



# JUSTICE

one life at a time

**1 in 5 families in Minnesota live in poverty or on the edge of poverty.**

**You changed more than 20,000 lives through the delivery of pro bono legal services in Minnesota.**



VOLUNTEER LAWYERS NETWORK

Volunteer Lawyers Network  
Annual Report 2013-2014



# JUSTICE

## one client at a time

As a client of Volunteer Lawyers Network (VLN), Mariann knows first-hand about the tremendous support and compassion provided by its volunteers. Mariann had already experienced homelessness and survived cancer when her husband was diagnosed with liver cancer. The family had recently moved into a new

apartment and thought they were receiving a fair deal from their landlord. It was not until a year later that Mariann discovered that this was not the case and that she had been paying the utility bills for the entire building. The family was already dealing with staggering medical debt, and when the landlord would not work with Mariann to refund her money, she knew she needed to turn to a lawyer for help.

That was when Mariann called VLN and was matched with Patricia DeVoy, a new attorney at Faegre Baker

### ► SPREADING THE WORD: TENANTS HAVE RIGHTS.

Hear Mariann's [story](#) of how Volunteer Lawyers Network's volunteer attorney helps her achieve justice and treble damages award.

Daniels. With the counsel of a senior attorney and law clerks pitching in to support her, Patricia took the case to trial and prevailed. Not only did the judge rule in Marian's favor, but she was awarded treble damages. Unfortunately, her husband did not live to enjoy the legal victory with her, but the monetary award greatly eased Mariann's financial burdens at a time when she was grieving the loss of her husband. Mariann feels "blessed" for the help and kindness she received from the legal team at Faegre Baker Daniels, the staff at Volunteer Lawyers Network, and the legal services community.

# JUSTICE

one volunteer at a time

**DEDICATED STAFF. AMAZING VOLUNTEERS.  
GRATEFUL CLIENTS.**

**M**ark Carter has been a volunteer for more than thirty years, and he is still one of VLN's strongest supporters. After graduating from law school in 1981, Mark joined VLN the following year. One year later, he joined our Board of Directors, serving as Chair in 1992 and has been serving on the board on a rotating basis ever since, only retiring this year due to our 30-year term limit! Mark also has chaired the VLN Family Law Committee and the Clinics and Quality Control Committee.

Mark's volunteer efforts are not limited to board and committee service. He provides full representation services in all areas of family law and also bankruptcy. For many years Mark has served on VLN's family law phone advice panel, and panel of expert attorneys screening custody cases for legal merit. In addition, he regularly conducts trainings for new family law volunteers, including presenting at VLN's annual family law training for well over ten years in a row.

It speaks to Mark's dedication to helping low-income people access legal services that more than thirty years later, he continues to volunteer at as great a level as ever, with no indications of cutting back. In fact, Mark currently has four active full representation cases with VLN; is on the schedule of phone advice attorneys; and serves on the family law committee and custody screening panel.

Continuing VLN's commitment to equal access to justice, Mark consistently brings compassion, dedication and experienced representation to many of the toughest cases at VLN.



**John D. Levine Distinguished Service Award Recipient**  
Mark Carter, Carter Legal Services, P.A.

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

Since 1997, Mark Carter has volunteered on 802 cases at VLN. Mark is a leader in providing one-on-one telephone legal advice services.





### **Volunteer of the Year Award Recipients**

The Best Buy Legal Team: Jill Barnett, Mark Odegard, Janet Lambert, Jodie Hagstrom, Cara Helper, Ryan Eddy and Noreen Schertler. Not Pictured: Frank Janes.

This year VLN honored the hard work and dedication of the Best Buy legal team by presenting them with the Volunteer of the Year Award. Every member of the team plays a crucial role in the work they do to help the clients of VLN. Ten years ago Best Buy created a pro bono committee, which led them to partner with VLN. Many of the team members have been working with VLN for years. The Best Buy team volunteers primarily at the VLN Housing Court Project and Conciliation Court Clinic. The structure of VLN affords the attorneys the flexibility to work at different clinics. According to Best Buy volunteer Mark Odegard, "There is an identified need for assistance and we can commit and know what we

to practice civil law, which they ordinarily would not as corporate attorneys. According to Jill Barnett, VLN provides great support to the members of the Best Buy team, including training and access to many forms and other resources. Team member Noreen Schertler loves having the opportunity to help people who have been taken advantage of get their money back. Frank Janes likes being able to explain to people how the law applies to them, because many people are confused by the process and have no idea what to do to present their cases or assert their rights.

Frank said that working with VLN

# JUSTICE

## one service at a time

are committing to. VLN identifies the need and we front the work."

Working with VLN allows the Best Buy legal team

allows him to get back to his roots from his days in private practice. He gains satisfaction from impacting the individual client's outcome when he works one on one with a person. The connections made between the Best Buy legal team and their clients are powerful and inspiring. The team hopes that by receiving this award they have motivated other corporate legal teams to become active in pro bono work. Though they normally practice corporate law, they find the support they receive from VLN enables them to deliver quality legal services and the work they do to be personally rewarding and essential and meaningful to the community.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Last year, the Best Buy legal team volunteered on 205 cases between VLN's Housing Court and Conciliation Court walk-in clinics.



# JUSTICE

## one family at a time



Today, Henry and his family have a healthy fresh start towards financial well-being. With your help, we expanded our bankruptcy services into northwest Minnesota. VLN provided 1,136 bankruptcy services.

