



# STRENGTH IN NUMBERS



# 2021

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

Together  
We Can  
Do **More**



MVA Public Service Committee

**Moore & VanAllen**

# TOGETHER WE CAN DO MORE:

## *Co-chairs' Message*

We are honored to share with you Moore & Van Allen's (MVA) 2021 Public Service Report, celebrating the commitment of our attorneys and staff to volunteerism, pro bono work, and community giving in an unprecedented year where we saw both a global pandemic and civil unrest. The events of the past year forced us to examine the impact of our public service programs, have honest conversations about race, and find intentional ways to help our communities.

This year's annual report showcases how MVA professionals increased and reconsidered their public service work to meet the needs of underserved communities, many of which have been victims of systemic racism and felt disproportionate consequences from the pandemic. Because of COVID-19, our volunteer and pro bono work shifted in real-time to adjust to stay-at-home orders, remote learning environments, and virtual court rooms. Together, we found a way forward.

In the wake of recent events, our public service work is more important than ever. We discovered new and unique ways to support efforts and programs, often virtually, to advocate on behalf of the elderly, human trafficking survivors, domestic violence victims, our homeless and food insecure neighbors, international refugees, and vulnerable children. We also took leadership roles in working towards dismantling systemic racism in the law and government institutions, and building pro bono partnerships between law firms, in-house legal departments, and public interest organizations.

At MVA, we are steadfast in our belief that to achieve the best outcomes we must also remain open and supportive of diverse experiences and perspectives. We support a culture where we work hard to welcome, include, and value people, and this mindset extends into our public service efforts. We are proud of our many community partners who worked tirelessly in a rapidly changing world to meet the needs of our region's most vulnerable. Together, our efforts are vital for our community.

Through each of these efforts we continue to value our countless community partners who prove there is strength in numbers and that together we can do more. We thank all who have helped make a difference in the lives of so many people. We hope our 2021 Public Service Report serves as a vehicle of reflection for what we have accomplished while also inspiring us to do even more.

With gratitude,

### **Ed O'Keefe**

Member, Financial Regulatory Advice  
& Response  
Co-chair, Public Service Committee

### **Kimberly Zirkle**

Member, Financial Services  
Co-chair, Public Service Committee



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## Supporting Trafficking Survivors' Access to Financial Services



MVA's Human Trafficking Pro Bono Project has become a participating member of the United Nations' Liechtenstein Initiative's Survivor Inclusion Initiative, which connects identified survivors of human trafficking with basic financial services, such as checking accounts, savings accounts, and debit cards. This framework is for financial institutions, governmental actors, and other key stakeholders, including survivor support organizations, such as MVA, to promote financial services access for purposes of providing a remedy for survivors and to prevent future revictimization.

"While our primary role is to support survivors' legal needs, the firm's Human Trafficking Pro Bono Project is pleased to refer survivors to banks for financial services," said MVA Senior Counsel [Sarah Byrne](#), who leads the firm's Human Trafficking Pro Bono Project and advises organizations on human trafficking prevention. "Such services are vital to survivors in their pursuit of independence and financial security."

The Human Trafficking Pro Bono Project also provides trainings on survivor access to financial services, facilitates credit repair for survivors and is engaged in national legislative advocacy to promote financial inclusion after victimization.

The Liechtenstein Initiative for Finance Against Slavery & Trafficking (FAST) launched in September 2019 at the United Nations General Assembly and is housed at United Nations University Centre for Policy Research in New York. FAST is a public-private partnership including the Governments of Liechtenstein, Australia, and the Netherlands as well as private sector and charitable groups. United Nations University Centre for Policy Research is an independent UN think tank advancing innovative solutions to global public policy challenges.



*"Our partnership with the Survivor Inclusion Initiative is yet another synergy MVA has with financial services companies in our collective fight against human trafficking and support of survivors."*

**- Sarah Byrne**  
MVA Senior Counsel

## Combating Human Trafficking by Advocating for Survivors



Recognized as MVA continues to build on its support of victims of this crime. The firm developed the MVA Human Trafficking Pro Bono Project (Project) in 2013, and today, the program has assisted survivors in over 300 matters.

Under the leadership of MVA Senior Counsel [Sarah Byrne](#), Global Services Paralegal [Sally Hentz](#), and Commercial Real Estate Member [Chris Thompson](#), the project provides comprehensive legal services to survivors. Frequently requested areas of support include working with prosecutors and law enforcement to ensure that victim rights are protected at all stages of the criminal process; expunging criminal records that pose obstacles to employment, housing, and education; and asserting parental rights.

In August of 2020, a federal court sentenced a man who sex-trafficked a client of the Project to life in prison. The defendant was convicted and ordered to pay over \$1M in restitution to the firm's client. "The conviction, sentence, and restitution order in this case provide a sense of safety and justice not only for the victims in this case, including our client, but others who are similarly exploited," said Sarah. "It sends a strong message that this horrific crime carries the most significant of consequences and that our justice system is focused on restoring victims." Similarly, this year, MVA provided pro bono victim-witness representation to the survivor in the federal district's first forced labor case. The case resulted in a guilty verdict.

