

Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania. Don't forget to add [efritsch@lasp.org](mailto:efritsch@lasp.org) to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.

### Stay Connected



[www.lasp.org](http://www.lasp.org)



**Newsletter**

**January 2018**

#### In This Issue

[Preserving housing vouchers; preventing homelessness:](#)

[LASP Foils Abusive Landlord](#)

[In Memoriam: Pat Brooks, longtime LASP secretary](#)

[Highlights from the Counties](#)

[Montgomery & Chester: Bankruptcy clinics help streamline client education](#)

[Bucks: Court scheduling changes; Mock Trial & more](#)

[Delaware Co. Expungement Clinic - MLK Jr Day of Service](#)

Preserving housing vouchers; preventing eviction & homelessness

### **LASP Foils Abusive Landlord**

This story should be from the "Can you believe this?" files. Unfortunately, for Ms. F, it was all too real.

Ms. F received a subsidy from the County Housing Authority based upon her income. But, when her apartment was in such poor repair that it failed several inspections, the Authority stopped paying their portion of her rent.

So the landlord came after Ms. F for the rent. He sued to evict her, claiming she owed thousands of dollars in back rent, utility costs and other fees. In fact, she was actually responsible for less than \$100 per month. The loss of any additional rent was due to the landlord's own poor maintenance of the property.

When someone participates in a publicly funded housing program, an eviction means more than the loss of a particular housing unit. It can result in losing the housing voucher the participant needs to afford any apartment at all. Without her

voucher, Ms. F and her children would be homeless.

Ms. F's LASP attorney represented her in District Court and negotiated a settlement that gave her time to find another apartment and transfer her housing voucher. Ms. F needed to pay only her share of the monthly rent at her current apartment and was liable for none of the rent, fees and other costs her landlord tried to force her to pay. The eviction complaint against her was withdrawn, Ms. F retained her voucher, and she is now living in a new home with her children.

This story has a happy ending only because Ms. F was able to get legal help when she needed it most. Too many other families don't have help available.

**Your donation changes lives.**

**DONATE NOW**

**Donate online today. Thank you!**

---

## **In Memoriam: Pat Brooks, longtime LASP secretary**



Pat Brooks

Longtime LASP staff member Pat Brooks died Jan. 9, 2018. As secretary in Delaware County's Chester City office, she provided dedicated service to our program for more than 40 years. Her obituary in the Delaware County Daily Times noted, "She was a secretary with Legal Aid in Chester, PA, since high school. Pat was devoted to her family and adored her nieces and nephews." To express condolences, please visit <http://bit.ly/PatBrooks>.

---

## **Highlights from the Counties**

### **Chester & Montgomery counties**

#### **Streamlining client education through bankruptcy clinics**

When callers contact the LASP Helpline about bankruptcy protection, they may be invited to a bankruptcy clinic in Chester or Montgomery counties. Longtime staff attorney Leo Vasmanis noted, "It's a good way to see a lot of clients." He has utilized this time-efficient model for many years, Vasmanis said from LASP's West Chester office.

Staff attorney Erica Briant adopted the model for Montgomery County. For the past six months, Briant has conducted monthly bankruptcy clinics in Montgomery County for clients who don't have an urgent need such as a utility termination notice or eviction notice.

The clinics include about an hour of teaching clients about the legal process, timeline and requirements for bankruptcy protection, and answering questions that could affect multiple attendees. Then LASP attorneys meet individually with clients to address their individual situations.

---

## Bucks County

### **Court changes benefit victims of domestic abuse**

After conversations with a number of interested parties, including LASP staff members, the Bucks County Court revised the scheduling of ex parte hearings in Protection from Abuse cases. These ex parte hearings often result in a temporary order protecting the victim for several days until a full hearing can be held. By moving the start time for these hearings from noon to 1:30 p.m., more petitioners have a chance to obtain a temporary order the same day as their petition is filed, thus providing them with much-needed protection.

### **Attorneys attend MIE training & volunteer at high school Mock Trial competition**

Rodlena Sales, Managing Attorney for LASP's Bristol office, and Jennifer Pierce, Managing Attorney for the Doylestown office, recently attended the Management Information Exchange training: Supervising Legal Work conference in Phoenix, Arizona from Jan. 22-24. The conference provided legal aid managerial staff with interactive sessions and workshops to improve managerial skills and knowledge.

As part of the annual High School Mock Trial Competition, hosted by the Bucks County Bar Association Young Lawyer Division, Rodlena and Jennifer will participate as juror and bailiff, respectively, for a couple of days. The competition started Jan. 16 at the Bucks County Courthouse, where it will continue through Feb. 15.



Rodlena Sales (left) and Jennifer Pierce

---

## Delaware County

### Expungement Clinic held on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service in Yeadon

LASP co-sponsored a Delaware County expungement clinic on Jan. 15, as part of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. The event, at Yeadon Public Library, was held in partnership with State Sen. Anthony Williams and State Rep. Joanna McClinton, and the Chester Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta. Staff attorney Erica Briant noted that 24 people attended, with LASP opening up 14 client files. The other attendees were over income or their records were ineligible for service, but all received a review of their records and pro se information.

Legal Aid of Southeastern PA | 610-275-5400 | [www.lasp.org](http://www.lasp.org)



**Stay Connected**



Copyright © 2018. All Rights Reserved.