



2013 ANNUAL REPORT

FIFTY YEARS OF FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE FOR ALL.



Our mission is to
promote justice,
dignity, hope and
self-sufficiency
through quality civil
legal aid for those
who have nowhere
else to turn. 

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50 Years

Executive director's message

by Dave Pantos

“The Omaha Legal Aid Society handled more than 50 cases during its first week of operation, Miss Colleen Buckley, director, reported Friday.”



This was the lead from a September 27th, 1963 article in the Evening Edition of the *Omaha World Herald*. Six months later, the *World Herald* reported that “Omaha’s Legal Aid Society accepted 535 cases during its first six months in existence.”

The latter report said: “Cases so far involve 344 family problems, 110 economic problems and 37 property problems.”

A lot has changed in the 50 years since our inaugural six months in operation. In 2013, we assisted a total of 11,061 clients, an 8% increase over the prior year. When taking into account our clients’ household members, we helped 29,402 people, residing in 88 of Nebraska’s 93 counties. That’s about 11 times as many clients as our first year of operation.

But some things remain the same. We are still more likely to be approached primarily for family law matters, with consumer issues and housing coming in second or third.

More importantly, we continue to be driven by our mission to help those who have nowhere else to turn. That group grows every year, as more and more people struggle to make ends

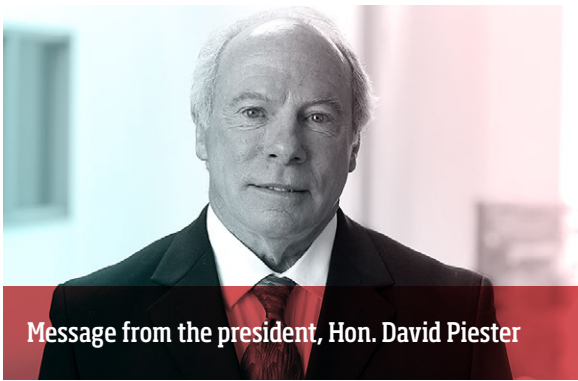
meet and to find the time and resources to support their families. When a legal trouble arises, there’s nothing left to pay an attorney.

That’s our job and mandate as the only legal aid provider in Nebraska.

In 2013 we celebrated our 50 years, and our Board initiated a new strategic plan. Over the next few years we look to enhance our sustainability, promote our effectiveness, support the professional development of staff, and encourage and expand our use of volunteers.

In 2013, we also secured key victories for renters, for parents of special needs children, and for migrant farmworkers. As we look forward, we will expand our medical legal partnerships with area hospitals, and provide increased services for women with breast cancer. We will also help the coordination and effective delivery of immigration legal services by our nonprofit partners in the community.

Fifty years is a great run. But it’s no time now to rest on our laurels. We must move forward and face new challenges while remaining the high quality law firm for the poor that we’ve become. I appreciate your support and dedication as we make this difference every day.



Message from the president, Hon. David Piester

It's 4:30 am

Sylvia's 8-year-old just threw up.

No taking her to school today, and her regular childcare provider won't accept sick kids. Sylvia has two unexcused absences from her minimum-wage job already for staying home with a sick child. If she does it again, she'll be fired. With no substitute childcare provider, she has to do it again.

The next day the child is well and goes to school. Sylvia goes to work, only to learn that she has, in fact, been fired. No pay. No income. No rent money. No food. Again. The downward cascade begins, again.

In the next several weeks, while Sylvia frantically looks for a new job, her landlord starts eviction proceedings for nonpayment of rent.

Her housecleaning is neglected, and her kids are getting sick because of an unfixed window that leaks air, even though she's complained about it to her landlord. Her welfare caseworker says she has to repair several deficiencies in the house or move, or her children could be taken. She has no money to do either. Sylvia goes to Legal Aid.

Such are the stories—hundreds of them—that are presented to Legal Aid attorneys and paralegals every month. Sometimes there's a legal claim (in this case maybe a violation of Nebraska's Landlord-Tenant Act); sometimes there's a defense (like preventing the taking of her children from her). Sometimes there's nothing the law provides for the Sylvias who show up; only a referral to social service agencies for some other type of assistance. But the stories keep coming, and it takes empathy, dedication, innovation, and stamina to address them all.

Legal Aid of Nebraska attorneys and staff provide those qualities and more as they represent and assist clients in their legal struggles each day. Wrenching child custody battles, evictions, domestic violence, consumer fraud, usurious payday lending practices, a callous welfare system, and much more face low-income people regularly.

The Board of Directors of Legal Aid of Nebraska hopes you will look beyond the statistics you see in this report and think of the stories behind them and the dedication, commitment, and vision it takes to maximize the services Legal Aid provides. With limited resources, Legal Aid has taken targeted actions to provide the most professional and effective legal assistance possible to Nebraska's low-income population.

To be sure, doing so requires the setting of priorities and directions. The Board and staff have engaged in a strategic planning process over the last several years to do so. In addition, the Board examines policies and practices to ensure that Legal Aid continues on its path to stated objectives. With this oversight, as well as that of several funding sources, and with the strong leadership of management, the organization stands in good stead to continue its mission of providing caring professional legal assistance to those who have nowhere else to turn.

As you study this report, you will see the character of the staff and the organization that makes that a reality. Please read on.