"Moore & Van Allen's Human Trafficking Pro Bono Project is a model for the nation. Years ago, I traveled to Charlotte to train the firm's attorneys on pro bono representation of trafficking survivors. In less than a decade, [Sarah Byrne](#) has grown the firm's small initiative into a powerhouse pro bono program," said Martina Vandenberg Founder and President of the Human Trafficking Legal Center in Washington, D.C. "This wonderful initiative has served hundreds of trafficking survivors in the Carolinas and beyond. The firm's investment in pro bono anti-trafficking work

*(continued on page 5)*

*"I would not have been as willing to talk about what happened if I didn't have a lawyer. I would not have been willing to meet with the prosecutors as many times as I did, because I would have been going it alone if I didn't have an attorney as a trusted advisor throughout this difficult process."*

**- MVA Human Trafficking  
Pro Bono Project Client**



*(continued from page 4)*

has yielded remarkable results: trafficking survivors able to confront the criminal justice system with a trusted pro bono attorney by their side; trafficking survivors able to win -- and collect -- criminal restitution to rebuild their lives; trafficking survivors able to obtain custody of their children, to feel safe with a protective order, to open bank accounts, to rebuild their credit. Because of Moore & Van Allen, trafficking survivors have pro bono representation that is both trauma-informed and inspired. Moore & Van Allen's anti-trafficking program achieves two fundamental goals: obtaining justice and restoring hope."

The Project has operated as an almost all-remote service provider over the course of the pandemic. Despite the COVID-19 protocols put in place, the Project achieved successful outcomes with very few in-person client meetings. In fact, the Project served twice as many survivors in 2020 than it did in 2019. Moving forward, the Project looks forward to re-instating in-person representation but will leverage virtual options to expand access to counsel when needed.

MVA's national presence in this work is demonstrated by its role as a founding member of the National Survivor Law Collective, a collaboration of U.S. organizations focused on providing free legal services to survivors of human trafficking. The Collective connects survivors to lawyers and provides trauma-informed training to lawyers nationwide.

Clients of the Project must be supported by a referring agency to be eligible for legal services. The Project accepts referrals from community partners, federal and local law enforcement agencies, and national human trafficking legal aid organizations.



*"The firm's investment in pro bono anti-trafficking work has yielded remarkable results: trafficking survivors able to confront the criminal justice system with a trusted pro bono attorney by their side; trafficking survivors able to win -- and collect -- criminal restitution and civil damages to rebuild their lives; trafficking survivors able to obtain custody of their children, to feel safe with a protective order, to open bank accounts, to rebuild their credit. Because of Moore & Van Allen, trafficking survivors have pro bono representation that is both trauma-informed and inspired. Moore & Van Allen's anti-trafficking program achieves two fundamental goals: obtaining justice and restoring hope."*

**- Martina Vandenberg**  
 Founder and President of the Human Trafficking  
 Legal Center in Washington, DC

## Bridging the Technical Divide through Strategic Investments

MVA supported the CMS Foundation during the 2020-2021 school year via generous contributions to the Connect for Tech Campaign. Since most North Carolina school districts, including the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, began the school year with remote instruction, the CMS Foundation sought to bridge the technology gap and bolster support during this unprecedented time.

As the official nonprofit fundraising partner for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the CMS Foundation serves as the bridge in the community connecting donors to the district's most important work. The support used for the Connect for Tech initiative helps the CMA Foundation fill critical technology gaps for students in the community during these challenging times.

MVA employees contributed more than \$5,000 to the campaign, which was then matched by an additional \$5,000 from the firm. MVA's total donation was earmarked for the firm's longstanding community partner, Devonshire Elementary.

The CMS Foundation reached its fundraising goal of \$3.2 million to provide not only hot spots and laptops to students, but also a year of internet service to families in need as the district navigated virtual, hybrid, and in-person learning.



# Championing our Community Partners

## by Investing in Future Generations

As MVA adapted to stay-at-home orders during the global pandemic, our volunteer and service commitments also changed. For almost two decades, MVA volunteers have visited the campus of Devonshire Elementary weekly to read to students. But as Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools suspended in-person volunteer opportunities, the program had to pause and find new and relevant ways to support the school.

During the week of November 2, 2020, as students began returning to the classroom, MVA volunteers welcomed them back to the school with cheers and words of encouragement from the drop-off lane sidewalks. Masked and socially distanced, it was a joyous experience for all. And while Devonshire partially returned to the campus in November, much of the school year remained in a hybrid learning schedule. MVA supplied the school with 260 headsets with attached microphones used for virtual learning to provide a clearer sound while the children completed reading and fluency activities online.

“Earlier this year, we reached out to MVA for their support in obtaining headphones, so our students would be equipped to learn in a remote environment. Many of our families had multiple children juggling at-home learning, parents working from home, and a multigenerational or multifamily living situation. As you can imagine, this created less than ideal conditions for students to concentrate and participate,” said Devonshire Elementary Principal Kristen Hackl. “I was most touched by how quickly MVA responded, ordered what we needed, and had the items shipped to the school for distribution. That moment reminded me of how fortunate we are to have partnerships with our community, specifically MVA. Since receiving the headphones, our children are more regularly engaged, able to concentrate on their work, and respond to teachers live in class. Now that a significant portion of our students have returned to school, they can engage in online content or independent work during small group sessions when the teacher is working with other students without distractions.”

