ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Brooklyn Law School Unemployment Action Center.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: The citywide Unemployment Action Center, which distributes available cases among participating schools through its website.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: Students are free to sign up online for hearing times that fit their schedule. Each case takes 5–10 hours, spread out over a week. Many advocates take one or two cases per semester. Opportunities are available for part-time students.

TRAINING: Advocates will be ready to represent clients after a short training offered each semester. A manual that guides new advocates through the interview, preparation, and representation process is provided.

GETTING INVOLVED: Go to a meeting, take the training, get a username and password, and volunteer for clients described on the website. Contact Evan Hasbrook, evan.hasbrook@brooklaw.edu with questions.

OF INTEREST TO: Those interested in labor and employment law, workers’ rights, direct legal services, due process issues, and learning to prepare for and handle hearings.
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

VITA volunteers assist low-income taxpayers in filing their income taxes to ensure that they get the tax credits to which they are entitled, avoid predatory tax preparers’ practices, and get prompt refunds and other financial services. In the past BLS students have provided a critical boost to low-income working families in our neighborhood, putting as much as $300,000 back into the community through this program.

ON CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: BLS Tax Law Association.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Internal Revenue Service & Food Bank for New York City.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN: From late January to mid-April. Students set their own schedule for volunteering at the nearby Free Tax Assistance site, which is generally open Monday to Thursday (10:00 am–7:00 pm) and Friday to Saturday (9:00 am–5:00 pm). Opportunities available to part-time students.

TRAINING: In January, students are required to pass a two-part training course to become a certified income tax preparer. Part I is the IRS’ online VITA certification program in basic tax law. This is taken independently, according to the student’s schedule. Part II is a one-day classroom training at a nearby location which applies the course material to real tax returns. BLS students will have the opportunity to attend the training together as a group or individually according to their own schedule.

GETTING INVOLVED: Join the BLS Tax Law Association or contact Megan Cuccia, megan.cuccia@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone interested in tax law, client contact, economic justice, financial services and assisting underserved families.
On Campus Non-Legal Volunteer Opportunities

Brooklyn Law Students for the Public Interest

Brooklyn Law Students for the Public Interest (BLSPI) is a student-run, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization at Brooklyn Law School that encourages and enables student participation in public interest and public service legal work. BLSPI provides both legal and non-legal opportunities for engagement at BLS.

We organize a number of charity drives throughout the year, often working with other student groups, including: blood drives, canned food drives, clothing drives, Halloween candy drives for children living in domestic violence shelters, and voter registration drives. BLSPI will also organize a number of days of service this coming year.

If interested in joining BLSPI’s e-mail list to learn about ongoing initiatives, please contact info@blspi.org.

Student Bar Association

Race Judicata
(The SBA in partnership with the Urban Assembly School for Law and Justice)

Race Judicata is an annual 5K Run/Walk held by law schools and law firms across the nation to benefit causes selected by each sponsoring group. The BLS Race Judicata is held in Prospect Park in the spring as a fundraiser for the High School for Law and Justice. The Race is held in honor of Professor Barry Zaretsky, a bankruptcy and commercial law professor at Brooklyn Law School as well as an avid runner. Last year’s
race raised over $5,000. This is a social as well as charitable event. Get your heart pumping, run (or walk) with your friends and the larger BLS community, and benefit a school working hard to bring youngsters previously relegated to very poor schools up to grade level and looking forward to college.

**CONTACT:** sba@brooklaw.edu or Andrea Viafara at andrea.viafara@brooklaw.edu.

“Off Campus” Opportunities in NYC Metropolitan Area

Supplementing the “on-campus” programs above, thousands of opportunities for involvement with pro bono activities in the New York area are available through the websites and organizations listed below. In addition, the Office of Public Service Programs at Brooklyn Law School is available both to help with individual placements as well as to help students develop new on-campus pro bono initiatives.

“Ask Trevor” Initiative

The “Ask Trevor” Initiative, sponsored by OUTLaws, is part of The Trevor Project, the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth. Ask Trevor is an online non-time sensitive, Question & Answer resource for young people with questions surrounding sexual orientation, gender identity and bullying. After a 2-hour training in the fall at Brooklyn Law School, volunteers will choose a letter submitted by a young adult and respond to it through an online system. Volunteers may respond to letters at any time convenient with their schedule, and are expected to respond to at least one letter per month.

**CONTACT:** OUTLaws or Kathryn Hensley, kathryn.hensley@brooklaw.edu.

LawHelp/NY

LawHelp/NY, a legal information website for low-income New Yorkers, is seeking volunteers for LiveHelp, an online information and referral service that helps people find free legal services and self-help information to address a civil legal crisis. LiveHelp volunteers take on short weekly shifts in which they chat with visitors to LawHelp/NY’s
website and help them navigate New York’s courts, legal service projects and social services. Volunteers can work from home after an in-depth training. LiveHelp provides a simple and flexible opportunity to help people facing unemployment, eviction, domestic violence and other crises.

