

Justice Matters: Pro Bono Newsletter

March 2025



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Welcome to the Pro Bono Team

The Firm welcomed three new members to the Pro Bono Department in 2025.



Georgia Nickson

Georgia Nickson joins us as the Firm's first Pro Bono Lawyer in London. She is an English qualified lawyer and was the Pro Bono Associate at another law firm in London before moving to Simpson Thacher. She has a strong background in creating and overseeing pro bono clinical programs and has substantive expertise in areas including housing, LGBTQ+ rights, immigration, and employment.



Liane Aronchick

Liane Aronchick joins us as a Pro Bono Attorney overseeing the Firm's immigration program in the United States. She has ten years of experience supervising and managing staff and pro bono attorneys at several NYC-based nonprofit immigration organizations, including Catholic Charities, Human Rights First and Kids in Need of Defense. Liane also spent nearly five years in The Hague, Netherlands, working for defense counsel practicing before the Yugoslav Tribunal and the International Criminal Court.



Emily Soule

Emily Soule joins us as a Pro Bono Specialist focusing on project management, case work, and supporting the entire Pro Bono team. Emily was a Senior Litigation Paralegal in the Firm's Washington, D.C. office for the past six years and has worked with many of our attorneys supporting their pro bono matters.

We couldn't be more excited to welcome all of them to our team.

Little Bits of Good

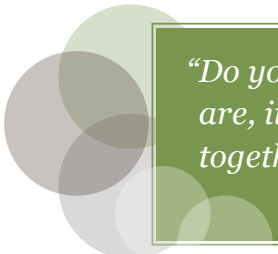
In keeping with our Pro Bono Recognition theme for 2025, this new section of our newsletter will focus on the little bits of good our pro bono volunteers did that led to an overwhelming impact in our communities and our clients' lives.

Lindsey Bohl (D.C.), Jessica Menjivar (D.C.), and Emily Soule (D.C.) gave their El Salvadorean client her long-awaited green card.

Ryan Callahan (NY) reviewed and summarized a veteran's complex medical file for an attorney at NYLAG who will submit his Discharge Upgrade claim.

Elie Lipnik (NY) changed the name and gender marker on his transgender client's new green card so their ID matches their gender identity.

Sungjoo Ahn (NY), Sheryl Koretz (NY), Shuting Lu (BJ), Erin Randall (D.C.), and Alli Sutherland (PA) hit their two-year anniversary of daily monitoring of changes to Mississippi's reproductive health laws in support of Lawyers for Good Government and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.



"Do your little bit of good where you are, it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world".

— Desmond Tutu

Maya Reeves (HO) and Associate **Andrew Young (NY)** got each of their clients a green card after the clients cooperated with law enforcement to investigate and prosecute crimes committed against them.

Marissa Train (PA) drafted a personal statement in support of a California expungement petition for a nurse who turned to substance abuse to cope with trauma from abuse in her childhood.

Justin Guo (HK), Tom Lort (LO), Xochitl Romo (TK), and Staff Attorney Yoshimi Koshiishi (TK) completed a comparative research memo on anti-discrimination laws for Japanese NGO, Human Rights Now.

Wendy Wu (NY) and Cathy Ye (NY) obtained green cards for their client who had been sex trafficked from China to the United States and her son.

Joe Donaghey (LO), Lauren Gluzman (LO), and Tom Lort (LO) obtained British citizenship for two British born and raised low-income children of migrant parents, creating stability and access to opportunities they deserve.

Kimberly Jacobs (HO) and Seya Lewis-Meeks (NY) submitted a pardon application for a Philadelphia resident with convictions dating back to his teens and early twenties, who today spends his days repairing water main breaks in his job with the Philadelphia Water Department, and mentoring youth as a volunteer at Change 4A Dollar.

Jie Min (HK), Maria Fernandez Garcia (NY), and Taylor Nefussy (NY) are coming up on their two-year anniversary of collating a weekly list of news articles related to reproductive health care and abortion that are relevant to policy, corporate governance, and the overall legal and regulatory landscape for the New York State Attorney General's Reproductive Healthcare Task Force.

Isabella Gonzalez (NY) and Erica Henry (NY) recently completed a country conditions index for an Ecuadorian asylum client of Legal Services NYC, **Julien Tunney (NY) and Liliana Taub (NY)** produced a country conditions report for the Urban Justice Center and their client from Venezuela, and **Alexis Capati (NY) and Shuting Lu (BJ)** produced a country conditions report for a LSNYC asylum client from Guinea.