MVA would also like to offer a special thank you to the Devonshire administrative team and teachers whose dedication enabled students to thrive during an unprecedented year. Their commitment to keeping the students engaged, academically on track, and safe is a testament to the quality of Devonshire’s extraordinary educators. Our volunteer readers are eager to return to the classrooms, but until then, MVA is proud to find other ways to support our friends at Devonshire.



*“As we navigated through the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on schools, Devonshire’s needs have changed and evolved to meet health and safety requirements, difficult circumstances facing our families, and the growing need for academic support for students. The Devonshire partnership with MVA was truly a gift in times of uncertainty.”*

**- Kristen N. Hackl**  
Principal, Devonshire Elementary

## Fighting to Help Food Insecure Communities through the NC Legal Feeding Frenzy

For the past seven years, MVA has competed in the annual Legal Feeding Frenzy hosted by the North Carolina Bar Association (NCBA). A partnership between the NCBA's Young Lawyers Division and Feeding the Carolinas, the Frenzy boasts a one-month competition among legal organizations across North Carolina to fight hunger.

Led by Litigation Associate **Kaitlin Price**, the MVA team participated in the Frenzy throughout the month of March 2021 as food banks across the country fought to maintain services for increasingly food insecure communities across the nation in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Feeding the Carolinas, food purchases by food banks at the onset of the pandemic increased an average of \$82,000 per month to almost \$1 million per month. This increasing cost, coupled with a stagnant volunteer rate due to social distancing restrictions, severely impacted food suppliers across the Carolinas.

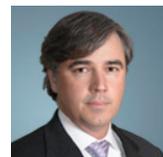
Team MVA responded to the call for help, collectively raising over \$43,000 for the effort that were specifically earmarked to assist MVA's long-standing community partner, the Second Harvest Food Bank. In turn, Second Harvest converted these funds into over 300,000 pounds of food and used the contributions to keep refrigerated trucks on the road to distribute fresh produce, dairy, and meats to partner agencies.

The Legal Feeding Frenzy participants collectively raised over \$230,000 in support of Feeding the Carolinas and local food banks across the state of North Carolina. MVA was honored to be recognized as the Frenzy Champion in the large law firm category, but more importantly, to lend critical support to families in need during a time of international crisis.



*“Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina has always been a vital part of the Charlotte community. Over the past year, many in our community relied upon the support and resources from Second Harvest Food Bank to survive these unprecedented times. MVA is once again proud to participate in the Feeding Frenzy and join the North Carolina legal community in supporting the important work of the Second Harvest Food Bank.”*

**- Kaitlin Price**  
Associate, Litigation



*“I feel blessed that I've never had to deal with hunger and humbled to be able to help in the fight against it. The effects of food insecurity on families, especially families with children, can be devastating and permanent. I can't think of a better ally in the fight against hunger than The Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina, and I'm incredibly proud of the legal community and our firm stepping up to support this wonderful organization.”*

**- Jim Langdon**  
Member, Bankruptcy

## Mobilizing Lawyers to Advancing Economic Mobility

MVA will collaborate with law firms across the Charlotte region to launch the Charlotte Legal Initiative to Mobilize Businesses (CLIMB). In the wake of George Floyd's death in the summer of 2020 the Carolinas Social Impact Initiative – a collective of law firm and legal industry leaders – began to identify ways to advance racial justice and equity in the Charlotte area. The group came to realize that providing free, transactional legal services to low-income entrepreneurs and small businesses owned by members of diverse communities was essential to advancing economic mobility and an important step toward equity.

MVA will work together with the law firm of Robinson Bradshaw to initiate and manage CLIMB's pilot phase with plans to expand the initiative to include a larger collective of legal industry participants in the summer of 2021. CLIMB provides eligible entrepreneurs and small business owners full-service representation on non-litigation business law matters, prioritizing applications from historically under-resourced groups (BIPOC, female, LGBTQ+, veteran, and disabled entrepreneurs), and is partnering with referral sources that serve individuals and businesses primarily in those groups.

The goal of CLIMB is to create a sustainable program that engages volunteer lawyers to make the broadest possible impact in Charlotte and its surrounding communities. By providing access to legal services at no cost, CLIMB seeks to assist clients in building and sustaining thriving businesses, support commercial activity in historically under-resourced communities, and foster economic mobility and opportunity, which are essential components to racial and social justice. MVA has built its reputation by offering exceptional financial services and transactional legal counsel. We are proud to now offer it pro bono to impact change.



