

LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE AND THE CUMBERLANDS

INFORMATION FOR RELEASE

CONTACT: Jeff Bradford or Mike Reed
(615) 515-4888
jcb@bradfordgrp.com

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF TENNESSEE HELPS THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY PROVIDE AID TO VULNERABLE SENIORS

Dandridge Trust funds \$7,500 grant to help with housing issues.

NASHVILLE, Tenn., March 20, 2008 – The Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee recently awarded a \$7,500 Opportunity Grant to the Legal Aid Society to aid in their efforts to help senior citizens who are poor with legal issues involving housing. The grant was funded by the Dandridge Trust, a diocesan endowment fund benefiting seniors, the needy, the disabled and programs not normally covered in congregational budgets.

“Christ was very clear to his disciples that they should care for the most vulnerable among us, said Seawell Brandau of the Dandridge Trust. “The elderly are among the most financially, emotionally and physically vulnerable people in Tennessee. We are fortunate to have an organization like the Legal Aid Society to look out for their best interests and the diocese is very pleased to be able to support this important work.”

“There are nearly 120,000 seniors in Tennessee who live below the poverty line,” said Gary Housepian, executive director of the Legal Aid Society. “The money will go toward providing free legal representation to hundreds of low-income seniors.”

According to U.S. Census Bureau figures, nearly 120,000 of the 950,000 Tennesseans age 60 and above live below the poverty line. A study produced by the Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services suggests that, on average, every low income senior in the state will have at least one civil legal problem every year that threatens his or her ability to meet basic needs such as safety, healthcare and housing.

In 2006, the Legal Aid Society was able to resolve 715 cases on behalf of Middle Tennesseans who were age 60 or older.

“The recent subprime mortgage crisis has increased not only the need for legal help for seniors, but for education and outreach,” Housepian said. “Seniors can be particularly vulnerable to predatory lenders, housing discrimination, or even family members who

attempt to take economic advantage. We provide help to as many as possible, but the need nearly always outweighs our available resources. That's why we are grateful that the Dandridge Trust has agreed to fund part of this important work."

The Legal Aid Society gives free legal aid to people who have nowhere else to turn. It serves 48 counties from offices in Nashville, Gallatin, Clarksville, Murfreesboro, Columbia, Tullahoma, Cookeville and Oak Ridge. For more information call 1-800-238-1443.

###