



SBLA: A Model of Innovative Pro Bono Collaboration, from Harlene Katzman



Harlene Katzman

Small businesses and nonprofit organizations serving New York City's low-income communities provide residents with goods and services, jobs, and the opportunity to improve their lives. On October 29, the inaugural Small Business Legal Academy (SBLA) hosted more than 200 small business owners and nonprofit leaders at Harlem's World Famous Apollo Theater to get free legal advice from STB attorneys **John Bennett, Fernando Berman, Jeffrey Lieberman, Chris Vena, Sam Warfield** and **Maura Whelan**, as well as attorneys representing 30 other law firms. Business owners and nonprofit leaders had the opportunity to address their legal needs in workshop settings as well as during individual consultations on topics including formation and tax, intellectual property, nonprofit governance, employment and commercial leasing. The SBLA is a novel attempt to offer impactful services to a high volume of diverse start-ups city-wide.

The SBLA is one of two pro bono projects in New York born out of a 2012 meeting **Bryce Friedman** and I attended at the White House with Vice President Joe Biden and other law firm pro bono leaders and the Association of Pro Bono Counsel (APBCo). We discussed improving access to justice and designing large scale pro bono collaborations to impact gaps in civil legal services across a city or region. From that visit, collaborations are underway in eight other cities.



The Small Business Legal Academy was sponsored by APBCo in partnership with Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation, The City Bar Justice Center, Lawyers Alliance for New York, The Legal Aid Society, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, Pro Bono Net, Start Small Think Big, Urban Justice Center and Volunteers of Legal Service.

For more information about the SBLA, please visit www.probono.net/sbla.

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Associate John Bennett presenting the Nonprofit Formation Workshop from the Apollo's main stage.

Simpson Thacher Assists Immigrant Entrepreneurs through the Hot Bread Kitchen Project

The Hot Bread Kitchen (HBK) is an East Harlem nonprofit whose goal is to help immigrant and low income entrepreneurs succeed in their food enterprises. They provide their clients with access to a licensed commercial kitchen, professional development and business education. In 2012, HBK received a grant from Citibank offering financial coverage and highly subsidized kitchen rates for startup low-income food entrepreneurs. However, to be eligible for the grant, the entrepreneurs needed to be incorporated as a business. Many of HBK's clients had been selling food informally for years, yet lacked the resources for legal counsel to assist with entity formation. HBK through the Legal Aid Society's Community Development Project, brought Simpson Thacher on board to work with its grantees. Over nine months, four teams of Simpson Thacher associates provided transactional advice and representation to HBK clients, who are now formalizing their businesses. **Allan Chorny** took on the first matter and helped launch Magy's Catering. **Jim Cross**, **Phong Quan** and **Jodie Sopher Pimentel** assisted a Spanish-speaking couple with their food seasonings company. Yum Yum Bakery, a pastry business



Photo courtesy of www.hotbreadkitchen.com.



previously operated out of the founder's home, is becoming a storefront thanks to **Charles Clinton** and **Doug Brown**. **Matthew Levy**, **Jihyun Chung**, **Sophie Staples** and **Jonathan Goldstein** assisted five Bengali women to incorporate their food business. All matters are supervised by **Joe Kaufman**.

Simpson Thacher Associates Lead Workshop for Small Business Owners in the Bronx

Corporate associates **Sam Warfield** and **Jeffrey Lieberman** led a workshop on entity selection and other legal issues common to small businesses at the Bronx office of Start Small Think Big (SSTB), a nonprofit organization that empowers New York City's most underserved individuals—mostly in the South Bronx—to start, maintain and grow small businesses in order to accumulate assets, increase personal financial security and contribute to the economy. For the past six months, Simpson Thacher's New York office has partnered with SSTB to refer clients to the office's weekly small business clinic, which is coordinated by Sam, Jeffrey and **Matthew Farrell**.



Sam Warfield and Jeffrey Lieberman lead a workshop for small business owners in the Bronx.

Recent Pro Bono Victories Simpson Thacher Wins Asylum for Client from Jamaica

Paul Rodriguez and **Katelyn Benton** successfully represented our client, a gay man from Jamaica who had been taunted and physically assaulted due to his sexual orientation, in his application for asylum. He was referred by Immigration Equality, a national organization fighting for equality under U.S. immigration law for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and HIV-positive individuals. The matter was supervised by **Alan Turner**.

Simpson Thacher Obtains SIJS and Permanent Residency for Undocumented Child

Attorneys in the Palo Alto and Los Angeles offices successfully represented a 16-year-old Honduran girl who had been abandoned by her mother at infancy and sent to the United States to live with her aunt at the age of 10. Our client, who suffered through the death of her father and physical abuse from her aunt in the United States, was granted Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) and legal permanent residency. She is now able to live her life as an economically stable 17-year-old living with her cousin. The case was handled by **Michelle Lyon** with supervision from **Jessica Marek** and **Jim Kreissman**.