Legal Aid of Nebraska Board of Directors

President

Matthew Dunning, Bennington

Vice President

Michael Schleich, Omaha

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Ron Oleson, Lincoln

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Carol Gendler, Omaha

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Michelle Oldham, Hastings

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Hon. David Piester, Lincoln

Barbara Pinkelman, Aurora

Lorene Thomas, Bloomfield

William Tringe, Holdrege

Amy Van Horne, Omaha

Nicole Vereen, Omaha

Michael Willet, Beatrice

Lashawn Young, Omaha



Front row

Janice Brown

Eluid "Eli" Aguilar

Amy Van Horne

Second row

Hon. Patricia Lamberty

Hon. Patrick Rogers

Michael Schleich

Third row

Hon. David Piester

Ron Oleson

Carol Gendler

Back row

Nicole Vereen

Michael Willet

Douglas Murray

Larry Baumann



In memory
Susie K. Chief Bear

10 years of Legal Aid board service

May her memory be a blessing

Thanks to outgoing board members:

Many warm thanks to our outgoing board members who served our mission with years of dedicated support:

Kathryn Olson, Lincoln, served 2004-2013

William Foley, Omaha, served 2004-2013

Courtney Klein, Norfolk, served 2008-2013

Lashawn Young, Omaha, served 2010-2013

Additional thanks to outgoing board president, Matthew Dunning. Hon. David Piester will now serve as the new board president.

Not pictured: Sen. Danielle Conrad, Michelle Oldham, Lorene Thomas, Matthew Dunning, Julianna Jenkins, Katherine Voorhees, William Tringe.

Each year, about half of low-income American households experience one or more legal needs.

Low-income households opt for less formal methods of addressing legal needs:

62% Do nothing, or attempt to solve it alone	8% Find non- legal help	29% Turn to civil justice system
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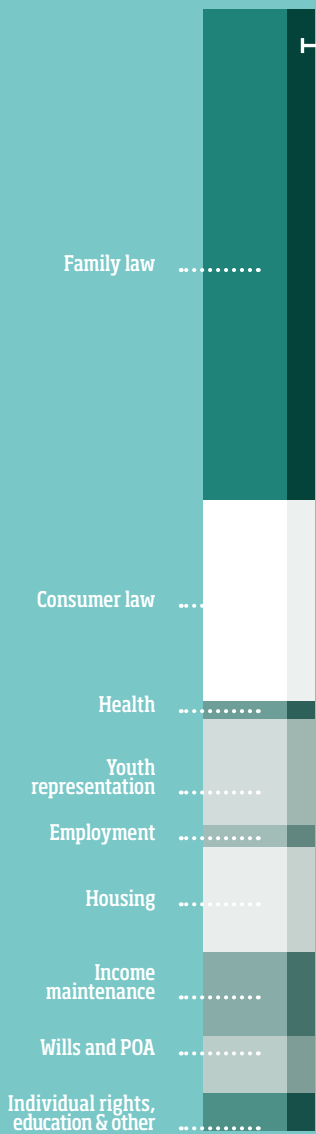
Why do more than 2/3 of these households not seek formal legal help?

“They can’t help me.”

“It’s too expensive.”

“I’ll avoid the situation.”

“I don’t know a lawyer.”



In 2013, Legal Aid of Nebraska opened 13,052 cases, providing assistance to 29,402 people.

With offices in 8 locations and an extensive network of volunteer private attorneys, Legal Aid of Nebraska provides assistance in all 93 counties.

- LEGAL SERVICES through representation, advice & counseling, advocacy, and specialized programs
- TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS
- COMMUNITY OUTREACH
- COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS with other nonprofits and human service providers
- RESOURCES like automated court forms, handbooks, links to other resources, and more

Legal Aid short-term results:

- REDUCED BARRIERS TO JUSTICE. By providing resources, assistance and representation, Legal Aid of Nebraska helps its clients achieve the legal outcomes that they would not otherwise be able to achieve.
- SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES. Our clients report that the services they have received reduce anxiety, provide practical and usable information in a timely and efficient way, and are delivered in a professional and caring manner.
- LEGAL LITERACY. Our services help clients improve their understandings of court procedures and legal rights.

Legal Aid long-term results:

- LEGAL EFFICACY. Clients have improved abilities to prevent and handle their own legal issues in the future.
- SAFETY. Our services help provide freedom from situations of domestic abuse.
- IMPROVED ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.
- HOUSING STABILITY.
- REDUCED DEPENDENCE ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE.
- IMPROVED HEALTH.
- COMMUNITY WELLBEING. Improvements across community wellbeing indicators are the result of improvements to low-income individual’s lives.



When it rains...

A breast cancer patient challenges unlawful repossession.

After having made some mistakes with her credit, Stephanie Cline was working to rebuild her finances. She had moved in with her daughter's family and had found employment with an insurance agency. The only other thing she needed was a car to get to work. After searching online ads, Stephanie decided on a 2002 Toyota Camry with 60,000 miles from a local car dealership. The sales manager tried to talk her into getting a 2010, but Stephanie remained firm on the 2002, knowing that purchasing a car with more affordable payments would be the best way to begin rebuilding her finances.

Stephanie had a \$1,500 down payment, and her son-in-law had offered to cosign the auto loan. The sales manager assured Stephanie that the financing would go through and that he'd notify her within two days if there was a problem. That deadline came and went, so Stephanie went ahead and insured the vehicle. Almost two weeks had gone by when Stephanie received a call from the sales manager.

On July 3rd, the sales manager called and demanded that Stephanie give them another \$1,500 or return the car. Stephanie, without extra funds and dependent on the car for work, said that just couldn't happen. She had a legal contract, bill of sale and licensing.