Alan Fenyes (NY) and Erensu Altan (NY) prepared an application for a Certificate of Relief from Disabilities for a New Yorker with a decade-old robbery conviction who has since served as a firefighter and volunteers extensively with a youth program sponsored by the Long Beach Police Department.

Rachel Sparks-Bradley (NY) got green cards for a mother and her son after winning their asylum cases in Immigration Court.

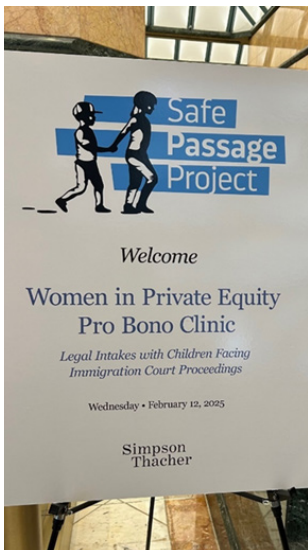
Laurel Fresquez (D.C.) won a motion to dismiss a Special Immigration Juvenile's case in immigration court.

Firm Hosts First Pro Bono Clinic for Women in Private Equity

Simpson Thacher’s women partners paired up with women leaders in several private equity firms to screen immigrant children for potential legal relief. This in-person pro bono clinic included a networking high tea followed by the clinic which served 23 young people and their families, most of who will now be able to find counsel to help them through their removal proceedings in Immigration Court. Participants included Simpson Partners **Elizabeth Cooper, Erica Egenes, Martha Kammoun, Kathy Krause, Marni Lerner, Caitlin Lucey, Joey Mayer, Jackie Starr,** and Associates **Felicity Bell, Haley O’Connor** and **Amy Zhou.** Our PE client participants included Caroline Conway (Stonepeak), Risa Gordon (Global Atlantic Financial Group), Lori Hoffman (KKR), Soufi Mirfakhraei (KKR), Kaitlyn Posa (KKR), Lily Sayahg (IFM Investors), Jane Shlimovich (IFM Investors), and Jessica Woolf (KKR).



Women in PE Networking Event held prior to the clinic



Winter gear, school supplies and toiletries given out to the immigrant children who attended the clinic

Simpson Thacher Wins Asylum for Judge on Guatemalan High Risk Court

In October 2024, Simpson Thacher successfully secured asylum in the United States for Erika Lorena Aifán Davila, a former judge on the Guatemalan High Risk Court and hero of the anti-corruption movement in Guatemala and throughout the democratic world. Ms. Aifán fled to the United States in May 2022 after dedicating her nearly 20-year judicial career to fighting corruption, organized crime and impunity, demonstrating, in the words of the U.S. Department of State, “determination and fortitude in upholding the rule of law in Guatemala.”

The Simpson Thacher team included Associates **Claire Cahoon, Jon Vicuña,** and **Rachel Phillips** and now-Pro Bono Specialist **Emily Soule,** supervised by Partner **Todd Crider.** The team is grateful for the support provided by the City Bar Justice Center, which referred the matter.

Simpson Thacher Wins Sentence Reduction for Nonviolent Marijuana Offender With Serious Heart Conditions

In December 2024, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee granted an opposed motion for a sentence reduction for a 50-year-old Black man suffering from very serious heart conditions. He had been incarcerated since 2011 serving a 262-month sentence for nonviolent marijuana offenses. The court found it “worrying” that our client had “received only infrequent, disjointed treatment despite his well-documented, symptomatic, and potentially fatal heart condition.” Moreover, the court found that what little treatment our client did receive was “inadequate at best and dangerous at worst.” The court held that our client had demonstrated an extraordinary and compelling reason for a sentence reduction.

The court found that our client would “not pose a threat to the public if released,” as both of his prior offenses “were non-violent and both occurred more than 20 years ago.” The court emphasized that our client’s post-sentence conduct had been “extremely positive,” with an extensive record of educational and vocational programming and work

assignments and just one disciplinary sanction from over a decade ago. In addition, the court pointed to our client's strong relationships with family and friends who "intend to support him upon release."

The court ordered our client's immediate release. Our client is now home and enjoying the company of his children, his grandchildren, and his devoted girlfriend of many years. He plans to get much-needed care for his heart condition.

The Simpson Thacher team included Partner **Josh Levine** and Pro Bono Attorney **Nihara Choudhri**.

