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Production Credit:
Joanna Bevor



To our readers,

Welcome to the BPP Pro Bono Centre's latest newsletter and update on our work. The 2008/2009 academic year is off to a roaring start in the Pro Bono Centre's sites in Leeds, London and Manchester. Over 1,750 students have registered interest in one or more of the Centre's projects, and you'll find evidence of our work to date throughout this newsletter.

National Pro Bono Week

This year marked the seventh annual National Pro Bono Week during which the legal profession celebrated the provision of free legal services to those otherwise unable to access such help. Goals of the more than 70 events held across the country included showcasing work already done, motivating even more of the profession to get involved and advertising to the public that such assistance is available.

BPP's Pro Bono Centre played an integral role in the Week's events, starting with a team of London BVC students who delivered a mock trial in the Lord Chief Justice's courtroom at the Royal Courts of Justice as the centre-piece of the Week's launch. The mock trial of two "defendants" charged with knife crimes was delivered to a jury of teens from a Camden behaviour support unit and an audience of some of the legal profession's most prominent members, including President of the Law Society Paul Marsh, Bar Council Chairman Tim Dutton QC, the Lord Chief Justice Lord Judge, Master of the Rolls Sir Clarke, and the Attorney General Baroness Scotland. BVC students then reprised the mock trial at the Royal Courts of Justice throughout the week to different groups of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Asad Ladha (BVC London 08/09), Student Director of the Streetlaw Mock Trials project, said: "The mock trial served the important purpose of highlighting the current problems of escalating gun and knife crime, whilst simultaneously acting as an informative and practical exercise for the youngsters who acted as the jury. On a more personal note, it was a privilege (be it a rather a nervy one!) to have the opportunity to advocate in the court of the Lord Chief Justice; an experience that would no doubt intimidate even the most experienced practitioners."

Some examples of our work taking place both during National Pro Bono Week and throughout the year include:

- Interviewing and advising members of the public through our Legal Advice Clinics;
- Drafting letters of legal advice in response to human and civil rights queries sent by the public to Liberty;
- Supplying law students to assist solicitors' pro bono advising at law centres and CABx around the country;
- Delivering Streetlaw legal literacy lessons to prison inmates, ex-offenders, schoolchildren and youth groups near each of our sites;
- Hosting a seminar delivered by Jones Day lawyers on the impact of pro bono work by global law firms (at BPP Waterloo);
- Assisting litigants-in-person at the Royal Courts of Justice and courts in London and Manchester;
- Providing email advice to individuals in the creative industries on how to protect their intellectual property rights; and
- Training a team of students to act as Mackenzie friends to people facing court action over serious debt.

Many thanks to all BPP Pro Bono Centre volunteer students and supervisors for enabling us to deliver such valuable assistance to those in need.

Kara Irwin, Director
BPP Pro Bono Centre

How to get involved in BPP Pro Bono Centre projects:

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If you are a practitioner interested in supervising a project, please contact the Centre's Director, Kara Irwin, on 0207 430 5677 or at karairwin@bppls.com.

**Pro Bono
Milestones
Since
September ...**

**Legal
Translation
Service
volunteers
have
conducted 21
translations
for charities
and law
centre
clients.**

**Volunteers
from our
Own-it
project have
completed 36
letters of
advice on
intellectual
property
matters for
individuals in
the creative
industries.**

The Attorney General's BPP Pro Bono Heroes

At an 11th November reception in the House of Commons Members' Dining Room, the Attorney General, Baroness Scotland, recognised members of the legal profession from across the country who give their time, legal skills and knowledge to providing free legal services to those otherwise unable to access such help. Among those whose work was celebrated were five current and former BPP students, all honoured in large part for their work while at BPP. Those named as the Attorney General's "Pro Bono Heroes" include:

- Marie Dhanendran** (LPC Leeds 07/08), for her tremendous contributions as Streetlaw Student Director in developing the project;
- Barney Cowin and Hollie Marcham** (LPC Manchester 07/08), for their leadership in delivering legal advice to the poor through BPP's Legal Advice Clinic;
- Julie Kathuria** (BVC London 07/08, LLM London current), for her vision and initiative in establishing Know Your Rights, a West London legal literacy programme; and
- Deborah Regal** (GDL London 07/08), for her employment pro bono work and for her significant efforts in raising awareness about pro bono among MPs for their constituents.

Baroness Scotland said: "Pro bono is a time honoured tradition of the legal profession and something I hold very dear. I look forward to thanking in person a number of those individuals who quietly give up their time and expertise, both here and abroad, in order to make justice happen for people for whom justice may otherwise be denied. Their valuable work, which can be life-changing for those they support, often goes unrecognised and it is high time their achievements were celebrated."