As Stephanie says, "Getting that car was the break I needed to rebuild my life." It wasn't simply a matter of just giving the car back.

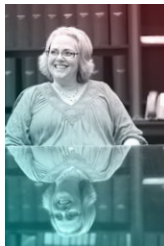
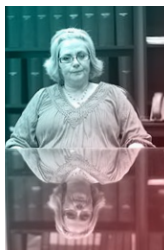
In the midst of this, Stephanie was diagnosed with breast cancer. The stress of the diagnosis coupled with her impending bilateral mastectomy made the situation with the dealership

even more stressful on Stephanie and her family. So it was with disbelief on July 8th that Stephanie answered a knock at the door to find someone demanding the keys to her vehicle, which had already been towed away with her belongings inside. Among those belongings: cancer

materials and a new car seat that Stephanie had recently purchased for her granddaughter.

Five days after her cancer diagnosis, Stephanie lost her job and her health insurance. She hired a lawyer who said that the dealership had illegally repossessed the vehicle, but progress was not being made in the case. Eventually, the lawyer said he couldn't help Stephanie without more money. But Stephanie was already spending half of her unemployment to pay for COBRA and other expenses related to her cancer treatment. Recovering from her bilateral mastectomy and without a car, Stephanie was limited with her job search.

"Getting that car
was the break
I needed to
rebuild my life."



Stephanie shares her story amid both smiles and frustration.

With nowhere else to go, Stephanie turned to Legal Aid of Nebraska. “I had just lost my breasts and my job, and that’s when I came to Legal Aid, and they encouraged me by saying, ‘We’re going to fight this.’” Legal Aid first suggested that Stephanie call the Better Business Bureau (BBB). They immediately opened a case against the dealership, but heard nothing back for two and a half months. When the sales manager from the dealership finally addressed the BBB, he responded by defaming Stephanie’s character, calling her ignorant, and claiming the contract wasn’t binding.

Reading that letter was distressing for Stephanie, who merely wanted her money back. The dealership’s offer was to consider the period she had the car as a rental period, and to give her about \$500 back. Stephanie needed her full \$1,500 back though, and her Legal Aid attorney, Kate Owen, encouraged her to remain positive. “I knew it was going to be better after meeting with Kate,” said Stephanie. “Kate kept fighting for me...You don’t realize how important Legal Aid of Nebraska is unless you’re in a situation like mine.” But her circumstances would soon become more challenging.

With one small mistake in paying COBRA, Stephanie lost that insurance. She suddenly found herself in need of a new job that could provide her with healthcare coverage. Stephanie found a gas station close enough to walk to that offers health insurance for full-time employees after three months. She is currently working with her manager to establish her health insurance through the company. This is vital since she needs to schedule a third surgery and needs more blood work done soon.

Stephanie is now saving to get a new car, but notes it is difficult to do with so many medical expenses. Nonetheless, it’s important to her to be able to reestablish her independence. Throughout this ordeal with the dealership and her cancer, Stephanie has had to rely on her daughter and son-in-law to get to medical appointments, which she knows is hard on them.

The situation with the dealership has been a burden to Stephanie’s recovery and state of mind as well: “It broke me...I have never understood what could push people to take their own lives. I now do. Hopelessness.”

Asked how she has been able to remain so determined throughout this arduous and lengthy process, Stephanie puts it clearly: “I have to. Plain and simple. I have to stand up and fight.”

“It broke me...
I have to stand
up and fight.”



On the cover

To celebrate our 50th anniversary, this year's annual report cover features a 1964 photograph of Legal Aid of Nebraska’s first Director and attorney, Colleen Buckley (third from left). On the far left is attorney Elizabeth Pittman, and the other ladies are Junior League of Omaha representatives who served on Legal Aid’s board.

Cheers to 50 years.

Legal Aid of Nebraska’s anniversary event raised over \$51,000! On October 4th, 2013, the Lozier Foundation presented Legal Aid’s 50th Anniversary Celebration with special guest Morris Dees, civil rights activist and co-founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center. He reminded the audience of the need for equal access to justice for all Americans.

Dees shared his belief that we should treat our fellow citizens and neighbors, regardless of income or nationality, with the respect that all humans have the right to, and he emphasized the importance of legal aid in preserving that.

Other speakers included Chief Justice Michael Heavican, Legal Services Corporation President Jim Sandman and Judge Vernon Daniels, a former Legal Aid attorney.

Honorary hosts were Dianne and Allan Lozier.

All funds raised went to supporting our domestic violence cases. We have a shockingly high number of abuse victims needing our help; sadly, we have to turn a number away due to funding challenges. The funds raised at our 50th Anniversary Celebration will help 51 victims and their families become survivors.



Guest speaker, Morris Dees



Chief Justice Michael Heavican



Judge Vernon Daniels



Legal Aid staff Elise Emanuel-Moore, Christine Stolarskyj and Elaine D'Amato with Morris Dees.



Morris Dees with Tara Muir, Executive Director of the Domestic Violence Council.

Sponsors

Presenting Sponsor

The Lozier Foundation

Dinner Sponsor

Weitz Family Foundation

\$7,500

The Hawks Foundation

\$5,000

Carol Gendler
Lieben, Whitted, Houghton,
Slowiaczek & Cavanagh, PC., L.L.O.

