

Community Legal Aid

A non-profit law firm serving the legal needs of low-income individuals and families in central northeast Ohio



www.communitylegalaid.org

Community Legal Aid Receives \$186,033 Cy Pres Award

Community Legal Aid Services in Akron was recently named a Cy Pres Award recipient. The \$186,033 award will go a long way in serving the nonprofit law firm's impoverished and elderly clients in eight Northeast Ohio counties, says CLAS Executive Director Steven McGarrity.

"For Legal Aid, to be on the receiving end of justice is an honor," said McGarrity. "This generous award will help further our mission of ensuring that everyone, even if you can't afford an attorney, has equal access to the justice system." McGarrity noted that the Cy Pres Award will be used to support general client services, which range from obtaining protective orders and expungements to preventing unwarranted evictions, among many several others.

Unclaimed funds from the Summit County class action lawsuit Taylor v. First Resolution Investment Corp. resulted in the award. Cy Pres Awards originate from the French phrase *cy pres comme possible*, which means "as close as possible." Hence, the residual funds from Taylor V. First Resolution were awarded to Legal Aid at the request of attorneys Jim Burke and John Horrigan who won the case. An equivalent Cy Pres Award went to the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland.

"This is a way to help the community, for Legal Aid to help people in the same situation as our client, people who are having a hard time paying their bills, people who need help," Burke says.

The case, which the attorneys took to the Ohio Supreme Court, involved a debt buyer that obtained judgements for old Chase Bank debts. The debt collection process was ultimately ruled as time-barred. As a result, more than 3,000 Ohioans were eligible for reimbursement of monies debtors collected from them. Funds that went unclaimed by members of the class action suit were designated for the Cy Pres Award.

"The fact that Attorneys Burke and Horrigan trusted Legal Aid with a gift of this size is really a tribute to the hard work of our legal team here. Our attorneys have fought hard to protect client's rights, and our work in addressing financial issues has helped thousands overcome the crushing weight of debt," McGarrity says.

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