



LA VOZ

JULY 2016



Celebrating the people who make things happen
at New Mexico Legal Aid

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*The winner of the May reader drawing is **ROB GREENBAUM**, seen here with his Spider-Man puzzle, stickers, and towel.*

Rob wrote: "Thank you. I am deeply honored. I'll update my résumé immediately." Now, *that's* a gracious winner. By the way, the Spider-Man dart board on his wall was already there *before* he won the drawing! And notice the way cool Star Trek necktie!



Photo by Linda Paz

And ... Alicia Clark won the drawing for readers of the Volunteer Appreciation issue of LA VOZ:



Here she is with her prize, a strange wrought-iron thing that nobody can figure out what to do with. (She chose it, folks!) And no, it is not a CD rack or a shoe stretcher.

Right about now, you are really starting to wish you'd entered the drawing. The magic word for July is somewhere in this issue. Email the word to marianb@nmlegalaid.org by the end of **July 29th** to be entered in the next drawing!

EXCELLENCE IN ACTION

The 2016 Vieth Fellowship Team

How did this get started?

Arnold & Porter LLP is a prominent law firm “focusing on the intersection of business, law, and public policy,” and employing nearly 800 lawyers in nine offices across the US and Europe.

The firm has “a deep commitment to public service and pro bono work.”

G. Duane “Bud” Vieth joined Arnold & Porter in 1949 and is now a retired partner. To honor him, the A & P Foundation funds an LSC program that will award grants each year to LSC-funded organizations to support professional development in non-profit leadership skills.

And **NMLA** got one of the first-round grants offered by LSC after a national competition for proposals submitted in 2015. The program is designed to stimulate the development of highly motivated and skilled teams capable of leading community-wide initiatives as well as innovative projects and strategies within NMLA.

John Ross came on board to help us design and implement a year-long **leadership development** model. John is a consultant with 45 years of leadership experience in the nonprofit sector.

Over a series of listening sessions with NMLA staff and partner agencies statewide, the “leadership development model” evolved into our own **“Excellence in Action”** project.

Four **“Vieth Fellows”** were selected for the first-ever team:

- ❖ **Alicia Clark**
- ❖ **Neomi Gilmore**
- ❖ **Molly Graver**
- ❖ **Nate Puffer**

Alicia and Neomi and their projects are described on the following pages.

Molly and Nate will be profiled in the next issue of LA VOZ.

Alicia Clark, 2016 EIA Fellow

What you don't know about public benefits can hurt you!



Alicia (in the prow) and Penelope
photo by Ray Vandersall

Project Synopsis:

A training outreach project to educate the New Mexico public about public benefits eligibility.

For the public: In-person education about little-known rule exceptions, the importance of timely appeals, and navigating the appeal process pro se.

For community partners: How to better inform the public of their rights and how to use the web-based resource when questions arise.

Where did the idea come from? From my frustration at the fact that there are so many needy people in New Mexico who are eligible for benefits, but not getting them. From my experience, the New Mexico Human Services Department (“HSD”) makes errors constantly, thereby denying people benefits to which they have a right. A lot of people don’t realize that they can appeal, or they’re afraid to appeal and they don’t know that they can get a lawyer to help them.

I elected to apply for this fellowship because I want to inform the public about its right to benefits, especially re: those benefit programs HSD administers—SNAP (food stamps), TANF, General Assistance, all the different types of Medicaid, etc. There are others, such as the Medicare Savings Program (a subsidy that pays Part B premiums) and LIHEAP (heating and energy assistance); these are just a few examples. Often the applicant’s only source of information is an HSD caseworker or a NM Works Program contractor, and those people may give out wrong information out of lack of their own knowledge or for other reasons. For example, they might say, “You have to work 126 hours per month to continue to be eligible for TANF”—when the person is likely eligible for reduced work hours because of barriers to employment caused by disability or domestic violence. HSD case workers often push for the highest job-training hours, even when the regs show that the client fits into a TANF reduced hours/waiver category. Another area where people are grossly misinformed is in regard to the TANF 60-month “lifetime limit.” There are exceptions to that rule as well, but hardly anyone understands what they are.