\$2,500

eFrame, LLC
Lamson, Dugan and Murray, LLP
SilverStone Group
Wells Fargo

\$1,000

American National Bank
Baird Holm LLP
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The Daily Record
Erickson & Sederstrom, PC.
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The Daily Record
Piccolo's Florist

In the summer of 2012, 63 migrant workers traveled to Nebraska from Texas, Kansas, North Carolina and California to detassel corn. They came to Nebraska with the hope of earning a good, honest wage in exchange for good, honest work. However, after working long days under the harsh July sun, they finished their work in Nebraska feeling as though the promises made to them had not been fulfilled. Some even thought that by the time they accounted for their living expenses, they were leaving Nebraska with less money in their pocket than they had when they arrived.

Due to the outreach efforts of attorney Lori Wilson, head of the migrant program for Legal Aid of Nebraska, a group of workers contacted Legal Aid and asked for help recovering the wages they were promised. Andrew Stock, an attorney from Legal Aid's North Platte office, took the case. Stock, who is bilingual, met with the migrant workers behind the back of an interstate motel outside of Wood River, Nebraska the night before the migrant workers were departing Nebraska for home. Stock heard their stories of pay discrepancies and broken promises. Stock explained to the migrant workers that as U.S. citizens and persons with legal status, they have legal rights regarding wages and that Legal Aid would help them.

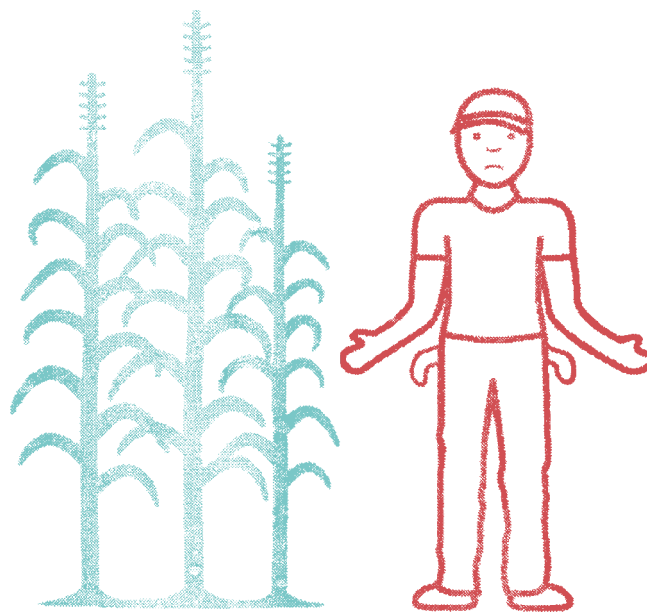
After realizing the situation they were in shortly after arriving in Nebraska, many of the migrant workers wanted to cut their losses and return home early. Unfortunately, they had no means to do so. Most had carpooled together and they could not leave until the person who drove the car was ready to go. However, the people with the cars still held out hope for

getting gas money from the contractor, so they were more reluctant than the others to leave early. And, of course, purchasing their own bus tickets was a problem because the workers had earned far less than they thought they would—they couldn't afford the tickets. "They felt hoodwinked and trapped," says Stock.

Stock went on to explain that migrant work is a necessity for their lives, and their families depend on a fair wage for their work.

In the fall of 2012, Stock filed employment discrimination complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on behalf of the 63 workers. By the summer of 2013, the discrimination complaints were withdrawn as Legal Aid and Monsanto—the company who controlled the fields on which the migrant farmworkers labored—came to a settlement agreement. Stock cannot discuss the content of the settlement due to a nondisclosure agreement between the parties, but he is pleased with the outcome and pleased that Legal Aid of Nebraska was able to help a group of workers who had nowhere else to turn.

"migrant work is a necessity for their lives, and their families depend on a fair wage for their work."



These are just a few of the hundreds of stories Legal Aid of Nebraska encounters every single month.

Renters unknowingly became victims to a dishonest landlord who was illegally renting apartments two years after his Lincoln complex was foreclosed on. Michael Matulka continued to accept rent payments and deposits for new leases without the mortgage company, Fannie Mae, knowing about it.

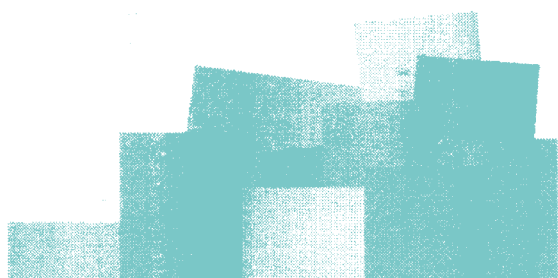
With no funds to secure housing—and homeless shelters in the area full because of the snowstorm—these families were in crisis. One father decided to go to Legal Aid of Nebraska where attorney, Lea Wroblewski, represented him and 9 other families. "This was truly not their fault," says Wroblewski, "and they were essentially left homeless."

Wroblewski was able to navigate their way for them through the legal process and get the help they needed. She helped the clients reach a settlement with Fannie Mae, and the tenants were granted three more months in their apartments and financial assistance to help with their move.

Additional support and advocacy for the tenants came from Senator Mike Johanns, Lincoln City Council and Occupy Lincoln.

In addition to representing their case, Wroblewski also provided them with housing counseling. She advised her clients on their housing rights so hopefully they can avoid any future landlord/tenant issues in the future.

"this was truly not their fault, and they were essentially left homeless."



