

center news

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Andy Dash



Amanda Varella

Addressing the Plight of Unaccompanied Alien Children (UAC) Threatened with Deportation

In 2013, Brown Rudnick decided to partner with the nonprofit screening and advocacy group established by Angelina Jolie and Microsoft, Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), creating a Brown Rudnick Pro Bono Impact Project in Boston and New York in which associates could receive a budget of full billable credit for their representation of unaccompanied immigrant children threatened with deportation.

In 2014, the Firm's Andrew Strehle and Al Wallis learned of the new urgency and breadth of the looming crisis from Vice President Biden during a meeting in his office in the Executive Office Building. Since then, the crisis has broken into public view and the Firm has been part of discussions with those across the country seeking to understand and respond to the legal dimensions of the crisis. These discussions have included those with: the White House, the American Bar Association, the Association of Pro Bono Counsel, the National Pro Bono Institute, the American Immigration Lawyers Association ("AILA"), the American Civil Liberties Union, the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), Lutheran Social Services Refugee and Immigrant program, among others.

During the last two years, Brown Rudnick has been involved in a number of KIND engagements in Boston, New York and Washington D.C. We asked Amanda Varella and Andy Dash, two of Brown Rudnick's Supervising Partners on these matters, for their thoughts on the Firm's efforts to help address this crisis (continued on page 2).

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&
THE
BROWN
RUDNICK
CHARITABLE
FOUNDATION
CORP.

cover story continued

Why do you think this pro bono work is important?

Amanda: Providing representation to children who enter the US immigration system alone is incredibly important, particularly given the dramatic increase in the number of unaccompanied minors in the past year.

Andy: I am proud to be involved in these matters. By helping these children, we are literally changing the course of their lives. We are helping to keep families together, and by remaining in this country, these children have new opportunities for a better education and a better life.

How do Brown Rudnick associates benefit?

Amanda: KIND is a tremendous partner, and working with them is a great opportunity for young associates. These associates are skilled and idealistic, and KIND matters allow them to refine and broaden their experience. They get multiple opportunities to get into a courtroom and meet with clients, and they get this great practical experience while helping a child and playing a small but significant role in addressing what is truly a humanitarian crisis.

Andy: The pro bono work presents numerous opportunities for additional associate professional development on case management, client relations, trial preparation, and more. Most importantly, the associates have a sense of ownership on these matters. They meet the kids and their families, and our associates become immediately invested in doing whatever is in their power as lawyers to help their clients. They realize that we can use our skills as lawyers to make a positive impact on people's lives.

What part of the project has impacted you the most?

Amanda: I was recently at one of the hearings and two things really struck me. The first was how young so many of these kids are. Our particular client has been abused and traumatized so much in her country of origin that she needs an all-female team of attorneys and interpreters. She traveled here from El Salvador with only her younger nephew. She's just four years older than my sixth grader, and it's absolutely heartbreaking to think about what she has gone through in her life. The second thing was that the hearing began with a lengthy announcement in Spanish. It was really jarring for me to sit in a courtroom and not understand a word that was being said. It was really eye-opening, because that's what our KIND clients deal with in trying to navigate the court systems, the schools, and everyday life in a language other than their native one.

Andy: The opportunity to work with individuals on matters that so directly affect their lives is deeply satisfying. There is enormous human impact to this work. Children's lives are being bettered. That's a nice day's work. In addition, as a lawyer, working with these children and their family members provide an opportunity to give back to the profession -- and society.

Amanda Varella is a litigation partner in Brown Rudnick's Boston office.

Andy Dash is a litigation partner in the Firm's New York office.



Did You Get Your 2015 Brown Rudnick Center for the Public Interest Calendar?

The Brown Rudnick Center for the Public Interest 2015 calendar has arrived. If you would like a calendar, please contact Kellie Cahill at KeCahill@brownrudnick.com.



Meet the Brown Rudnick Travel Debate Team

Relationship Grant recipient, the New York City Urban Debate League, named its new Travel Debate Team in honor of Brown Rudnick and the Brown Rudnick Center for Public Interest its ongoing support of the organization's mission to ensure a citywide debate league for all.



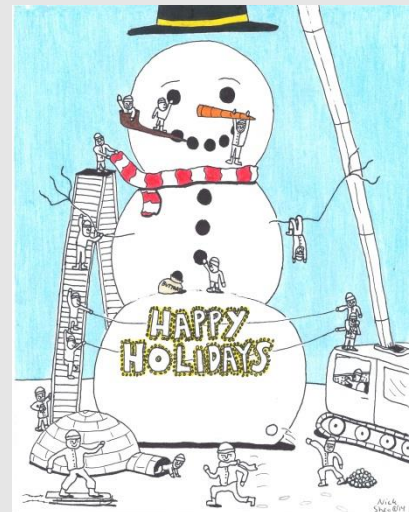
Boston Public School students celebrating the VLA Holiday Art Award Ceremony at the Brown Rudnick Boston office.