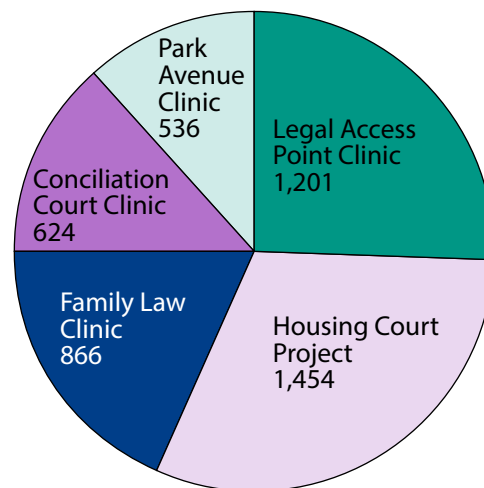


An ambitious 15 year old, Paola, is now college bound thanks to the help of VLN's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival Immigration project. Immigration is VLN's 4th largest area of service.

Prior to attending VLN's Family Law Clinic, Dan had tried unsuccessfully for several months to schedule parenting time with his children. At the clinic a VLN volunteer attorney advised Dan on his parental rights and assisted him at his motion hearing. Thanks to VLN, Dan is able to have a supportive relationship with his children.

With 833 active volunteer attorneys, VLN provided more than 6,830 services at its 22 walk-in legal clinics.

### Services Provided At Major Clinics



### DID YOU KNOW?

Recently, VLN launched the Juvenile Court Phone Advice Pilot Project. This project offers opportunities for families considering custody of an at-risk child to talk with an attorney.

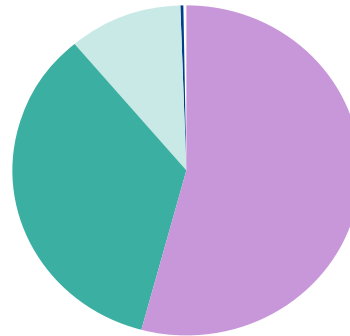
## FINANCIALS

### July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014

#### INCOME

Contributions	616,795.00
Service Grants	395,968.00
Special Events	122,148.00
Workshops & Seminars	1,361.00
Interest	2,141.00

<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,138,413.00</b>
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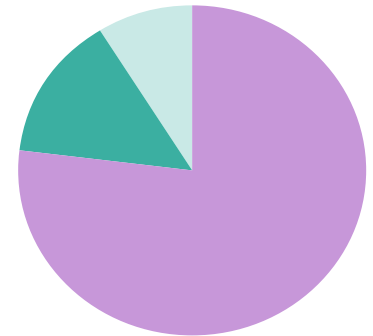


- Contributions
- Service Grants
- Special Events
- Workshops & Seminars
- Interest

#### EXPENSES

Programs & Services	867,274.00
Management & General	160,605.00
Fundraising	97,620.00

<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,125,499.00</b>
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- Programs & Services
- Management & General
- Fundraising

#### ASSETS

Cash & Cash Equivalents	662,732.00
Accounts Receivables	157,298.00
Prepaid Expenses	16,867.00
Net Property & Equipment	36,300.00

<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>873,197.00</b>
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#### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Payroll Liabilities	61,720.00
Accounts Payable	3,552.00
Deferred Revenue	31,000.00
Net Assets	776,925.00

<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>873,197.00</b>
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# JUSTICE

one dollar at a time

Thank you for making a gift to VLN. You make pro bono happen. See our [website](#) for a complete list of VLN's generous supporters.

Help VLN continue its good work  
by **giving** today.





After years of rollercoaster employment and surprising rejection letters, Peter learned of a decades old minor conviction that was at the root of his employment struggles. Working with a VLN attorney, Peter's record was expunged and he now has high prospects for real long-term stability.

### DID YOU KNOW?

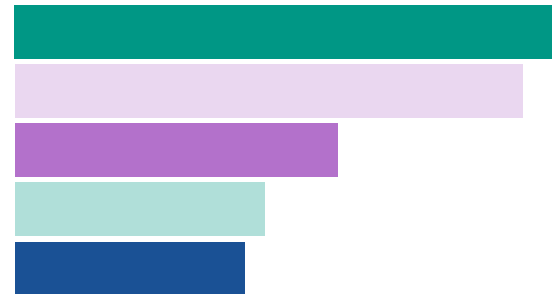
VLN is a statewide leader in criminal expungement. VLN was an active partner in pushing for a legislative change to criminal expungement law signed by Governor Dayton. Today, many legal and social service organizations rely on VLN as a crucial resource for training and support in criminal expungement.

# JUSTICE

## one step at a time

### Top Legal Services Provided

Private Landlord/Tenant: 1,893
Family Law: 1,788
Bankruptcy/Debtor Relief: 1,136
Immigration/Naturalization: 880
Collection/Repossession/ Defense/Garnishment: 809



### GENEROUS ADVOCATES, IMPORTANT WORK, URGENT NEED.

VLN's mission is to protect and promote the basic human needs of people in poverty through the power of legal volunteers.

### HELP US DO MORE.

Here's what you can do:

- **Volunteer**
- **Donate**
- **Tell** others about VLN
- Attend an **event**

### GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Minneapolis, MN 55402  
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