So, the goal of the outreach project to get people informed about their rights and the appeal process. To begin with, I’m working with Ted to perfect a food-stamp calculator, adapted from the one in Massachusetts. <http://pservex/online%20snap%20calculator.html>. Ours is not 100% ready for the public yet, but I encourage folks in our offices to try it out and give me feedback on it. When finished, it

will be the only one of its kind for New Mexico. I'm hoping it will draw people to our website, where they will be able get even more information about public benefits.

The next step will be a series of trainings with community partners, such as clinics for service provider staff who deal with Medicaid, domestic violence advocates—anyone in a caseworker-type role who has contact with our client base. I plan to do trainings all over the state to help these community partners become issue-spotters, so the information will trickle down to our client base. John Ross advised me not to try to train statewide at the start, but, rather, to start with a pilot project covering a 100-mile radius of Bernalillo County.

I don't expect the client base to be able to digest this new legal information directly. So we need to make the website attractive to both the community partners and to the public. My goal is to give people a baseline of knowledge so that they aren't compelled to accept what HSD tells them at face value. My ultimate goal is that, with this information available to them (through our website) at least some segment of the public will be willing and able to represent themselves at HSD administrative hearings. Or if not, they will at least have the confidence to ask for an administrative hearing. That point (when a hearing is pending) is the only time HSD caseworkers take a hard look at my clients' cases.

How's it going? We're putting the finishing touches on the food stamp calculator and I'm preparing materials for trainings.

How can we help? You can help by taking public benefits cases in your office and being interested in learning about the subject. If this takes off, it will increase our referrals, and we'll need to have knowledgeable attorney advocates in each office. ■



photo by Ray Vandersall

Neomi M. Gilmore, 2016 EIA Fellow

Walk a mile in the shoes of a domestic violence survivor.



Photo by Priscilla Portillo de Mata

Project Synopsis:

Students from the UNM-Human Service Program, Gallup—unafraid of a challenge, and wanting to understand the struggles of domestic violence victims—take on the role of domestic violence victim to improve their oral and written advocacy skills. Navajo Nation and state law licensed attorneys volunteer to educate students on the pro se process. In a mock hearing, the students argue in front of actual former Navajo Nation judges and a Domestic Violence Commissioner. In this way, they experience every survivor's experiences with the court system.

Where did the idea come from? It started with a cup of coffee. I met for breakfast with two very smart and ambitious leaders: Sylvia Andrew (from the Division of Education, Health and Human Services at UNM Gallup) and Rose Graham from the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship and Financial Assistance. Sylvia, Rose and I talked about my work with domestic violence victims, particularly about the communication gap between social workers, lawyers, and others in the community. Our conversation was so intense it went on right through lunch. As a result, Sylvia invited me to speak to future social workers in her Human Services class in Fall 2015. Not only did I talk about the protection order pro se process, but also about my personal history—growing up in poverty and witnessing domestic violence and substance abuse. She asked me to talk about my experience working with survivors of domestic violence. The students wanted to learn more about domestic violence. I mentioned Excellence in Action, and Sylvia and I came up with the idea of mock hearings and a plan for a pilot project.

How did the mock hearing go? The students did very well. I was so impressed. They brought pictures of bruises (created with special effects make-up) and other injuries, and used them as evidence to make their case. Student presented their petitions, and raised some interesting legal issues. For example, one student alleged psychological control over another person through the abuser's use of supernatural ability over the victim. After the hearing, students asked questions about holding a corporation responsible for domestic violence. I enjoyed the mock hearings, and so did the three judges who gave specific guidance, based on their real-life experience, about what usually happens in court. I didn't give the judges much instruction. They just ran with it. Next time, I'll know how to make it even better. For example, it would be good to have an actual bailiff involved.

What's the next phase? John Ross suggested that I use this model to “deputize advocates and leaders.” So I submitted two proposals to give presentations to people in the domestic violence field, to encourage them to train more advocates in their communities. I go every month to Roberta’s Place, and the strong and caring advocates there—Sally, Molly, Jessica, and Rod—want me to use this model to train survivors and advocates. Lastly, Sylvia and I will write about our experience with EIA and submit a paper for publication.

