



PISGAH
LEGAL SERVICES

Justice Matters

THE NEWSLETTER OF PISGAH LEGAL SERVICES

Standing for Justice and Dignity since 1978.

SECOND QUARTER

2020

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Pisgah Legal Services has remained open and accessible to people across the mountain region throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Here, PLS attorney Jenna Walley attends court in April to secure a protective order for her client. Domestic violence is on the rise since the pandemic began.



Save the date for our annual **Justice Forum** on October 1st. We are going virtual this year.

The keynote speaker will be **Clint Smith**, writer, poet and scholar.

Details to come!

Adapting to Meet Greater Needs in WNC

PEOPLE IN OUR MOUNTAINS ARE TURNING TO PISGAH LEGAL SERVICES NOW MORE THAN EVER AS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC DEVASTATES ECONOMY, COMPLICATES LEGAL SYSTEM

Many of us have endured countless sleepless nights since the coronavirus pandemic took hold, but for Pisgah Legal clients, their nightmares are all too real.

“Jasmin” lost her job after refusing to monitor a COVID-19 patient without appropriate personal protective equipment.

“Anita” began caring for her three-year-old grandson because his parents were living in a van and battling drug and alcohol

addiction. In March, they took the child for a visit, but never returned.

“Gary” survived heart failure only to be told by his health insurance company they wouldn’t be renewing his policy. How would he pay for care and medicine now?

Your Support Changes Lives!

Together with Pisgah Legal, these folks, and many others, are overcoming hardships. Find out how, and read more at: pisgahlegal.org/stories.

Navigating Hard Times Is What We Do Best

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR PISGAH LEGAL TO CARE FOR FOLKS IN CRISIS

Dear Friends,

In almost four decades at Pisgah Legal Services, I've witnessed a great deal, both good times and bad. These times, as we all know, are extraordinary.



We restate our commitment to stand for justice and dignity for all. Racism is wrong. Murder and violence happening against people of color are abhorrent. Our mission to pursue justice and improve the lives of low-income people in WNC will never be fully achieved until structural racism is dismantled.

In the face of so much terrible loss, it is my fervent hope that we may all now better acknowledge what is most important in our lives: our friends, our families and all those we hold dear. May we better appreciate not only the courageous nurses, doctors, and health care workers who are putting their lives on the line, but also equally value those who have been taken for granted for far too long: janitors in our hospitals, grocery store cashiers, bus drivers and farmworkers. Their contributions deserve both recognition and sincere gratitude.

We continue to fight and advocate to improve the lives of our most vulnerable neighbors, including pushing for Medicaid expansion in NC. We are working hard to address the hardships folks are facing that are made worse by this pandemic.

“What keeps me up at night is knowing that we must do more...”

This is what we do best: help people through economic crisis, manage mounting debts, avoid unfair foreclosures and evictions, escape domestic violence and secure health care which is needed now more than ever. Providing free civil legal aid to local people now will make a world of difference in their lives years from now.

There is much to be thankful for: our resilient staff seamlessly transitioned to work remotely. They have cross-trained to learn new skills and areas of the law in order to meet needs. We added online applications to our website, technology that has been invaluable. We've expanded to Avery, Jackson, Macon, Mitchell and Yancey counties so more people in our region have access to these critical services.

What keeps me up at night is knowing that we must do more; thousands more need our help. As the courts hear more cases and eviction protections are lifted, we are bracing for a flood of clients who are facing homelessness. Domestic violence is increasing, and millions are without jobs. The economy will not rebound fully until we have a cure or vaccine for the coronavirus. This a marathon, not a sprint. The needs are immediate, but the impacts will also be long lasting. We need your help more than ever. Please stand with us, and make a gift today. **Thank you!**

James A. Barrett

Jim Barrett, PLS Executive Director

CELEBRATING THIS YEAR'S JAZZ FOR JUSTICE HONOREES

Until we can honor and thank our wonderful 2020 award recipients in person, please read more about their generous contributions at: pisgahlegal.org/JazzHonorees.



Ann Y. Young,
*the Roy W. Davis, Jr.
Award Recipient*



Lee Anne Mangone,
*the Karl H. Straus Board
Member Emeritus Award
Recipient*



Gerald De Land,
*the Arnold and Bernice Green
Philanthropy Award Recipient*

Helping Those Impacted Most

ATTORNEYS ARE POWERFUL ALLIES FOR FIGHTING POVERTY



HOUSING



DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE



CHILD
ABUSE



HEALTH
CARE



UNEMPLOYMENT
BENEFITS

Here are a few highlights of how Pisgah Legal staff and hundreds of volunteer attorneys are assisting people who need us most during the COVID-19 pandemic:

Domestic Violence/Child Custody

Although NC courts stopped hearing most matters in March, they remained open to hear emergency domestic violence protection and child custody cases. Pisgah Legal has continued to represent our clients throughout.