After saving up, a husband and father of two was able to sign a lease and pay the deposit and first month's rent on an apartment. The family was living paycheck-to-paycheck on the small amount of money the father was able to bring home from work, but it felt good just to have a place to call home. So imagine his surprise when his family received an eviction notice just days later that said they had three days to vacate. Having spent all the extra money they had to secure this apartment, this family was now about to find themselves homeless, and they weren't the only ones.

Twenty-four tenants of a Lincoln apartment complex came home on a Friday in April 2013 to discover they were being evicted and had only a few days to vacate. Most of the apartments were comprised of families who were now being displaced during a spring snowstorm.

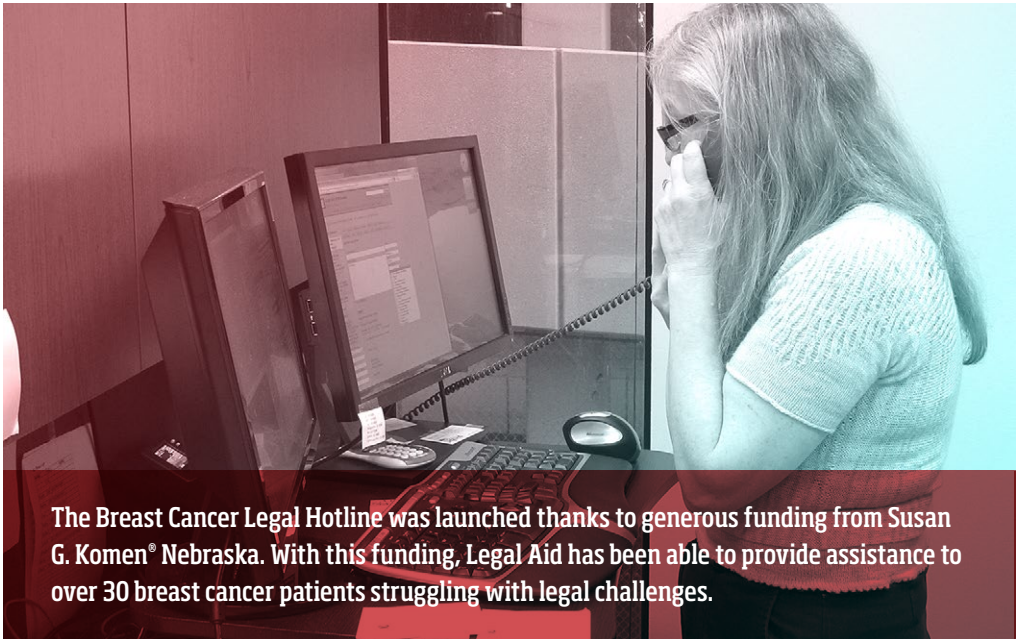


Lincoln's Access to Justice Self Help Center (A2J), a center for walk-in legal services, opened in April 2013. The A2J Center served over 460 people in its first year of operation.



Legal Aid staff and board member volunteers graciously accepted the Better Business Bureau Integrity Award in October, 2013.

Back row: Ed Brooks, Hon. David Piester, Matthew Dunning. Front row: Jennifer Gaughan, Annette Farnan, Dave Pantos, Carol Gendler, Samantha Miller and Nicole Vereen.



The Breast Cancer Legal Hotline was launched thanks to generous funding from Susan G. Komen® Nebraska. With this funding, Legal Aid has been able to provide assistance to over 30 breast cancer patients struggling with legal challenges.

Margaret Schaefer, Breast Cancer Legal Hotline and ElderAccessLine Attorney.



The Nebraska Immigration Legal Assistance Hotline (NILAH) launched on November 4th, 2013. Since its debut, NILAH has handled approximately 541 calls. NILAH provides centralized intake for immigration legal service providers.

From left to right, Aydee Rader, Leslie Espino, and Noemi Hernandez De Graham, NILAH paralegals.



The first-ever charity golf event was sponsored by Fidelity National Title Group. Over \$2,700 was raised to support legal services. Special thanks to our sponsors, golfers and the staff at Fidelity National Title Group for organizing such a wonderful event!

Hole sponsors

- American National Bank
- Gerald L. Friedrichsen
- Locher Pavelka Dostal Braddy & Hammes, LLC
- Tim Loudon, Jackson Lewis, LLC

- Stalnaker, Becker & Buresh, P.C.
- Thomson Reuters

Event Donation

- Lindsay Doucette



In December, Legal Aid's Omaha office and Access to Justice Self Help Center moved across the street. This new, larger location has provided more room for our expanding organization and allows us to improve and increase services for our clients.

Move donors

\$5,000	\$2,000	\$1,000
The Hawks Foundation	Carol Gendler	American National Bank
		John and Wende Kotouc Family
		Charitable Funds

People.