Members of Parliament, peers and members of the judiciary were also on hand to recognise and congratulate the heroes.

Congratulations to all of BPP's many pro bono heroes!



Marie Dhanendran, BPP Pro Bono Hero, meets Attorney General Baroness Scotland at the House of Commons



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**Pro Bono
Milestones
Since
September ...**

**Students on
our Mock
Trials Project
are advising
10 different
secondary
school teams
entering
this year's
Citizenship
Foundation
Mock Trials
Competition.**

**BPP students
in London,
Leeds and
Manchester
have
completed
over 90
letters of
legal advice
on human
rights issues
for members
of the public
through the
Liberty
Letters
Clinic.**



London FT BVC Students Lucinda France-Hayhurst and Katherine Buckle pose following the National Pro Bono Week launch mock trial

BPP Students Promoting Human Rights in England and Wales

**Lewis Danezi, LPC FT 08/09,
Liberty Letters Clinic Student
Director, London**

London-based charity Liberty is at the heart of the movement for fundamental rights and freedoms in England and Wales, promoting the values of individual human dignity, equal treatment and fairness as the foundations of a democratic society. BPP Liberty Letters Clinic volunteers are very proud to be able to work in conjunction with Liberty to provide free advice and information to members of the public who have no other means of legal representation. The protection of these individuals' rights and freedoms is of immense importance both for the individuals affected and for the development of society as a whole.

The BPP Liberty Letters Clinic is relatively new, running for 5 years now. During this time the

Clinic has grown significantly with more and more students showing their enthusiasm each year. Kate Pumphrey and Sarah Rogers (Student Directors 2007/08) did a marvellous job last year of maintaining that interest.

This academic year has started extremely well. A record number of volunteers applied and were offered the opportunity to volunteer for the BPP Liberty Letters Clinic. Volunteers attend the weekly Clinic sessions to research and draft their letters of legal advice responding to queries sent in to Liberty by the public while indulging in a tasty selection of treats including Pringles and Jaffa cakes. Subjects of the legal advice range from the right to free expression and the right to receive equal treatment to the right to peaceful protest.

We are working hard to unite the three BPP Law School sites

that run the Liberty Letters Clinic – Leeds, Manchester and London. The new Student Directors are Rowena Howard in Leeds and Katie Portwin and Jennifer Small in Manchester. It is a pleasure to be working with them. They report that the Leeds and Manchester volunteers have similarly had a good start to the year.

We will be hosting a number of events for all students to really have some fun while raising money for Liberty. This will include gigs, debates and of course the infamous Annual Fundraising Ball, so keep your eyes peeled.

I look forward to another rewarding year working with Liberty and such a dedicated team of Student Directors, volunteers and staff in promoting human rights.

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What is FRU?

The Free Representation Unit (FRU) is a London-based charity that trains law students and new lawyers to represent parties at employment and social security tribunal hearings under FRU case worker supervision. The BPP Legal Advice Clinic refers some cases to FRU, and over 35 BPP London law students are actively involved in taking FRU cases, with additional volunteers set to qualify as FRU representatives in early 2009. Those interested in becoming FRU reps should go to www.freerepresentationunit.org.uk. The next FRU training session will in early 2009.

Supporting FRU representatives – The New BPP FRU Project

Lia Gialelis, LPC PT 08/10, and Sophie Priestley, LPC FT 08/09, BPP FRU Project Student Directors, London

As part of an exciting push to expand the Pro Bono Centre's employment law advice services, we have launched the BPP FRU project. The project's first meeting saw lots of enthusiasm from students who have been keen to share their ideas. The aim of the project is to encourage and support BPP students to become FRU Representatives and to achieve expert status (those representatives who have undertaken 5 or more cases and are eligible to take on complex and longer cases). The project will also be a base from which we can assist BPP FRU representatives to work together on cases, dividing the work load and pairing up those more experienced reps with students who are keen to take on their first case.

While many students are very interested in getting as much legal experience as possible during their studies and are keen to become FRU representatives, for a variety of reasons, the reality is that only a small minority currently make the most of the opportunities offered by FRU. We are addressing this issue through the project by encouraging more students through the FRU qualification process.

Project volunteers will help representatives pair up and split the roles in a similar way to the roles of solicitor and barrister in practice. We are also hoping to develop ideas for further training and support once the project is fully up and running.

