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# They do it 'pro bono'

By VAL VAN METER  
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**WINCHESTER** — Even the poor need legal services, but they seldom have the money to pay for them.

So some area lawyers help out.

Many residents have had bankruptcy papers filed, landlord/tenant disputes mediated, and wills drawn, thanks to the "pro bono" work of area lawyers.

"They are essential to our organization," said Anna L.K. Hammond, managing attorney at the Winchester office of Blue Ridge Legal Services.

This is a nonprofit legal aid society, which provides free legal assistance in many types of civil matters to low-income residents of the Shenandoah and Roanoke valleys. BRLS is a United Way member agency.

Blue Ridge recently honored three Winchester-area lawyers and one law firm for their "pro bono publico" services to aid BRLS clients.

They are James R. Larrick Jr. and Marilyn A. Solomon, and the law firm of Buchbauer and McGuire PC.

Hammond said every lawyer in that firm — Peter W. Buchbauer, James J. McGuire, Lawrence P. Vance, and Kelly C. Ashby — participates in the program.

"They are state-funded, so there is not much money, so you have to be very poor to get help," said Solomon.

BRLS' Winchester office handles clients in Winchester and Frederick, Clarke, and Warren counties, along with the northern half of Shenandoah County.

"That's a pretty good-sized poverty population," Hammond said.

"There really is a need," said Lauri C. Boyler, who works with the pro bono program for BRLS. "We have more cases than we can possibly do."

BRLS has two lawyers on its staff: Hammond and Jennifer L. Locke.

"We'd be forced to turn people away" without the donated time of local lawyers, Boyler said.

Solomon offers her services "to help people who can't afford to access the legal system, unless Blue Ridge helps them. I try to do what I can."

BRLS screens the low-income clients and then refers them to lawyers willing to help with uncontested civil prob-



Photo provided by Blue Ridge Legal Services

Blue Ridge Legal Services recently honored lawyers who perform "pro bono" work in the area. They include (first row, from left): Marilyn A. Solomon, Kelly C. Ashby, and Lawrence P. Vance; (second row) James R. Larrick Jr., Anna L.K. Hammond (BRLS lawyer), and Thomas A. Louthan; (third row) James J. McGuire and Jennifer L. Locke (BRLS lawyer). Also honored was lawyer Peter Buchbauer.

lems, such as no-fault divorce or custody issues.

All of the Winchester-Frederick County Bar Association members have been "real generous with their time," Hammond said.

These honorees were singled out because of the vast amount of time they have donated.

BRLS also cited Thomas A. Louthan, past president of the local Bar Association, for his help in the recent Pro Bono Recruitment drive.

"There is a tax incentive" for the donated hours, Hammond said, "but it's not money in their pocket."

Instead, she said, the motivation is "commitment to the American idea of equal justice for all."

— Contact Val Van Meter at [vanmeter@winchesterstar.com](mailto:vanmeter@winchesterstar.com)