*"We are really excited to launch CLIMB and to offer proactive, transactional pro bono services to diverse entrepreneurs and small businesses. We believe this is a way that we, as transactional lawyers, can move the needle on improving economic equality in Charlotte. We are not reinventing the wheel, we are just doing what we do best for those who need it most!"*

**- Kimberly Zirkle**  
Member, Financial Services



## Collaborating for Change with the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance



MVA is one of more than 240 law firms that joined the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance (LFAA), a coalition of firms that work together to identify and dismantle systemic racism in the law and government institutions. When LFAA launched this year, MVA was the first and initially the only North Carolina-based law firm to support the effort.

LFAA's purpose is to "leverage the resources of the private bar to amplify the voices of communities and individuals oppressed by racism, to better use the law as a vehicle for change that benefits communities of color, and to promote racial equity in the law."

MVA Finance Member **Kimberly Zirkle** has taken an active role within the LFAA serving within the organization's Systemic Racism Legal Inventory (SRLI) Banking Working Group. The group examines the practices and habits of banking and financial institutions with an eye towards determining how best to dismantle those elements that have the effect of perpetuating racial inequity. Each of the SRLI working groups – composed of LFAA firm volunteers – focuses on the intersection of racial equity and a substantive area of the law.

While still in its formative stages, the LFAA has plans to coordinate its efforts via a network of social and racial justice organizations with the institutional knowledge of what has to happen to effect meaningful change. LFAA member firms will work together to provide substantial pro bono resources and skills to initiatives that address systemic racism.

**LFAA** LAW FIRM  
ANTIRACISM  
ALLIANCE



*"It is incredibly important for our firm to participate in this program because through the LFAA, the legal community will learn from each other by sharing best practices related to our responsibility to increase diversity and equitable access to opportunities."*

- **Tom Mitchell**  
Firm Chair

## Making Spirits Bright with Record-Setting Generosity



**THOMPSON**  
Strengthening Children, Families & Communities



Each year MVA employees gather to make the holidays a little brighter for children served through Thompson Child & Family Focus (Thompson) - a leading provider of clinical and prevention services for children across the Carolinas. In 2020, we recognized a need greater than ever before to bring joy during a year that tested the limits of individuals' physical, mental, and emotional health.

Over the course of three weeks, MVA raised over \$20,000 for Thompson to fulfill the holiday wish-lists of children and families served by the organization. This historic giving record also provided supplies including housewares, linens, and hygiene kits for Thompson's on campus residential facilities.

The tremendous generosity of MVA employees was also used to secure a new technology hub for one of the residential cottages specifically designed to support adolescent girls subjected to human trafficking. The hub includes new desktops, iPads, whiteboards, and desk dividers to be utilized in Thompson's on-campus classroom. Since many of the children in residential care continue to heal from emotional and physical trauma that prevents them from attending off-campus schools, Thompson provides on-campus educational services. These new supplies helped the children be more comfortable in socially distanced learning environments and allowed them to better access online learning platforms.

The 2020 campaign was led by Litigation Member **Frank Schall** with support from team captains **Courtenay Clark, Holly Bannerman, Amanda Franklin, Natalie Hilmandolar, Tricia Jordan, Cole Richins, Peter Stewart,** and **Shaun Wallace**.



*"The young women receiving treatment through our residential care program have benefited tremendously from the generosity that led to renovations to their program. Using technology to engage in education, life-skills, creative learning, and exercise allows the adolescents in the program to feel a sense of normalcy when so many of them have only experienced institutional settings prior to Thompson. We have already seen an improvement in the girls because of these enhancements."*

**- Matt Simon**  
Chief Program Officer  
Thompson Child & Family Focus

## Preserving Refugee Rights While Securing Clients' Safety and Stability

Throughout the last year and during the COVID-19 crisis, MVA continues to lend pro bono assistance to refugees seeking safety around the globe. In partnership with the International Refugee Assistance Program (IRAP), and led by Financial Services Associate **Anastasia Fanning**, MVA pro bono attorneys provide comprehensive legal representation to refugees throughout the registration, protection, and resettlement processes.

The program, which has always remotely connected pro bono attorneys with migrant clients even prior to the onset of the global pandemic, proved to be more critical than ever throughout 2020. Pathways to safety for IRAP clients were disrupted due to widespread travel restrictions and humanitarian crises were exacerbated, leaving many in further uncertainty. IRAP leveraged its pro bono counsel worldwide to advise clients, process their cases, and advocate on their behalf, even amidst COVID-related restrictions.

Over the course of 2020, MVA attorneys worked with a family of refugees to seek protections. As in many IRAP cases, the family has resided in a Jordan refugee camp after fleeing their home country of Syria in 2012 after continuous bombings. One of the family's relatives is a naturalized U.S. citizen residing in North Carolina and has worked with MVA Attorneys **Emily Cheatham**, **Anastasia Fanning**, and **John Zaloom** to petition for her alien relatives to be granted permanent resident status within the United States.

"Countries that are capable of taking in displaced persons should do so because it is the right thing to do," said John. "The United States, which is a country primarily made up of immigrants, should be at the forefront of resettling refugees as it has proven to be a place where refugees and immigrants can thrive and contribute to society."