CONTACT: Quisquella Addison, qaddison@nylawhelp.org.

Legal Information for Families Today (LIFT)

Legal Information for Families Today (LIFT) enhances access to justice for children and families by providing legal information, community education, and compassionate guidance, while promoting system-wide reform of the courts and public agencies. Today, LIFT operates innovative, award-winning programs in the Family Courts and in the community, all of which share the goal of promoting positive outcomes for families and children.

Ways To Volunteer With LIFT:

ANSWER QUESTIONS ON LIFT’S HOTLINES
LIFT seeks volunteers to answer questions on the organization’s telephone and e-mail hotlines. Volunteers will be trained in one particular area of family law to develop an expertise and be able to answer questions on that topic.

Where: LIFT’s Central Office, 350 Broadway, Suite 501, or answer E-mail Hotline questions from your home or office.

Hours of Operation: 9:00 am–5:00 pm

Minimum Time Commitment: 2 hours per week

HELP FAMILIES NAVIGATE THE NYC FAMILY COURTS
Work side-by-side with LIFT staff at their Family Court-based Sites to answer questions and address concerns regarding Court procedure and family law matters, and hand out our Legal Resource Guides.

Where: Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan or Queens Family Courthouses

Hours of Operation: 9:00 am–5:00 pm

Minimum Time Commitment: 6 hours per month
Resolution Assistance Program (RAP)

The Resolution Assistance Program trains students to assist unrepresented tenants and owners/landlords who are appearing in the Resolution Part of Housing Court as parties to nonpayment proceedings, cases where landlords sue tenants to collect rent. The goal of RAP is to help litigants who do not have an attorney have a productive court experience through an offering of non-legal support. Participating students work in the courtroom under the supervision of a RAP Coordinator. They have the opportunity to interact with judges, lawyers and litigants, gaining real-world experience. Whatever a student’s goal is in volunteering—helping people in need, making new contacts, learning more about representing a client in court or developing esteem—RAP sets the stage! Learn more at nycourts.gov/courts/nyc/housing/rap_prospective.shtml.

CONTACT: Yacine Barry, Esq., Special Counsel to Hon. Fern A. Fisher, Housing Court Initiatives, at 646-386-5146 or RAP@courts.state.ny.us

Urban Assembly School for Law and Justice

Since its founding in 2004, the Urban Assembly School for Law & Justice (SLJ) has been proud to partner with Brooklyn Law School to fulfill its mission of engaging the city’s highest need public high school students through legal studies and debate. As part of a challenging and exciting four-year sequence, students learn about and experience with law in their own school, law in their city, state and country, and law around the world and throughout history.

Ways to Volunteer at SLJ

College Personal Statement Coaching – The college office would like a weekly volunteer to assist students with writing and revising personal statements for their college applications.

A Day in the Life of a Brooklyn Law School Student – Twice a year, SLJ and Brooklyn Law School collaborate to offer four 10th grade students the opportunity to shadow a law student for a day: attending class, going to the library, seeing professors, lunching with friends, walking around campus, and more.

Moot Court Week – In the Spring SLJ invites volunteers to act as Supreme Court Justices during Moot Court Week. Your role as a Supreme Court Justice, and as an official evaluator of student work, will be to hear arguments, ask questions that
challenge students to cite precedent and invoke their research, uphold or overturn the decision of the lower court, and offer students feedback on their performances.

**Student Portfolio Roundtables** – As a guest evaluator, volunteers sit with a small group of students as each narrates his or her portfolio, walking you through a year of challenges and triumphs. Your brief written feedback will help teachers award each student a final grade.

**Gay-Straight Alliance Mentoring** – Approximately twice per year, SLJ and Brooklyn Law School’s OUTLaws student organization organize meetings and other outings to support LGBTQ and allied high school students who struggle with a range of issues: coming out to their parents, bullying in and out of school, finding community support, as well as general high school student concerns.

**CONTACT:** For Gay-Straight Alliance Mentoring, contact OUTLaws at bklynoutlaws@gmail.com. For all other opportunities, contact Alison Malloy, alison.malloy@brooklaw.edu & Melissa Martin, melissa.martin@brooklaw.edu.

### Online Resources for “Off Campus Projects”:

**AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION’S CENTER FOR PRO BONO**
www.abanet.org/legalservices/probono/home.html

**THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY’S PRO BONO PROGRAM**

**VOLUNTEERS OF LEGAL SERVICE (VOLS)**
www.volsprobono.org

**IDEALIST**
www.idealista.org

**PSJD** (formerly PSLawNet)
www.psjd.org

**For more information:**

**ABA’S RULES FOR ATTORNEYS REGARDING PRO BONO, RULE 6.1**
www.abanet.org/legalservices/probono/rule61.html

**GUIDELINES FOR LAW SCHOOLS ON PRO BONO PROGRAMS**
www.abanet.org/legalservices/probono/lawschools/introduction.html