

VSB Joins Just the Beginning Foundation as Conference Cosponsor

The Virginia State Bar has joined as a cosponsor the eighth biennial conference of the Just the Beginning Foundation, a nonprofit organization that tries to nurture an interest in the legal profession among students of color and other underrepresented groups.

The conference is scheduled for September 25–28, 2008, in Washington, D.C.

High school-aged youth from the Washington metropolitan area will be invited to attend the conference. They are referred by area schools and members of the task force that organized the conference. Some of the students are identified as at-risk because of a financial situation, neighborhood, poor grades despite high potential, or history of misconduct.

The program introduces the students to federal judges and others in the legal profession, who tell their stories — some of which are similar to those of the attendees — and how they became lawyers and judges.

The Just the Beginning Foundation tracks its students and has programs for them in middle and high school, college, and law school. Similar conferences have been held in other metropolitan areas, including Chicago and Cincinnati.

For more information on the foundation, see <http://www.jtbf.org>. The foundation is in the process of developing a section for students on its website, where information on future programs will be posted.

Attorneys in Waynesboro, Staunton Recognized for Pro Bono Work

Attorneys Jeffrey A. Ward and K. Wayne Glass have been honored for their pro bono work by Blue Ridge Legal Services (BLRS).

Ward, who practices with Franklin, Denney, Ward & Lawson PLC in Waynesboro, and Glass, of the Staunton firm Vellines, Cobbs, Goodwin & Glass PLC, were recognized for “tackling difficult legal problems for their low-income clients referred to them by legal aid,” according to a press release from BLRS.

The clients were referred by a pro bono referral program cosponsored by the Augusta County Bar Association and BLRS. In the last decade, about five hundred low-income residents of Staunton, Augusta County, and Waynesboro have received assistance through the program, which serves the Shenandoah and Roanoke valleys.

Volunteers Needed for Attorney Support Programs

Lawyers Helping Lawyers needs volunteers to start support groups for legal professionals throughout the commonwealth.

LHL — a nonprofit program that offers mental-health and substance abuse services to the legal community — wants to establish two types of groups:

- A peer-led support meeting for legal professionals who live with addictions such as alcoholism or other substance abuse.
- A meeting led by a mental-health professional for people who cope with the stresses of law practice — stresses that can contribute to depression, anxiety, or other disabling conditions.

In both cases, groups will be limited to people involved in the legal profession.

Such programs already have been established in three areas of the state. LHL sponsors substance abuse meetings weekly

in Northern Virginia and twice monthly in Roanoke. Mental health support is available in Roanoke (twice monthly), Northern Virginia (monthly), and Richmond (every two weeks).

That’s a start, but many more groups are needed to meet the needs of Virginia attorneys statewide, LHL Executive Director James E. Leffler said. The Hampton Roads area is in particular need of lawyer-focused support.

Any legal professional is welcome to volunteer. Lawyers who are familiar with twelve-step recovery programs are especially needed, Leffler said.

Volunteers will be put to work in a number of ways. They will be asked to attend support groups, work one-on-one with struggling attorneys, or provide telephone support to lawyers from another part of the state, for example.

Information exchanged is confidential, free, and not disclosed to the lawyer disciplinary system.

To volunteer, or for information, contact:

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