How can we help? I want volunteers—attorneys, judges, advocates, and anyone willing to help organize mock hearings. I also want help with my caseload. Joel has been great; Gallup is a very collaborative office. Cassie Fleming helped with the state portion of advising the students, Jean Philips made a connection for me with people in Zuni. Miranda Fafard help me create certificates for the participants, signed by Ed Marks, and Public Defender Ryan McCord talked about his role in Domestic Violence process.

Through this Excellence in Action project, I collaborate with individuals and agencies who work directly with survivors of domestic violence. I am proud of the UNM-Gallup Human Services students for stepping up to the challenge. I hope they now understand how hard it is for victims to speak up and seek legal advice. In conclusion, I want this project to create a snowball effect to show survivors they can access help so they can have healthy, safe and secure lives. ■



Professor Sylvia Andrew

Sylvia says: “We had a reception to recognize the students for their accomplishment—attended by a Who’s Who of our legal community here in Gallup. State Senator George Muñoz said, ‘Thank goodness Sylvia and Neomi had that cup of coffee!’ The project was featured twice in the *Gallup Independent*!”

“Neomi is quite a dynamo! Domestic violence is an issue of great interest to my students, and this project pulls everything together. It allows students to network with the NMLA attorneys, and know more about NMLA. We definitely want to embed this experience in the class, which is offered yearly in the spring semester.”

THE LATEST - Neomi has submitted her project for the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence conference (Arizona in October) ... and also for this conference:



NEW FACES: VOLUNTEERS!



Camille Bontems

Started volunteering for NMLA: July 5, 2016

Where? Albuquerque

Doing what? Working on litigation cases, beginning with shadowing Jane Zhi for her DV docket.

Why NMLA? I wanted to do an internship outside of France. I felt that working here would give me a good view of the American legal system. My aunt is a lawyer in Albuquerque; she knows Maria Geer and Ed Marks.

What else? I have two sisters, Morgane and Marlène. We're identical triplets. I've been dancing West Coast Swing for five years in Paris and now I teach it, too. After my time here at NMLA, I will finish my training in France, take some exams, and become an attorney specializing in employment law.

First name pronounced: "ca-MEE"



Susan Green

Started volunteering for NMLA: July 6, 2016

Where? Albuquerque

Doing what? Right now, I'm helping out with intake for Roswell while Rafaela is away and they're short-handed. After that, I'll do whatever is needed.

Why NMLA? I was placed here through the Goodwill SCSEP program. I have worked for attorneys in the past, and I enjoy working in the legal field.

What else? I have worked as a professional freelance writer. Right now I'm looking for a permanent job in a law firm. Legal research is my strength, but writing is what I do for fun. I also paint and take a lot of photographs.

See one of Susan's beautiful photos on the next page.



View from a bus going through Colorado
Photo by Susan Green

WORD PROCESSING

TIP OF THE MONTH

QUESTION: I’m typing text into an Excel spreadsheet. I want to force a line break, but when I press ENTER it takes me to the next cell. Help!

ANSWER: Press ALT + ENTER

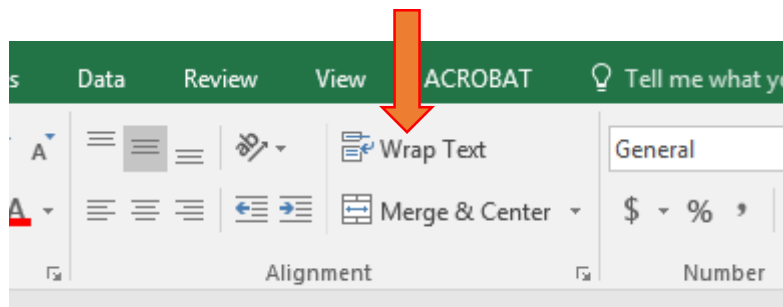
First Name	Last Name	Areas of Interest
Perry	Mason	Family law Animal protection Pre-nuptial contracts

In this example, if you were in Word, you’d press ENTER after “Family law” to insert a line break. But when you’re in Excel, you have to press ALT + ENTER.