As our attorneys adapted over the last year to serving pro bono clients in a variety of capacities, we are thrilled to know our support continues to extend worldwide. We will continue to advocate for the rights of displaced persons and are grateful for the opportunity to do so alongside the IRAP organization.

For more information on IRAP visit <https://refugeerights.org/>.



*"There are many organizations performing work like this for individuals who otherwise would have no help and little hope. But those organizations are stretched thin and, without pro bono assistance from firms like Moore & Van Allen, they would fall far short of meeting the demand for assistance. Lawyers should spend some time doing this kind of pro bono work because it is both rewarding and the right thing to do."*

**- John Zaloom**  
Member, Litigation



## Providing Advocacy, Support, and Stability to Charlotte's Elderly

Providing pro bono legal services is an opportunity for MVA attorneys to serve as personal advisors for the firm's Pro Bono Wills Project which, for over a decade, has partnered with the Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy (CCLA) to assist elderly residents of Mecklenburg County with estate planning services. The program, led by Financial Services Member **Lauren Biek**, empowers residents of Mecklenburg County over 60 years of age to make plans and decisions governing end of life issues through the completion of wills and health care power of attorney.

The project was initially placed on hold when the pandemic began, but by June of 2020, the team was helping with new pro bono cases again. Given the need for notaries and witnesses when executing the documentation, and the general prohibition on in-person meetings, the main challenge was coordinating the execution of the documents throughout the 2020 lockdown.

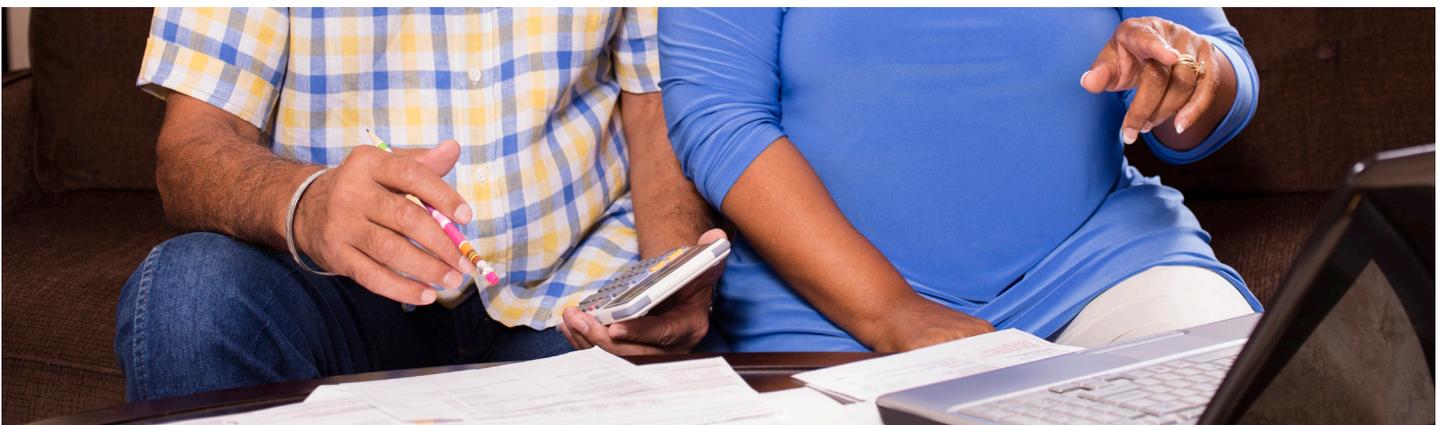
Lauren Kickham, the CCLA's paralegal advocate, was extraordinarily helpful and worked with MVA volunteers to coordinate meetings, in compliance with COVID-19 protocols, with clients as well as witnesses and notaries. "The process was seamless," said Lauren. "With CCLA's help, we were able to continue providing the same services as before the pandemic started."

Legal problems facing the impoverished elderly population are often critical since they are less likely to seek the assistance of an attorney because they do not have financial resources to afford them. Each client sourced through the program is an opportunity for MVA attorneys to provide advocacy, advice, and quality representation in securing the client's estate. As part of its valued partnership with CCLA, MVA takes on a minimum three new pro bono cases per month.



*"There has never been a more important time to assist pro bono clients with their health care power of attorney. Every efficiency we can create means that there will be less stress on our health care system. This is a small but important way to contribute to the battle against COVID-19."*

**- Peter Allen**  
Member, Public Affairs



## Creating Safe Spaces for Domestic Violence Survivors

At MVA we take responsibility for offering a safe haven for our pro bono clients, many of whom have experienced trauma, very seriously. This especially includes the firm's Domestic Violence Pro Bono Project, led by Litigation Associate **Rachael Coe**, where our attorneys and staff work diligently to secure Domestic Violence Protective Orders (DVPO) for our clients.

The project, which partners with the Safe Alliance Legal Representation Project, empowers victims of domestic violence who could not otherwise afford an attorney to advocate for their rights. The LRP represents roughly 400 clients a year with 40 percent of those clients being served by pro bono attorneys.