Celebrating a Decade of Holiday Card Contests for Boston Public School Students

Brown Rudnick and the Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts of Massachusetts (VLA) celebrated their 10th annual Holiday Card Contest for Boston Public School students. Created in 2004 to support arts education, the contest provides an opportunity for educators to engage students in an art enrichment program. The contest was initiated with a grant from The Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation and with assistance from the Brown Rudnick Center for the Public Interest, as well as through the support of the Boston Public Schools.

On December 3, 2014, contestants, their teachers and families, Brown Rudnick attorneys and Charitable Foundation Directors, and a representative from the Boston Public Schools administration gathered to celebrate this year's winners at an awards reception hosted in the Boston office's Events Center. About 100 attendees applauded the student winners from each school and every winning student received an award certificate and art supplies. The first place winner, Nick Shea, a 12th grader at East Boston High School, had his artwork made into a 2014 holiday card which is used by the Firm and offered for sale by the VLA.

The presence of a professional camera crew added to the excitement as videographers recorded the celebratory event to make into a short video about the Brown Rudnick Center for the Public Interest.



2014 VLA Holiday Card Contest Winner. Art work by Nick Shea.



Brown Rudnick Attorneys and Staff at the Holiday Art Award Ceremony.

Accepting Applications for Community Grants

Each month the Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation accepts applications for educational grants to support inner-city educators through its *Community Grant Program*. Created to support front-line educators who often do not have a voice in funding decisions, the *Community Grants* subsidize small, concrete projects, which will improve inner-city education within Boston, Hartford, London, Providence, New York, Washington, DC, or Orange County, California within the coming year. The grant applications and an explanation of the program can be found at <http://www.brownrudnickcenter.com/foundation/community-grant>.



London Office Hosts LIFEbeat and Mousetrap

The London office hosted two current Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation Relationship grantees in November, 2014. Both grants support organizations and programs effectively engaging inner-city, disconnected and disenchanted youth.

1. LIFEbeat uses an intense summer camp as the core of its programming. (Brown Rudnick London Trainees Peter Wozny and Emma Jane Price visited the camp this past summer.) LIFEbeat uses the London theatre and on-site theatre exercises to excite and involve youth. The two organizations will create a collaborative project with part of our grant. Youth and staff from LIFEbeat joined Brown Rudnick attorneys in a rich interactive evening of trust and relationship building. A LIFEbeat staff member wrote to us afterwards:

"I always feel humbled when I meet dynamic motivated and successful business people who are so warm and open to youth /community participation." One of the youth who attended commented afterwards: "Wowwww....thank you so much. I am so glad to have taken part in this. It has made my life seem alright again".

2. Mousetrap also uses theater to engage marginalized London youth, bringing theater exercises into the classroom and bringing youth to productions in London West End's Mousetrap Theater. The night after the visit to the Firm's London office, Mousetrap hosted a theater visit to a production of *The Scottsboro Boys* for families with disabled children. Two Brown Rudnick London office trainees attended as well. One mother who attended the theatre event with her child visit wrote to Mousetrap:

"Thank you so much for a wonderful evening; we thoroughly enjoyed the gripping story of the Scottsboro boys. Many congratulations on the anniversary of Family First Nights, this project has made such a difference to so many families. Life with a child who has a disability can be very tiring and place demands on the whole family. These days out to see shows are so special to the children with the disability, but also to their families - when so many other aspects of normal life are hard to achieve, these provide a relief and a joy that can last a lifetime."

[In photo, LIFEbeat students and staff, together with Brown Rudnick attorneys, engage in the kind of interactive program activities used to break down barriers and involve youth in a positive outlook for their future.]

London Office Visits Whittington Health Charitable Fund



Foundation Board member Chris Toms, London Partner Steven Friel and Al Wallis (pictured left) visited the Whittington Health Charitable Fund in London and presented a Community Grant check to Kathleen Cavin, Speech and Language Coordinator. The grant supports the work of the Camden Early Years Speech and Language Therapy Service, which works directly with speech challenged children and families, providing assessment and ongoing intervention as needed. Much of the language development intervention work is delivered around key topics and stories used with this population. Grant funds will be used to purchase learning "play sacks" which provide valuable assistance with this intervention.

community grants and community involvement

Boston Library Bake Sale Benefits Breast Cancer Patients & Families

Again this year, Brown Rudnick's Boston Library staff, led by Diana Pierce, had a successful bake sale, raising over \$1,000 for the Ellie Fund, a non-profit organization that provides critical support services to those fighting breast cancer and their families in Massachusetts. Pictured is a note of thanks from Hilary Harrelson, Ellie Fund Director of Special Events.



Dear Diana+the entire library staff,
Thank you so very much for thinking of the Ellie Fund and for your generous donation. What an impressive bake sale! It was so nice to see your email come through sharing that you were going to support the Ellie Fund. We had just learned from our Director of Patient Services that we had received a record number of requests for help this month.



Your contribution helps tremendously in allowing us to provide critical support services to all of the women and families who have asked for our help.

Thank you again for your support, it is greatly appreciated! Please contact me with any questions or if you know of someone who could use our help!