Simpson Thacher Represents Maya Village in Belize in Connection With FPIC Process and the Execution of a Consent Agreement

The Firm represented the village of Santa Ana, a Maya community located in southern Belize, in connection with the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) process initiated by the government of Belize for the conduct of petroleum exploration activities in Santa Ana's communal land, and the negotiation with the government of Belize and U.S. Capital Belize Corp, an oil company holding exploratory and development rights for the corresponding region of Belize, of a Consent Agreement for Petroleum Exploration Activities.

The consultation process was conducted by the Belizean government following a ruling by the Caribbean Court of Justice that recognized, after a lengthy judicial process, the rights of indigenous



Mayan people in southern Belize to the lands that they have customarily used and occupied, and the government's obligation to consult with such communities in connection with the development of any proposed projects or initiatives within communal lands that may affect their use and enjoyment by indigenous people, including the natural environment.

The Firm's pro bono representation of Santa Ana, working alongside the Mayan leadership of Santa Ana, Belizean counsel, a local NGO and the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice, sought to assure that (1) the conduct of any petroleum exploration activities respects the rights, traditions and decision-making process of the Santa Ana community, including the preservation of their environment; (2) the village receives compensation for the use of communal land during the exploration project and has the right to monitor the development of any activities within its boundaries; and (3) members of the village have access to economic development opportunities, such as the right to employment during the course of the exploration works.

The Simpson Thacher team included Partner **Todd Crider**, Counsel **Luiz Noronha**, and Associates **Winnie Loureiro** and **Susan Uquillas Mosquera**.

Simpson Thacher Creates Greater Share Education Fund

Simpson Thacher acted as legal advisors to Greater Share on a pro bono basis, helping to create an innovative fund structure which resulted in a successful final closing of Greater Share's inaugural Education Fund, which raised \$52 million. This fund attracted more than 50 individual and institutional investors from around the world, all united by the goal of providing sustainable funding over the next decade to eight high-impact NGOs focused on educational equity in underserved communities. By collaborating with leading private equity firms, the fund will offer long-term and unrestricted financial support derived from investment returns and donations to assist in their crucial work of promoting equitable education.

Greater Share is an innovative philanthropic investment model harnessing the expertise of the

world's top performing private equity funds and impact NGOs to solve complex global challenges. The Greater Share Education Fund is focused on bridging and closing the education gap, supporting the highest impact NGOs in their efforts to enact real and measurable change on children's lives across the globe.



The Simpson Thacher team based in London included Partners **Jason Glover**, **Bill Smolinski**, and **Caleb McConnell**, and Associates **Andreea Gancea** and **Victoria Hartman**.

2025 Public Service Fellow: **Alexis Capati**

The Firm is pleased to announce the recipient of the 2025 Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP Public Service Fellowship. Washington, D.C. Corporate Associate **Alexis Capati** '23 will spend one year, supported by the Firm, working with the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights' International (RFKHR) Advocacy and Litigation Team as a Fellow with the Asia program. Alexis will work to advance accountability and expand civic space in RFKHR's priority countries, with a particular focus on supporting human rights defenders in Bangladesh who advocate for legal and institutional reforms, and supporting victims in pursuing justice for extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and torture.



Clinic Roundup

Simpson Thacher Volunteers Assist Veterans Seeking Access to Legal Services Through Innovative Limited Scope Clinic

In September 2024, the Firm launched a remote pro bono intake project that allows volunteers to conduct telephonic legal intakes on behalf of Veterans Legal Justice (VLJ), a New Hampshire nonprofit organization that provides pro bono legal services to veterans and their family members in nearly every aspect of the law. This project was launched in response to the increasing volume of veterans calling VLJ for assistance, particularly because VLJ serves a rural population and operates in a state without law firms that have large scale pro bono resources.

Simpson Thacher volunteers screen for a range of legal issues, including family law, housing/property disputes, misdemeanor criminal charges, wills, VA benefits, personal injury, and other legal issues. VLJ works from the intake summaries to place individuals with New Hampshire-based legal services organizations and private attorneys.

Since the program's launch, 25 Simpson Thacher attorneys have collectively conducted 80 legal intake screenings. The volunteers have found that the clinic is a great way to extend the reach of our pro bono work to underserved communities and to ensure that those who have served in the military have access to the legal help that they need.