2013 employees

Omaha office

Nicole Albers, AL Data Specialist
Rachel Albin, Intake Paralegal
Ana Bezrutcyk, Paralegal
Christina Bradley, Paralegal
Edward Brooks, Director of Finance
Elaine D’Amato, Attorney
Jaclyn Davis, Law Clerk
Shereece Dendy, Attorney
Elise Emanuel-Moore,
NAP Coordinator
Leslie Espino, Intake Paralegal
April Faith-Slaker,
Data Outcome Analyst
Annette Farnan, Deputy Director
Rodney Feelhaver, CFO
Paula Fritz, AL Attorney
Jennifer Gaughan,
Director of Litigation & Advocacy
Melinda Hanson, Attorney
Adam Harper, Law Clerk
Muirne Heaney, Managing Attorney
Laurel Heer-Dale, Director of Access
Noemi Hernandez De Graham,
Intake Paralegal
Michael Kammerer,
Tech Coordinator
Alyson Krupica, Accounting Clerk
Ann Mangiameli, Attorney
Venita Mason, Receptionist
Jennifer McGill, Paralegal
Anne McShane, Attorney
Matt Merrill, Law Clerk
Angela Miller, BFRD Attorney
Samantha Miller,
Development Associate
Scott Mertz, Attorney
Katie Timperly Mock,
Director of Development

Katherine Owen, Attorney
Dave Pantos, Executive Director
Shirley Peng, Attorney
Selina Perry, Grants Manager
Aydee Rader, Intake Paralegal
Mindy Rush-Chipman, AL Attorney
Valentina Saaverdra, Paralegal
Margaret Schaefer, Elder AL Attorney
Benjamin Scheuring, Attorney
Rebecca Schneckloth, Paralegal
Jonathan Seagrass, Attorney
Liliana Shannon, Attorney
Bambi Stofer, Intake Paralegal
Christine Stolarskyj,
Attorney/PAI Coordinator
Kathleen Stolarskyj, Intake Paralegal
Lindsay Surdell, Attorney
Suriel Vazquez, Intern
Stephanie Watton, Paralegal
Amy Williams, Researcher
Emma Williams,
Administrative Assistant
Susan Willis, Intake Paralegal

Bancroft office

Lori Marr, Administrative Assistant
Michelle Soll,
Paralegal/Office Manager

Grand island office

Shawn Farritor, Attorney
Barbara Fenton, Receptionist
Jazmin Figueroa, Receptionist
Crystal Schott, Paralegal
Lori Wilson, Managing Attorney

Lincoln

Sophia Alvarez, Attorney
Heather Bernt, Paralegal

Mark Bestul, Attorney
Patrick Carraher, Managing Attorney
Kristin Ceballos, Paralegal
Alexander Clark, Attorney
Steve Golej, Law Clerk
Cheree Hatfield, Law Clerk
Laurel Johnson, Attorney
April Kirkendall, Attorney
Jennifer Kulwicki, Attorney
Sarah Kyker, Project Clerk
Brittani Lewit, Attorney
John Milligan, Attorney
Amanda Raver, Law Clerk
Hazell Rodriguez, Attorney
Tania Sercl, Paralegal
Scott Sidwell, Attorney
Brenda Wikoff, Legal Secretary
Lea Wroblewski, Attorney

Norfolk

Lori Lee, Managing Attorney
Amanda McMahon, Attorney
Kelsie Myers, Attorney
Karmen Thompson, NAP Paralegal
Kathy Wesche, Paralegal

North Platte

Victoria Carpenter, Paralegal
Jeffrey Eastman, Managing Attorney
Andrew Stock, Attorney

Scottsbluff

Caryle Covalt, Paralegal
Dana DeSimone, Receptionist
Kelanie Marker, Temp. Receptionist
Amanda Palomo, Paralegal
Christina Rodriguez, Receptionist
Sheldon Skelcher,
Managing Attorney

2013 volunteers and interns

Thank you to our volunteers and unpaid interns for dedicating their time and energy to Legal Aid of Nebraska’s mission.

Interns

Daneis Barber, Omaha
Erin Burkett, Omaha
Lang Chao, Omaha
Tania Garcia-Rangel, Lincoln
Molly Glover, Lincoln
Sarah Gyhra, Lincoln
Christy Iltzsch, Omaha
Callie Rietfors, Omaha
Eric Ritter, Lincoln
Rhys Williams, Lincoln

Law clerks

Isaiah Ang, Omaha
Katelyn Cherney, Omaha
Seamus Kelly, Lincoln
Qi Lucy Li, Lincoln
James Sieben, Lincoln
Jacqueline Tabke, Lincoln
Jayne Wagner, Omaha
Tiffany Woodall
Jenny Zhang, Lincoln

Work-study

Kaylor Caldwell, Lincoln

Volunteer

Karen Caballero, Lincoln
Claudia Fullerton, Lincoln
Alexandra Garrison, Omaha
Eric Gruidel, Omaha
Kelsey Hillman, Lincoln
Laura Monsees, Lincoln
Reid Murdoch, Lincoln
Suzanne Polzkill, Lincoln
Joan Thelin, Omaha
Allie Walters, Lincoln
Mary Wickizer, Lincoln

Volunteer attorneys

Jean Ambrose, Omaha
Kimberly Dunovan, Omaha
Dawn Swanson, Lincoln

2013 private attorney involvement

Under the Private Attorney Involvement (PAI) program, Legal Aid recruits private attorneys to assist clients living at or near poverty, pro bono or at a reduced rate with civil legal matters in counties more than one hour’s driving distance from a Legal Aid office. For more information on how to get involved with the PAI program, please contact Christine Stolarskyj at (402) 348-1069 ext. 248 or email cstolarskyj@legalaidofnebraska.com.