Housing/Evictions/Foreclosures

Governor Cooper issued a moratorium on evictions in March, and later extended it in June. Pisgah Legal has worked hard to encourage renters to continue to work with their landlords, even with partial payments, and has stressed that a moratorium does not mean that rent is forgiven. As the courts open up, we expect a huge demand for help to avoid homelessness. And, as unemployment increases, foreclosures won't be far behind.

Unemployment Benefits

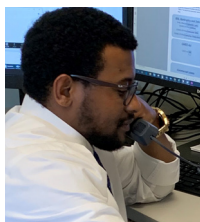
Unemployment rates in NC are now in the double digits. Pisgah Legal has been inundated with requests to access these benefits. Volunteer attorneys have been welcome resources, and staff attorneys have cross trained to learn how to help people get benefits they need to pay for food, shelter and basic needs.

ACA Health Insurance

With job losses, many have also lost health insurance. Pisgah Legal provides free assistance signing folks up for ACA health insurance through Special Enrollment Periods triggered by life events, including job loss. We've partnered with the Dogwood Health Trust to educate and encourage people in our mountains to get covered during this critical time. **Thank you, DHT!**

Sharing Valuable Legal Knowledge

Since March, Pisgah Legal has created videos, held live social media events, been featured in dozens of media interviews and added important resources to our website in order to get important information out to the people who need help most.



In May, we partnered with the Buncombe County Bar, Legal Aid of NC and the NC Bar Foundation to host a free legal hotline.

More than 500 phone calls were answered on that day alone. Xavier Lightfoot (above), a private attorney at Ward & Smith, was one of 150 volunteers that day. He says, "It was important for me to participate in the hotline to help folks with unemployment questions."

In Memoriam



In January, we lost a dear friend and long-time champion for justice, Jones Byrd.

Jones was proud to be a lawyer and spent most of his career in Asheville, first with Patla, Straus, Robinson & Moore, and then practiced for many years with The Van Winkle Law Firm. He devoted his professional career to helping those in need. Jones loved his family, the outdoors, and the Wake Forest Demon Deacons.

"To honor Jones' wishes to provide access to the justice system for the growing immigrant population in WNC, our family has established The Jones Byrd Memorial Fund for Pisgah Legal's Justice for All Program," says Sandra, his wife. "Our hope is that this fund will provide resources to transform the lives of immigrant families through representation, giving individuals voice, and asserting their humanity in the face of growing challenges."

Contact Ally Wilson
(828.210-3444 or
ally@pisgahlegal.org)
to find out more about
making a gift to this fund
or leaving your own legacy.



PISGAH
LEGAL SERVICES

Standing for Justice and Dignity since 1978.

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“The time is always right to do what’s right.”
– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Help Others by Supporting Pisgah Legal Today

YOU HAVE LOTS OF GREAT OPTIONS, AND YOUR GIFT IS USED WISELY TO HELP FOLKS RIGHT HERE IN WNC

Give Stock If you have appreciated stocks, it is easy to make a gift to Pisgah Legal Services. And if you give common stock held longer than one year, you can avoid capital gains on the transfer, so the full value goes to PLS.



Give Online It’s fast, easy and secure at www.pisgahlegal.org/give.

Give By Mail Some supporters are giving all or part of their stimulus check to Pisgah Legal Services as one

way to give back during these challenging times. If that’s an option for you, please use the enclosed envelope and mail in your donation.

Give Through Your IRA

Transferring funds from an IRA to Pisgah Legal is a great

way to stand for justice while taking advantage of an incentive in the tax code. Contact your IRA administrator for details.

Leave Your Legacy Include Pisgah Legal Services in your estate plans.

We have partnered with FreeWill to provide you with an intuitive, online will-writing tool. It is free, whether you choose to include a gift to PLS or not, and can be used to create a fully valid legal will or guide you through planning before finalizing with an attorney. Visit www.freewill.com/pisgahlegal.



Questions? Contact Ally Wilson by phone at 828-210-3444 or via email: ally@pisgahlegal.org.

Thank you for your support!

Stand With Us: For Justice and Dignity for All.