Volunteers include Partner **Maya Reeves**, Counsel **Christine Marshall**, and Associates **Jason Anterasian**, **Christian Bond**, **Brian Budd**, **Ryan Callahan**, **Franklin Castro**, **Michael Chen**, **Sandy Cho**, **Colin Dennis**, **Victor Diaz**, **Kaitlin Dunne**, **Erica Henry**, **Megan Johanneson**, **Stefan Luginbuehl**, **Ezra Meren**, **Robert Picciano**, **Hannah Rasekhi**, **Joshua Schub**, **Ekok Soubir**, **Simon Teich**, **Ryan Thomas**, **Diana Yen** and **Cynthia Yi**.

Essential Life Planning Clinic With Blackstone

In December 2024, the Firm hosted an Essential Life Planning Documents Clinic for low-income seniors. At this in-person clinic in the New York Office, Simpson Thacher volunteers partnered with our colleagues at Blackstone to finalize and execute wills, powers of attorney and other life planning documents for clients referred to us by Volunteers of Legal Service (VOLS). Simpson Thacher volunteers included Associates **John Balletta, Ally Brennan, Louise Choi, Elizabeth Greene, Zach Guttman, Erica Henry, Angel Li, Marco Linares Cordero, Colin Manchester, Tara Martin-Chen, Ezra Meren, Anne Mummery, Santiago Osorio, and Chayla Sherrod.**



Associates Erica Henry and Marco Linares Cordero answering questions for their client and her family.



Associates Ezra Meren and Ally Brennan assisting their client in executing the documents.

Advanced Directives Clinic for Cancer Patients With Carlyle

In February 2025, the Firm partnered with Carlyle to host an Advanced Directives Clinic for 11 low-income clients with cancer or other long-term illnesses and seniors facing specific legal challenges to prepare powers of attorney, health care proxies, and other directives, all of which can be crucial for accessing and maintaining housing, health care, and public benefits when individuals cannot speak for themselves. The clients were referred to the Firm by New York Legal Assistance Group. Simpson Thacher volunteers included Senior Counsel **Beate Krieger**, Associates **Kunzhao Cao, Chris Flynn, Isabella Gonzalez, Harrison Gordon, Madison Harrow, Erica Henry, Claire Kamau, Jacklyn Kornstein, Robert Picciano** and Anna Sheu, and Paralegal **Santiago Valenzuela.**



Associates Kunzhao Cao and Madison Harrow reviewing their client's documents.



Associates Robert Picciano and Harrison Gordon working with their client and her son.

Awards, Events and Mentions

Los Angeles Wildfire Relief

Simpson Thacher has made significant donations to nonprofits in Los Angeles to support efforts to provide relief to those impacted by the LA Wildfires, including to the Banc of California Wildfire Relief & Recovery Fund, Neighborhood Legal Services Disaster Assistance Project, LevittQuinn Family Law Center, Bet Tzedek Legal Services, and The YMCA of Greater Los Angeles. These donations are already making a meaningful impact in the Los Angeles community. They have helped provide a range of services from assistance in navigating complex legal and insurance issues to childcare support for those affected by the wildfires.

Additionally, a number of LA attorneys have attended pro bono trainings and clinics to provide pro bono legal services in the area. For more information on how to get involved in these efforts, please reach out to the Pro Bono team.

Simpson Thacher Named to National Women's Law Center's "Pro Bono Honor Roll"

Simpson Thacher has again been named to the National Women's Law Center's (NWLC) annual "Pro Bono Honor Roll." This recognition highlights the NWLC's exemplary pro bono partners who support the organization through work on pro bono projects in support of its mission.

NWLC fights for gender justice, working across the issues that are central to the lives of women and girls. The organization aims to use the law to change culture, break down barriers and drive solutions to the gender inequity that shapes our society.



Winter Coat Drive Warms Many Hundreds in NYC

Simpson Thacher and the Vanbarton Group (425 Lex) jointly sponsored a winter coat drive this season to benefit three of the Firm's pro bono partners: The Door, The Safe Passage Project and Safe Horizon Streetwork Project.



Associates
Tim Wang and
Alleayah Caesar
at The Door
unboxing the
coats for their
clinic clients.

Pro Bono Counsel **Susan Cordaro** served on a panel for the New York City Bar Association's Pro Bono & Legal Services Committee on what makes pro bono partnerships enduring and effective. Susan presented with Beth Baltimore, Pro Bono Managing Attorney at The Door's Legal Services, on structuring impactful, sustainable work to best serve our clients by discussing our Homeless Youth Clinic and Special Immigrant Juvenile status matters.



Please send
news items, comments
or suggestions regarding
the Pro Bono Program to
Harlene Katzman at
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**In November 2024, Simpson Thacher announced that it will open an office in Luxembourg.*

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