Simpson Thacher Obtains U-Visa for and Reunites Client with Children after Two-Year Separation

Jona Lundborg assisted an immigrant victim of domestic violence in obtaining a U-visa, social security number, work permit and driver's license. Jona then processed the client's children through the Jamaican consulate and brought them to the United



States to live with their mother after a two-year separation. Palo Alto associate **Cara Walsh** assisted in preparing the U application and the matter was supervised by **Harlene Katzman**.



Jona Lundborg poses with Clovia Shaw (left front), her two children and two relatives.

Simpson Thacher Wins Asylum on Behalf of Colombian Client

Attorneys in the New York office successfully secured a grant of asylum on behalf of a Colombian client who feared persecution in his home country on account of his sexual orientation and HIV-positive status. The matter was referred to the Firm by the City Bar Justice Center's Refugee Assistance Project. The team included associates **Meredith Duffy** and **Tina Woehr** and was supervised by partner **Alan Turner**.

News

Former Simpson Thacher Associate and Public Service Fellow Leads Successful Right to Health Effort with Rainforest Foundation-US

The Kandozi and Shapra communities in the Peruvian Amazon have faced a serious epidemic of Hepatitis B, which has affected over 70% of their population. Government health programs have not provided adequate healthcare to treat or prevent the disease (vaccines are most effective in the first 24 hours of life, and need to be refrigerated). When the Rainforest Foundation-US (RF-US) first visited these communities in 2010, the situation was dire: there were limited funds and personnel; lack of medications and refrigeration; no doctors specialized in Hepatitis B; and very little funding for vaccination campaigns or evacuating the sick from these remote communities.

At the time, a Simpson Thacher Public Service Fellow working with RF-US, Jonathan Taylor, was tasked with finding projects where pro bono legal services could help indigenous communities. The Fellowship project was conceived with the assistance of Simpson Thacher partner **Todd Crider**, who sits on RF-US's Board of Directors. In 2010, as a result of Jonathan's efforts, the RF-US and other NGO's filed a legal case arguing that the Peruvian government must provide adequate healthcare. In September 2011, a local Judge ruled in the communities' favor. Though the ruling was appealed by the government, a higher court upheld the original decision in the communities' favor in a decision issued in April 2013.

The judgment sets important precedent for indigenous peoples' right to health by calling on the government to provide adequate healthcare and mandating the communities' participation in decisions made about their health program.



New York State Implements Pro Bono Reporting Requirement

Effective May 1, 2013, New York attorneys are required to report on their biennial registration form the number of hours spent providing pro bono legal services (as described in Rule 6.1 of the New York Rules of Professional Conduct), and the amount of voluntary financial contributions made to organizations primarily or substantially engaged in providing legal services to the poor and underserved. Further information is available from Harlene Katzman, the Firm's Pro Bono Counsel. Detailed information concerning the new reporting requirement is available at: <http://www.nycourts.gov/attorneys/probono/reportingreq-faqs.shtml>.

Awards/Community Service

William T. Russell, Jr., Receives Manhattan Legal Services' Visionary Leadership Award

Simpson Thacher litigation partner **Bill Russell** was honored as a recipient of Manhattan Legal Services' (MLS) Visionary Leadership Award at the MLS 2013 Awards Reception on October 30, 2013. Mr. Russell is a former Chair of the MLS Board of Directors and served as the Firm's Pro Bono Committee Co-Chair for 12 years.

Ten Simpson Thacher Attorneys Received 2013 Pro Bono Publico Awards from The Legal Aid Society

Ten associates were honored by The Legal Aid Society as recipients of the Society's 2013 Pro Bono Publico Awards for outstanding service to The Legal Aid Society and its clients. Every year, the Society recognizes the outstanding work of volunteer lawyers, law firms, corporations and other professionals who

participate in the Society's Pro Bono Program by providing exceptional legal services to low-income New Yorkers. The Honorable Jonathan Lippman, the Chief Judge of the State of New York, presided over the awards ceremony, which took place on October 29, 2013. Congratulations to **Brittany McCants, Douglas Tang, Julie Levy, Matthew Levy, Allan Chorny, Jim Cross, Phong Quan, Jihyun Chung, John Bennett** and **Charles Clinton** for their work with the Society's Community Development Project and its Hot Bread Kitchen Project.

Simpson Thacher Climbs 43-Story Building

For the third consecutive year, Simpson Thacher employees from the New York office climbed a 43-story building for inMotion's Story by Story fundraiser. inMotion, which recently changed its name to Her Justice, is a long-time pro bono client of the Firm that provides free legal services to women who have been victimized by gender violence, and their children. This event is one of their largest annual fundraisers and contributes to their mission to end domestic violence. Corporate partner **Peter Pantaleo** generously sponsored the registration fees and matched the donations of all Simpson Thacher team members.



Photo provided by Flickr. (Front Row L-R) Abdul Aris, Raphael Wong, Alastair McVicar (Back Row L-R) Lydia Adamiszyn, Nicole Zarobinski, Brittany Oei, Jenny Famularo, Stephanie Klovsky, Priyanka Bose



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