

LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE AND THE CUMBERLANDS

INFORMATION FOR RELEASE

Contact: Jeff Bradford/Mike Reed
615 312 7220
jcb@bradfordgrp.com

RENEWAL HOUSE CLIENTS GET LEGAL HELP FROM CAT FINANCIAL, NASHVILLE PRO BONO

NASHVILLE, Tenn. Dec. 6, 2007 – It is one of the great misconceptions of our society that the poor do not need lawyers. The problems of the wealthy may often require the attention of learned counsel, but the fact of the matter is that it is the poor among our community who are most vulnerable to civil legal issues.

Recently, lawyers with the in-house legal department at Caterpillar Financial Services Corporation (Cat Financial) began a pro bono initiative to provide legal services to Renewal House and its clients. Renewal House is Nashville's first, largest, and most comprehensive long-term recovery community for women with substance use addictions and their children.

“We plan to marshal the talents of many Cat Financial associates for this important project” said Mike Sposato, General Counsel for Cat Financial. “We have lawyers, paralegals and administrative staff and process specialists all willing to be a part of this effort.”

Sposato said that one of the things that attracted the group to Renewal House was the opportunity to take cases that many lawyers at Cat Financial had not handled before. During the first clinic, the lawyers helped clients prepare forms for durable powers of attorney, powers of attorney for health care, power of attorney for care of a minor child and living wills.

Lucinda Smith, director of the Nashville Pro Bono Program, which is administered through Legal Aid Society, said that she hopes to get more corporations to encourage their in-house legal departments to take on pro bono work.

“It is an extremely effective way to give back to the community,” she said. “A few hours of your time can make a huge difference in someone’s life.”

The legal department at Cat Financial is also working on other partnerships in Nashville.

“We’re always open to new opportunities,” said Jan Jordan, a paralegal and pro bono coordinator for Cat Financial. “We’re looking at working with Nashville Hospital Hospitality House and doing some mediation work with the Nashville Conflict Resolution Center. We’re hoping this model can be taken to other venues.”

###