Mark Albin, Norfolk
Avis Andrews, Fremont
Kurt Arganbright, Valentine
Amanda Barron, Fremont
Ben Beethe, Tecumseh
John Begley, Omaha
Michael Borders, Broken Bow
Steve Brewster, O’Neill
James Davis, Fremont
Jeffrey Enszt, Minden
Marsha Fangmeyer, Kearney
Steve Fillman, York
Todd Flynn, Ainsworth
Leta Fornoff, Fremont
Tara Gardner, Lincoln
Scott Hahn, Omaha
Angela Heimes, Omaha
Zachary Hindman, Sioux City, NE
Wanda Howey-Fox, Yankton, SD
Shaun Ilahi, Omaha
Nathan Jaggert, Alliance
Matthew Jenkins, Lincoln
Kathy Koenig Rockey, Norfolk
Kevin Loftus, Yankton, SD
Angela Madathil, Lincoln
Nicole Mailahn, Kearney

Angelica McClure, Lincoln
Steve Mercure, Tecumseh
Diane Merwin, Humboldt
Lisa Meyer, York
John Moeller, Sioux City, IA
Laird Moore, Omaha
Cheryl Munson, Broken Bow
Rebecca Nelson, Sioux City, IA
Kay Prather, Beloit, KS
Justin Roberts, Omaha
Patrick Runge, Omaha
Melissa Schutt, Fremont
Jerry Sena, Omaha
Curtis Sikyta, Ord
Heather Sikyta, Ord
Gail Steen, Lincoln
Robert Stewart, Sioux City, IA
Adam Tripp, Fremont
David Wilson, Sidney
Lori Zeilinger, Grant

Pro bono lawyers

Legal Aid of Nebraska wants to recognize the considerable efforts of local private attorneys for their pro bono contributions to our organization. Thank you!

Brandon Dickerson, Stinson Leonard Street, LLP	Shaun Ilahi, Private Attorney
Joseph Dreesen, Jackson Lewis	Nancy Morris, Stinson Leonard Street, LLP
Scott Hahn, Women’s Center for Advancement	Jarrodd Reece, Stinson Leonard Street, LLP
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Why I became a Legal Aid lawyer.

I grew up in rural Brown County, Nebraska, and am now in my first year as a practicing attorney with Legal Aid of Nebraska. I grew up knowing several attorneys who practiced law in my community near Ainsworth, Nebraska. Looking back, I wonder if my initial impression of the nobility of law came from the observation that lawyers did things like pro bono work on Native American reservations, or help my brother with all the small, intricate but very important details when he started his own business and bought a home, or have an honest and open conversation with my parents while helping them write a will. As I grew up, my perception of the law changed very much. I met people in law school who were openly driven by money and power. I realized this was okay; it just was not what motivated me.

I set my sights on public interest law and with some perseverance and luck, I achieved my goal. Would I tell someone sitting in my shoes 10 years ago to go to law school today? My answer would be conditioned upon being certain they would be as fortunate as I have been on my journey through education and into my career. I had the support of my family, financially and otherwise, throughout both undergraduate and law school. Many people don't have that. I held convictions about wanting to serve the public and using my Bachelor's degree in social work to shape my career as an attorney. I went to law school with many people who did not share that same passion; but some did. Many—in fact most—of those who did share that common passion are not doing the type of public interest work I



Laurel Johnson shares her story about why she chose to pursue public interest practice, the choices and sacrifices that lawyers working in these areas have to make, and why she feels fortunate that this has been obtainable for her.

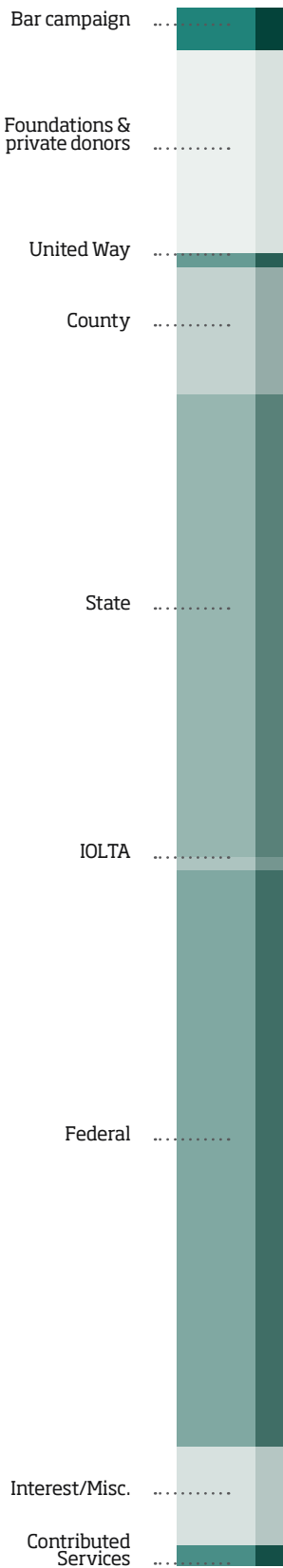
"I did not go to law school to make a lot of money. I went to law school to become a stronger advocate for those without a voice."

When I was hired at Legal Aid, there was no position I would have rather taken. I was not new to Legal Aid. I had interned in 2009 to fulfill the 480 hours of unpaid internship work that was required to obtain my Bachelor's degree in Social Work. It was somewhere during these 480 hours, in fact, that I made the decision to go to law school. With a law degree, I realized—right or wrong—sometimes one can be a more effective advocate for those in need. I completed my expensive undergraduate education and started law school at another private institution, swayed heavily by an emphasis in social justice and a desire to enrich my law degree with these types of experiences. In law school, I again found myself at Legal Aid of Nebraska, where I worked as a legal clerk during the summer following my second year of law school. Now, for the third time, I am back at Legal Aid as a practicing attorney. I completed an education I am proud of, and I gained valuable experiences.

am, and the reality of it comes down to money. Do I understand the choice many people make when entering into this profession: starting entry careers where they make at least twice the salary I do? Yes. When the debt you have accrued over a period of 8 years of education is no longer in forbearance and loans become a big part of your financial reality, I can understand why people with ambitions similar to my own still choose to pursue work in a private, much higher paying sector. I did not go to law school to make a lot of money. I went to law school to become a stronger advocate for those without a voice. I can and will continue to do that, but it is time that we are honest about the financial reality of lawyers in this position. We certainly gain the satisfaction of helping clients and serving the greater public, but we make sacrifices when we choose this work.