You didn’t think there would be just one answer, did you? Suppose your text is more like this:

First Name	Last Name	Areas of Interest
Saul	Goodman	Though originally trained as a contracts attorney, I have recently become interested in criminal law.

In this example, to keep your text from running off the right side of the screen, select the cell and then click “**Wrap Text**” in the Alignment section of the Home tab.



Send questions about Word and Excel to marianb@nmlegalaid.org

The magic word for July (for no reason at all) is **KELP**.

NMLA ♥ Our Pets

At the statewide staff banquet on June 15th, we selected our favorites from the photos of NMLA pets submitted. The competition was fierce—as well as soft and cute and cuddly. The top three winners received pet supply store gift certificates. But they’re all beautiful enough to publish, so here they are.



#1

KIRA

Fed and loved by Pat Wildsmith

Kira is seen here competing in the lure course at Woofstock. According to Pat, “Kira is a happy girl and she makes me happy.” Rescued as a very young puppy, Kira is listed as a Shar-Pei, but is probably a mix of Labrador, Australian Shepherd, and Something Else.

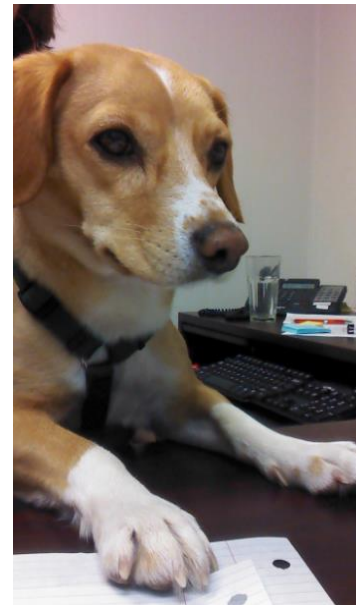


#2

CAPTAIN

Fed and loved by Allie Myga

Captain is a FEMA-certified search-and-rescue dog, and a member of the East Mountain K9 Search Team. He is a two-and-a-half-year-old Cane Corso (a rare breed, aka Italian mastiff). When not on duty he enjoys playing tug, chasing balls, and diving into any available water.



#3

RUBIO

Fed and loved by Tess Wilkes

Also a rescue, Rubio (part Beagle and part Mystery Dog) likes to play in the water, sleep, run around—whatever is going on. At Tess’s previous job, he was chosen as “Employee of the Month” seven months running, for helping clients’ children feel comfortable.