With the onset of COVID-19 in 2020, the delivery of pro bono services were initially impacted due to prolonged court closures and strict social distancing protocols. At the same time, calls to local domestic violence hotlines increased. As COVID restrictions lifted and court proceedings were clarified, our attorneys were able to quickly support clients in need.

MVA Litigation Associate and MVA Domestic Violence Pro Bono Project Volunteer **Lexi Narducci** became involved and said, "As a Safe Alliance pro bono attorney, I am called upon to represent victims seeking protection from their abusers through the legal system. I recently handled a hearing for a client and her child who were seeking a protective order. This client had called the police several times in the past to report abuse, but had not felt comfortable pursuing legal action alone. With the introduction from Safe Alliance, **Rachael Coe** and I contacted the client and assisted her in maneuvering the legal system. Ultimately, we went to court and successfully negotiated a consent order for our client."

The project routinely pairs volunteer attorneys to work together to offer support both to each other and to the client. "Through careful examination of the case file, excellent interviewing skills, and compassionate advocacy, Lexi helped negotiate a consent protective order to keep her client and child safe while requiring the defendant to get the services needed to change their behavior," said Rachael.

MVA is proud of its ability to help Safe Alliance clients as well as support the organization as a whole. In early 2021, Financial Services Member **Kimberly Zirkle** joined the Safe Alliance Board of Directors where she provides guidance and oversight to the organization's endeavors. During the past year the firm participated in Safe Alliance's Walk a Mile fundraiser, and provided a volunteer 'model' to walk the runway in its annual "Fighting for Women with Fashion" event, which was virtual this year. The firm also donated to Safe Alliance through its annual Strategic Choice Campaign.



*"Nothing beats a thank you from a client who, because of you, was able to find safety and stability for not only themselves, but also their children."*

**- Lexi Narducci**  
Associate, Litigation

## Securing Safe and Stable Housing in Partnership with Legal Aid of NC

MVA's Housing Rights Project, led by Litigation Member **Nader Raja** and supported by a team of pro bono volunteers, has worked tirelessly over the years in partnership with Legal Aid of North Carolina-Charlotte to provide legal services that secure safe and stable housing for clients. But with the onset of COVID-19, and a federal eviction moratorium, the nature of the project's work rapidly changed and MVA attorneys were quick to adapt to the new landscape. MVA Corporate Associate **Addison DuFour** jumped at the opportunity to assist two clients who were facing immediate eviction but were eligible under federal and state eviction moratoriums.

"Due to the pandemic and related closures, our clients lost their jobs and became unable to keep up with rent while awaiting new job opportunities," said Addison. "Following an attempted illegal eviction, MVA Litigation Associate **Bill Butler** and I represented our clients in four court hearings over the past year, securing stable housing for them during the pandemic. The landscape of landlord-tenant law evolved during the course of the pandemic, so we were focused on keeping up with every state and federal executive order and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) declarations, as well as examining the facts of their case against the established law in North Carolina."

The federal eviction moratorium that remains in place only safeguards against evictions due to the nonpayment of rent. Tenants facing evictions for this reason must make below a certain income and meet other factors set out by the CDC to prevent displacement. However, the moratorium does not stop evictions for tenants breaking the lease for something besides nonpayment. Case numbers for traditional eviction representation are beginning to increase, especially as court proceedings stabilize.

"Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, my family was fortunate to have continuous incomes, housing, and healthcare, and I saw how members of our community lost the same resources and stability that I tend to take for granted," continued Addison. "This really sharpened my perception of the economic divides in our community and across the country, prompting me to immediately say 'yes' to helping when needed. Having the support of **Bill Butler**, a seasoned litigator in this space, ensured that our clients were well-served during my first housing rights case, and I was able to learn from Bill not only wrinkles of landlord-tenant law, but the compassion and dedicated needed for pro bono clients."

Legal Aid anticipates an influx of cases once the moratorium has expired and has prepared its base of volunteer attorneys. When that time arrives, MVA's team is prepared to respond.



*"As attorneys, we have unique access and understanding of the justice system. I am using my law degree and training the best way I can when I work toward having our courts not only carry out the law but serve the people in our community. Working with pro bono clients is a privilege that MVA affords us, and our communities and justice systems are better when attorneys volunteer their time to those who need it."*

**- Addison DuFour**  
Associate, Corporate

## Insuring Fairness for the Indigent Accused

For over 25 years, MVA has served on a pro bono basis as the appointed counsel for indigent federal defendants under the Criminal Justice Act of 1964. MVA lawyers represent individuals who cannot afford to retain counsel and are under investigation or who have been charged by the U.S. government in connection with criminal offenses ranging from white collar crimes (health care fraud, passport fraud, wire fraud, etc.) to drug-related crimes to violent crimes. MVA's representation can begin before the individual has been charged, but typically begins once someone is charged. We represent these individuals through all phases of the federal district court proceedings. In addition, MVA represents indigent federal defendants appealing their convictions and sentences to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and then on to the U.S. Supreme Court. The majority of these indigent defendants are people of color.