This story was part of a prepared testimony in favor of LB 808, a Nebraska bill that would provide loan repayment for attorneys in rural and public interest practice.

2013 audited
operating statement.



Revenue

Legal Services Corporation*	
Basic Field	\$1,359,045
Native American	38,711
Migrant Worker	30,295
Technology Grant	36,000
Lancaster County Juvenile Court and JBC*	494,378
Northeast Nebraska Area Agency on Aging*	34,076
Nebraska Commission on Public Advocacy*	1,298,454
Department of Housing & Urban Development*	51,100
Violence Against Women Act*	172,584
National Foreclosure*	200,000
U.S. Department of Agriculture*	226,802
Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska	50,000
Interest on Lawyers Trust Fund*	52,000
United Way of the Midlands	22,592
United Way Lancaster County	19,431
ElderAccessLine Grant*	88,484
HUD Homeless Grants	27,145
Civil Legal Serv. Fund*	219,288
University of NE Med Center	104,043
University of NE Lincoln	20,203
Internal Revenue Service/LITC*	29,359
DOJ – Nat. Am. Legal Serv.*	60,740
Investment Income	256,697
Other Income	19,903
Contributions	1,043,895
Contributed Services	77,651
Total Revenue	\$6,032,876

Net Assets at 12-31-13. \$2,317,652

* Federal, state and county funding.

NOTE: Best practices for non-profit organizations indicate that the organization should have operating reserves equal to between 3 and 6 months operating expenses. At 12-31-13, Legal Aid of Nebraska had operating reserves of approximately 4.4 months, based on the 2014 budget.

Expenditures

Salaries	\$3,397,588
Employee Benefits	931,039
Payroll Taxes	244,753
Contracted Services	193,297
Private Atty. Contracts	77,651
Discounted or Donated Private Attorney Involvement	77,651
Supplies	50,243
Telephone	133,838
Postage and Shipping	22,574
Occupancy	272,783
Printing	9,160
Recruiting	7,829
Transportation	82,814
Training	38,407
Maintenance and Repairs	9,041
Equipment Rental	32,307
Litigation Costs	13,422
Insurance	63,098
Dues	31,754
Technical Support	80,114
Miscellaneous	18,600
Library	37,242
Development	71,383
Depreciation	113,872
Total Expenditures	\$6,010,460

Functional Expense
Breakdown

Program Services – 88.5%	\$5,321,343
Admin. & Fundraising – 11.5%	689,117
Total Expenditures	\$6,010,460

2013 donors

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Kearney Area Community Foundation.	\$2,000
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United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County	\$19,431
Heartland United Way	\$7,500
United Way of Columbus	\$5,000
United Way of Western Nebraska.	\$4,579
United Way of Box Butte	\$1,000

Thank you to Pamela Car for our cy-près award of \$3,638.

Cy-près awards, which in the class action context can arise from undistributed residual funds in the case, have become an increasingly important source of funding for legal aid for the poor. Additionally, cy-près distributions can be made to prevent a charitable trust from failing. In 2014, Nebraska Lawmakers passed LB 1089 which was signed into law by Governor Heineman. LB 1089 provides for the distribution of funds in both contexts to the Legal Aid and Services Fund. If you are an attorney and you are faced with residual funds in either a class action or charitable trust situation, please consult LB 1089 and direct these funds to the Legal Aid and Services Fund. If you have questions about LB 1089, please contact Dave Pantos, Legal Aid’s Executive Director.

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209 S. 19th Street, Ste. 200, Omaha, NE 68102
(Mon-Fri, 1 pm-4 pm)

Lincoln

941 “O” Street, Ste. 802, Lincoln, NE 68508
(Mon & Wed, 1 pm-4 pm)
(Fri, 9 am-12 pm)

Statewide AccessLine®

1-877-250-2016
(Mon & Wed, 9 am-11 am)
(Tue & Thu, 1:30 pm-3:30 pm)
Spanish-speaking staff available.
Translation services available.

Rural Response Hotline

1-800-464-0258
(Mon-Fri, 8 am-5 pm)

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program Hotline

1-855-660-1391
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ElderAccessLine® (Age 60 and over)

1-800-527-7249
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Nebraska Immigration Legal Assistance Hotline (NILAH)

1-855-307-6730
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Breast Cancer Legal Hotline

1-855-916-4540
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(Fri, 9 am-12 pm)

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Omaha

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Lincoln

941 “O” Street, Ste. 825, Lincoln, NE 68508

North Platte

102 E. Third Street, Ste. 102, North Platte, NE 69103

Scottsbluff

1423 First Avenue, Scottsbluff, NE 69363

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214 N. Seventh Street, Ste. 10, Norfolk, NE 68701

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415 Main Street, Bancroft, NE 68004

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1811 W. Second Street, Ste. 440, Grand Island, NE 68803

Lexington

1001 N. Washington Street, Lexington, NE 68850

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