Best,
Hilary Harrelson



Brown Rudnick Firm-Wide Effort Raises Funds for Breast Cancer Awareness

All Brown Rudnick offices participated in the annual Denim Day in which charitable donations were accepted in exchange for a "jeans day" at work. This year, the effort, which was coordinated by the Brown Rudnick Center for the Public Interest, raised \$1,230. Proceeds will support Breast Cancer Research. A special thanks to Denise Kaer, Diana Nelson, Val Jones, Claudia Teitelbaum, Judy Downey, Jessica Pels, Amy Bull, Karen Brisbois and Kellie Cahill for helping coordinate.

Community Grant Helps Bridge Communication Gap for Autistic Children in D.C.

A Foundation Community Grant was awarded to the Bridges Public Charter School in Washington, DC to support teacher training of the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). PECS is a unique augmentative/alternative communication intervention package for individuals with autism spectrum disorder and related developmental disabilities.

community involvement and pro bono

Brown Rudnick Remembers Children during the Holidays



Annual DCF Holiday Gift Drive in Boston

In what has become an annual tradition, the Brown Rudnick Boston Office completed a holiday gift drive, coordinated by the Center for the Public Interest, in conjunction with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to bring requested toys and clothing items to 48 children in DCF care. DCF provides a holiday gift "wish list" from children in their custody and individuals at Brown Rudnick "adopt" a specific child by purchasing gifts for their child, to be delivered by DCF for the holiday season. Thank you to everyone who participated by buying gifts, wrapping presents and loading the DCF truck!



Toys for Tots Drive in New York

The Brown Rudnick New York office raised over \$1160 in donations from attorneys and staff for a Toys for Tots holiday drive which benefitted the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation. Thank you to everyone who made this event a success.

Friday 12th December 2014
CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY
In aid of
Save the Children



Save the Children Drive in London

The Brown Rudnick London office raised funds from attorneys and staff to donate to aid Save the Children.

Pro Bono Accolade for Scott Burns

In the London office, Scott Burns was presented with a Pro Bono Accolade by Al Wallis, Executive Director of the Brown Rudnick Center for the Public Interest. Scott received the award in recognition of his initiative, leadership, and diligence in the Center's pro bono efforts, including his invaluable support and encouragement of the Center's efforts, including the expansion of the BR Charitable Foundation to London and his leadership in the conception and creation of the UK pro bono program, Lawyers Volunteering for the Arts.



Pro Bono Victories with Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts of Massachusetts

Brown Rudnick began this pro bono representation in 2011 to recover artwork that a Massachusetts-based client had delivered to a Georgia gallery. The gallery owner's financial troubles are well documented in the Atlanta press, and early on during this matter, his records were examined by the police at the request of other unpaid artists. Unconvinced by his claims that he could not pay, the Firm sued in Massachusetts court, recovering a default judgment that doubled the damage award and added prejudgment interest. When the gallery still refused to pay, the Firm located co-counsel in Georgia to work pro bono. Together, we domesticated the judgment into Georgia, and eventually filed a motion to compel discovery (as to the gallery's assets). Finally, with a sanctions hearing imminent in a nearby courthouse, the gallery relented, offering to settle for less than the judgment, but considerably more than what was originally owed. The pro bono client accepted the resolution -- a financial settlement that was paid earlier this month -- and is delighted this long saga has ended so well.

Representation in this matter was provided by Brown Rudnick attorneys Jessica Lu, Kaylan Sliney, and Andrew Strehle.



London Legal Clinic Underway

The London office has recently taken on a new pro bono engagement, providing legal assistance on a regular basis at the Croydon Legal Clinic. Establishing this effort has taken well over a year of sustained effort. Recently, the London office legal team and representatives from the Clinic and from LawWorks (a pro bono support organization) discussed how the initial effort was unfolding and celebrated Brown Rudnick's success thus far. In recognition of their leadership role in establishing this pro bono project, a Pro Bono Accolade was presented at the meeting to associate Imogen Steiert and partner Chris Toms by Center Executive Director Al Wallis.



Barbara Kelly Receives Award for Volunteerism

Brown Rudnick New York Attorney, Barbara J. Kelly, was recognized by the Lawyers Alliance for her volunteerism. During the October Lawyers Alliance Cornerstone Awards, Barbara was honored as a "15 Year Circle" Volunteer for her longtime pro bono work through Lawyers Alliance.



Al Wallis
Center for the Public Interest
Executive Director



Just Us.

Quoted from the Boston Bar Association e-newsletter feature, *Voices of the Bar*, Oct. 2014

Why is it important to you to be involved in pro bono work?"

Albert W. Wallis - Brown Rudnick LLP

"It seems to me that pro bono legal work is at the purest center of being an attorney: selfless use of our talents (and license) to represent the indigent and the marginalized, driven by our profession's pursuit of the dual ideals of "providing access to justice" and serving the "public good". More personally, Boston has a very vibrant pro bono community, with several firms like mine have full time pro bono managers. The camaraderie, cooperation and inventiveness among these smart, creative, compassionate colleagues refreshes me and is my favorite example of the way our sometimes unnecessarily competitive legal community works together for the common good."