

LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE AND THE CUMBERLANDS

Information for Release

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FREE SENIOR ADULT LEGAL CLINICS RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM TENNESSEE BAR ASSOCIATION

***\$9,900 grant will help Nashville Pro Bono Program match
volunteer attorneys with senior citizens***

NASHVILLE, Tenn., July 24, 2008 – The Tennessee Bar Association, through its nonprofit arm the Tennessee Legal Community Foundation, recently announced that the Legal Aid Society’s Nashville Pro Bono Program will receive a grant of \$9,908 to help fund a new program to provide senior citizens with access to volunteer attorneys. The grant money was raised by the Tennessee Bar Association’s Corporate Counsel Pro Bono Initiative.

The funds will help the Nashville Pro Bono Program continue to offer a series of monthly legal advice clinics at FiftyForward Centers in and around Nashville. The clinics are held on the first Friday of each month as space is available, and are staffed by volunteer lawyers. To date in-house lawyers from Caterpillar Financial Services, Inc., Corrections Corporation of America, and Nissan, have joined lawyers from Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz; Bass, Berry & Sims and Miller & Martin in committing to help at these clinics. Staff from the Nashville Pro Bono Program and the Legal Aid Society also are present to assist the attorneys. The next clinic will be held 1-3 p.m., Aug. 1 at the FiftyForward Center in Bordeaux.

“We wanted to create volunteer opportunities for in-house legal counsel to get involved in the community,” said Lucinda Smith, director of the Nashville Pro Bono Program. “We’ve held three clinics so far and they have been very successful.”

The clinics deal primarily with wills, living wills and durable powers of attorney, but participants can also participate in a “legal check-up” to identify potential legal problems such as housing issues, social security, denial of benefits or access to health care.

“If a client has an issue beyond the scope of the clinic, we give them a referral to a volunteer lawyer who can help,” said Smith. “The partnership between Nashville Pro Bono and corporate counsel provides lawyers a chance to work together to give back to the community by doing a kind of work they don’t normally see. The lawyers love helping these clients and it has been a positive experience for everyone involved.”

The Legal Aid Society gives free civil legal aid to people who have nowhere else to turn. It serves 48 counties from offices in Clarksville, Columbia, Cookeville, Gallatin, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Oak Ridge, and Tullahoma. The Legal Aid Society is funded in part by United Way.