We are looking forward to expanding and developing this project and would love to hear your ideas. You can reach us at BPPFRU-Project@bpplaw.co.uk.

IP Pro Bono Kicks Off in London

Chivone Gerald, BVC FT 08/09, and Julia Elliot, GDL PT 08/10, IP Pro Bono Group Student Directors, London

We have now set up the Intellectual Property Pro Bono programme for 2008/2009. The aim of this programme is to promote interested students' understanding of the field of intellectual property law while facilitating provision of IP pro bono services to the community.

Again this year, we have had lots of enthusiasm and interest in IP pro bono and have set up specific subject area groups ranging from art to music to IT. The Groups are approaching institutions and contacts to arrange opportunities for our IP Presentation Teams to provide free-of-charge informative and interactive workshops on IP law. The workshops' aims are to educate a wide range of authors of creative and scientific works about their intellectual property rights and responsibilities under UK law and to give advice on practical steps that should be taken to protect their property.

Our volunteers tailor their presentations to the audiences they address, covering the range of copyright, design rights or patent law that may be applicable to any particular audience.

The volunteers are BPP law students who, under supervision from BPP Pro Bono Centre staff, research legal issues, draft presentation plans and deliver the interactive seminars. BPP lecturers volunteer by checking the accuracy of the legal content of all presentations. We usually arrange for each Group from the IP Presentations Team to design and deliver each seminar.

These sessions are provided either on a one-off basis or as multiple sessions throughout the year.

Some examples of topics on which we have provided sessions in the past are:

- Copyright
- Design Rights
- What Film Makers Can and Can't Do
- Compliance Issues
- BBFC Regulation and Censorship
- Patent Law
- Ofcom/The Watershed
- Music and Intellectual Property

In addition to the external presentations, we are working with the Groups to identify a range of interesting speakers in the Intellectual Property field to give talks and presentations to BPP students.



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**Pro Bono
Milestones
Since
September ...**

**BPP's Legal
Advice Clinic
student
volunteer
advisers have
helped 40
new clients
so far this
term in
London
alone,
including
representing
10 of them in
housing
tribunals.**

**Streetlaw
Prisons
volunteers
have
delivered
interactive
workshops
on the law to
over 100 ex-
offenders and
prison
inmates.**

Engaging Law Students through Streetlaw Prisons

**Dilpreet K Dhanoa, BVC
FT 08/09, Student
Volunteer, London**

More than 30 years ago a small group of socially conscious law students at Georgetown University (in the USA) came together to form a legal literacy project called Streetlaw. Such was the effect that it managed to take hold and have a powerful impact. It has since crossed the Atlantic to become an integral and significant element of many law school pro bono programmes in the UK today, as well as in 30 additional countries. Streetlaw's original mission encompassed a blending together of both a practical education regarding the law and the philosophies of human rights and democracy.

BPP is proud to say that we too have a part in this phenomenon in our work with prisoners and ex-offenders, and this year we have had the largest project increase yet, with five times more student volunteers than previously. HMP Pentonville prison is a main focus of the project, where BPP students deliver interactive presentations on ex-offenders' legal obligations to disclose information about their convictions.

We have also held talks on prison reform, human rights and issues that are often faced by individuals in prison. These talks have better educated our volunteers about how we can assist in relation to these issues.

The project is continually expanding, and this has meant that BPP will be looking to commence sessions at various other prisons across London.

As well as becoming more engaged with the law on a pragmatic level, students are encouraged to think about legal problems from a possible client's perspective; and for many who may not see the functioning of the law at its most fundamental core, the Streetlaw Prisons Project provides them with an opportunity to become more engaged with the law from a socially dynamic perspective. Through researching specific legal topics for the presentations, or actually partaking in a session, or by delivering the interactive workshops and engaging in the debates surrounding controversial issues such as prison reform and treatment of inmates, law students raise their awareness of the legal issues surrounding prison reform.

This is certainly a crucial element of pro bono work that future lawyers cannot ignore – rather than using the law to help decide just a single case for an individual, the project provides law students with the priceless chance of providing those who may not fully know their rights, a way to change the course of their lives through increased understanding of the law and its function in society.

The volunteers' dedication to this project is paramount, and as a law student the sheer experience involved is an excellent learning tool in itself. In providing others with access to understanding their rights and responsibilities, the law students gain an understanding and awareness of social responsibility. No matter which field of law we may enter in the future, we should not forget the law's essential purpose, which is not to find people guilty, but to create a safe and progressive society. As future lawyers, surely it is down to us to ensure that we do all we can to keep this momentum going and play a positive role in helping shape society around us.



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