Pete

Fed and loved by Katie Withem



Sweetie

Fed and loved by Terrill Muller



Jak (dog) & Arwen

Fed and loved by Rob Greenbaum



Dulcie

Fed and loved by Erica Dominguez



Moose

Fed and loved by Aaron Holloman



Spot

Fed and loved by Ed Marks



Penelope (dog) and Myrna

Fed and loved by Alicia Clark



Bailey

Fed and loved by Linda Paz



Ginger (above) & Buddy

Fed and loved by Kasey Daniel



Barley

Fed and loved by Janet Paiton



Shy Girl's Red Dog & Doris

Fed and loved by Nate Puffer



A thrasher that Doris (the cat) caught and Nate rescued



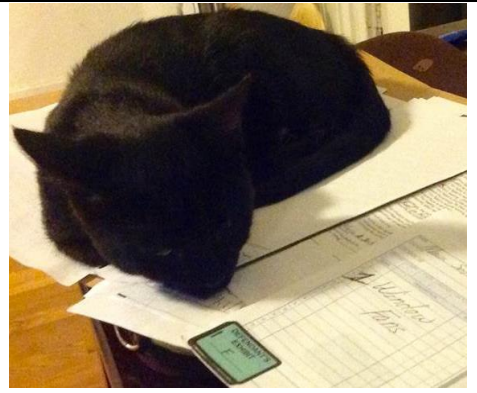
Chewy Baca

Fed and loved by Carmen Cortez



Milton

Fed and loved by Aja Brooks



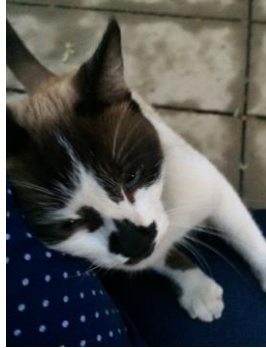
Vasquez

Fed and loved by Cass Brulotte



Ripley

Fed and loved by Cass Brulotte



Ink

Fed and loved by Jane Zhi



Zetta

Fed and loved by Lisa Nichols



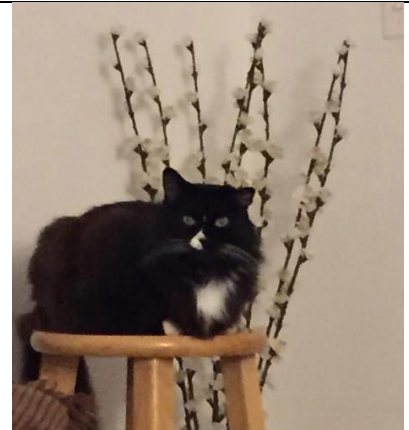
Stevie

Fed and loved by Dana Christensen



Lola

Fed and loved by Kathi Vance



Bootsie

Fed and loved by Rita Aragon



J.C. ("Just Cat")

Fed and loved by Kathi Vance



Chiquitica

Fed and loved by Rita Aragon

Read on to see who
guessed which pet owns
which NMLA employee ...

“Who’s Whose?”

Nate Puffer won the statewide contest for matching pets to their people, with **18** correct guesses. Nate chose as his prize the mother of all wind-up toys: the Chattering Teeth.

He is apparently using them to role-play aggressive cross-examination.



“To me, a lawyer is basically the person that knows the rules of the country. We're all throwing the dice, playing the game, moving our pieces around the board, but if there is a problem, the lawyer is the only person who has read the inside of the top of the box.”
—Jerry Seinfeld

IN THE NEWS 1



The Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA) recently received a contract to help fund its Indian Wills Project, aimed at assisting Native American Montanans on seven reservations to avoid losing their trust land upon death. The contract, for funding from the Indian Land Tenure Foundation, will run through September 30, 2017.

Without properly drafted wills and estate documents, Native Americans can lose their trust land to the federal government upon death, rather than the land passing to their families. Through the Indian Wills Project, MLSA brings affordable and accessible legal help that prevents families from losing their land.

And in case you were thinking that NMLA should do something like that: **We do.** NMLA's Volunteer Attorney Program works with the Southwest Indian Law Clinic at the UNM School of Law to organize estate planning clinics for tribal members. This effort is mostly student led, with our VAP providing advice and recruitment of pro bono attorneys.

IN THE NEWS 2

- A British study shows that people who come to the office while sick cost their employers twice as much in productivity losses as those who stay at home!
- A U.S. study agrees that clocking in while sick is counterproductive. While your inclination might be to power through an illness, going to work sick not only puts your co-workers at risk, but may further strain your own immune system.
- Staying home should be your unquestionable choice when you are ill enough to cause further medical risk to yourself or to possibly make others ill as well if you show up at the office. There is national debate right now over whether and when employers have a duty to send sick workers home. **If you are coming back to work while you are still ill only because you have run out of paid sick leave, reach out to HR Director Gloria Molinar to see if there are other options.**



“It’s your office.
They want to know
if you can stay home
a few more days.”

IN THE NEWS 3

GOOGLE GIVES PAYDAY LENDERS THE BOOT

by Aimee Picchi
for MoneyWatch
May 11, 2016

Payday loans have come under fire from consumer advocates and unhappy consumers for their sky-high interest rates.

Google, one of the world's most influential Internet companies, is taking a stand against the financial products, saying that *it will no longer accept ads for payday loans* starting this month (July 2016). The company said it decided to bar payday loan ads after reviewing its policies and research that has found the products can result in unaffordable payments and high default rates.

“When ads are good, they connect people to interesting, useful brands, businesses and products,” Google said on its public policy blog. “Unfortunately, not all ads are good—some are for fake or harmful products, or seek to mislead users about the businesses they represent.”

APPLY FOR
YOUR LOAN
TODAY

NO CREDIT CHECK!

Instant Approval

Get cash fast!

MONEY
WHEN YOU
NEED IT

FAST CASH
TITLE LOANS