The advocacy required covers the entire legal spectrum: challenging investigation procedures, such as violation of a suspect's *Miranda* rights or their rights against unlawful search and seizure, seeking the defendant's release from custody while he or she awaits trial, defending our client at trial, and arguing for a fair and reasonable sentence – often in the context of statutes that impose very lengthy prison sentences. In addition, our clients often need advice with respect to family, employment matters, and a host of other legal issues that arise when charged with a federal crime. In most cases, the criminal charges are the most important challenge our client has ever faced. In some cases, the issues will quite literally determine whether our client spends the rest of his or her life in prison.

For the almost 20 MVA attorneys and staff who have worked with these clients just over the last year, it is a strong reminder of the humanity in all of us, regardless of the situation in which we find ourselves. They include [Frank Schall](#), [Kristen Kenley](#), [Aishaah Reed](#), [Chelsea Trunk](#), [John Fagg](#), [Brandon Gaskins](#), [Lori Gibson](#), [Joe Piligian](#), [Martha Efird](#), and [Jim McLoughlin](#).

Lawyers across the country accept the representation of indigent clients under The Criminal Justice Act as do the lawyers of the of federal public defender organizations. MVA is proud to work alongside these dedicated professionals, including the Office of the Public Defender for the Western District of North Carolina, who work tirelessly to ensure that our federal criminal justice system is fair to everyone, regardless of their financial status.



## Empowering Citizens and Increasing Law Enforcement Accountability

MVA is creating a survey of the key statutes, rules, and regulations governing police conduct and accountability across multiple U.S. jurisdictions with the hope that it may serve as a resource for citizens seeking to set reasonable expectations for police encounters.

Led by MVA Litigation Associate **Jules Carter**, the goals of the effort are to equip citizens with reliable information, secure the safety of both officers and community members, and increase public confidence in law enforcement by promoting officer integrity.

The survey will focus on a broad range of policies and directives including but not limited to stop-and-identify statutes; body-worn camera laws; standards for arrest and detention; searches (and withholding consent to searches), including searches of the contents of an individual's phone or electronic device; "Terry frisk" use (stop and frisk); and immigration status questions. Pro bono attorneys leveraged through this effort assist in compiling relevant data for each state and coordinate post-research outreach efforts to circulate information to key stakeholders.



## Pursuing Justice for Prisoners' Rights

MVA is headed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit *en banc* in the firm's fight for justice for a long-time pro bono client. MVA filed a habeas corpus petition on our client's behalf in federal court to prove the client's actual innocence. Through appeals, the case has reached the court *en banc*, which is an exceptionally rare result. MVA has argued that the client's continued incarceration violates his due process rights because the Government did not prove the client had the necessary intent to commit the crime under the Constitutionally correct statutory interpretation. The Fifth Circuit will reconsider its test for permitting successive habeas petitions under a statutory "safety valve".

The issues being litigated by MVA will have a significant impact not only on our client, but on the legal landscape in the Fifth Circuit, as the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals is expected to decide whether, and under what circumstances, the client and the hundreds of other prisoners who file a successive habeas corpus petition each year are allowed the opportunity to prove their actual innocence. MVA Litigation Attorneys **Fielding Huseh, Jim McLoughlin, Raquel Macgregor Pearkes, Lexi Narducci**, and **Chris Tomlinson** as well as Litigation Paralegal **Maryna Draga** have worked tirelessly on the effort.



## Collaborative Partnerships Receive National Praise from the Pro Bono Institute

MVA was thrilled to announce in September 2020 that Charlotte Pro Bono Triage, a groundbreaking partnership created by McGuireWoods, MVA, and Charlotte-based corporate law departments to support local legal aid organizations, was the recipient of the 2020 Corporate Pro Bono Award from the Pro Bono Institute (PBI). The national award honors innovative pro bono partnerships between law firms, in-house legal departments, and public interest organizations. The award was presented during PBI's virtual gala on October 1.

Charlotte Pro Bono Triage is a partnership between corporate legal departments and law firms created to support Legal Aid of North Carolina-Charlotte and the Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy. Led by MVA, McGuireWoods, Bank of America, Duke Energy, Husqvarna Group, and Wells Fargo, it has brought together dozens of local law firm and corporate legal department leaders to raise awareness of the unmet legal needs in the community and drive pro bono volunteerism in those areas. Many other regional law firms and corporate legal departments have contributed volunteers to this project, making it a truly collaborative program across the Charlotte legal community.

"As a firm, we have always held strong to the idea that together as a community we can create greater impact," said MVA Senior Manager of Diversity and Community Initiatives **Stephanie Gryder**. "The Charlotte Pro Bono Triage is a prime example of that motto because it expands access to legal services and ultimately serves more clients."

Charlotte Pro Bono Triage has six primary areas of focus: housing eviction defense, increasing access to healthcare insurance coverage by providing assistance during open enrollment, criminal record expunctions, assisting victims of human trafficking, driver's license restorations, and assistance with social security matters. MVA attorneys lead two of these efforts. Litigation Member **Nader Raja** co-leads the Triage's eviction representations in partnership with Legal Aid of North Carolina – Charlotte and Senior Counsel **Sarah Byrne** co-leads the human trafficking endeavor. Since its inception, the program has trained more than 400 volunteers and helped deliver legal services for more than 350 matters.



*"In the wake of the pandemic's devastation, Charlotte Pro Bono Triage has proven once again that we can do more when we work together. Through the Triage's robust network of partner law firms and in-house counsel, we have onboarded additional pro bono attorneys to assist in eviction representations and increased the community's awareness about the acute housing issues impacting low-income families. While many are preparing to return to business-as-usual post COVID-19, those committed to the Triage Eviction Project will continue to work side-by-side to ensure the civil legal needs of our most vulnerable community members do not fall to the wayside as we transition to a new normal."*

**- Nader Raja**  
Member, Litigation  
Co-Champion, Triage Eviction Project



# Celebrating Service

## Bank of America Presents MVA with 2020 Pro Bono Award



MVA was the recipient of Bank of America's 2020 Pro Bono Award, presented during a virtual ceremony on October 22, for its work to support immigrants and victims of human trafficking and its commitment to reducing racial inequality and injustice. Financial Regulatory Advice and Response Member [Ed O'Keefe](#) and Financial Services Member [Kimberly Zirkle](#), who serve as co-chairs of MVA's Public Service Committee, accepted the award on behalf of the firm.

Bank of America and MVA collaborate for the Charlotte Pro Bono Triage, a partnership between corporate legal departments and law firms, including McGuireWoods. Charlotte Pro Bono Triage was created to support Legal Aid of North Carolina-Charlotte and the Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy, raising awareness of the unmet legal needs in the community.

Each year, the bank's internal lawyers nominate outside counsel for the award, considering the breadth and impact of each firm's pro bono activities. The award is given to a law firm that has exhibited outstanding commitment to pro bono work, particularly in partnership with Bank of America.



*"We are honored to receive this recognition from Bank of America in support of our heartfelt volunteer investments. The collective efforts that we undertake together to provide worthy clients with better access to legal services truly benefits the communities we serve."*

**- Ed O'Keefe**  
Member, Financial Regulatory Advice  
and Response



## By the Numbers

# THE IMPACT



**4,859**

MVA attorneys donated 4,859 hours of legal services to 163 pro bono clients in 2020.

**5,455**

MVA employees (attorneys and non-legal professionals) donated 5,455 hours of volunteer service to community efforts in 2020.



**Totaling over \$245,000**

MVA works together to support organization that are near and dear to our employees' hearts. In 2020, employees made individual financial contributions through firm-led giving campaigns totaling \$247,091. These funds benefitted organizations such as the Arts & Science Council, the Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy, Legal Aid of North Carolina, Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolinas, Thompson Child & Family Focus Services, and the United Way, among others.



**Pro Bono Areas of Focus**

- Domestic Violence
- Guardianship
- Housing Rights
- Immigration & Refugee Assistance
- Prisoners' Rights
- Small Business & Nonprofit Support
- Wills and Estates



**SERVICE ALL STARS**

**50+ Hours of Pro Bono Service:**

- Bobby Bowers
- Bill Butler
- Sarah Byrne
- Jules Carter
- Rachael Coe
- Addison Dufour
- Martha Efird
- John Fagg
- Taylor Festa
- Fielding Huseth
- Matt Kain
- Raquel Macgregor
- Gabe Mathless
- Karin McGinnis
- Jim McLoughlin
- Lexi Narducci
- Randy Phillips
- Nader Raja
- Frank Schall
- Russ Sizemore
- Scott Tyler
- Kate Wellman
- John Zaloom
- Kimberly Zirkle Pearkes

## IN THE COMMUNITY

MVA and its employees recognize the incredible value of investing in our long-standing partners by way of hands-on pro bono and public service hours, board service, and charitable contributions. The following represents a handful of organizations that MVA is proud to work alongside – in a variety of capacities – and who share the firm's vision of serving the greater good.

American Heart Association

Arts & Science Council

Bright Blessings

Care Ring, Inc.

Catawba Lands Conservancy

Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy

Charlotte Museum of History

Children's Hospital Foundation

Childress Klein YMCA

Classroom Central

CMS Foundation

Council for Children's Rights

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Doctors Without Borders

Dress for Success Charlotte

Feeding America

Foundation for the Carolinas

In Reach, NC

Jamie Kimble Foundation for Courage

Justice Initiatives

Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation

KIPP Charlotte

Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights

Legal Aid of North Carolina

Let Me Run

Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

Levine Children's Hospital

Levine JCC

Lily Pad Haven

Mecklenburg County Bar

Mint Museum of Art

NC Bar Foundation

NC Pro Bono Resource Center

Pinky Swear Foundation

Pro Bono Institute

Pro Bono Net

Roof Above

Safe Alliance

Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina

Teach for America, Inc.

The Arts Empowerment Project

Thompson Child and Family Focus

United Way of Central Carolinas

Wayfinders

Women's Impact Fund

Young Black Leadership Alliance

2021 PUBLIC SERVICE  
ANNUAL REPORT

Together  
We Can  
Do More



MVA Public Service Committee

**Moore & Van Allen**