



# Volunteer Lawyers Respond to Recession

VOLUNTEER ATTORNEYS DRAMATICALLY INCREASE SERVICE TO PLS LOW-INCOME CLIENTS

As the effects of the recession have taken hold in Western North Carolina, Pisgah Legal Services' phones have rung off the hook. More people have called desperate for legal help to stop foreclosure on their homes, manage debt after being laid off from their jobs, or escape domestic abuse that intensified in tough economic times.

As PLS stretches its resources to help more people in crisis, volunteer attorneys have come to the rescue. More than 315 private attorneys provide pro bono legal services to PLS clients through the Mountain Area Volunteer Lawyer (MAVL) Program.

MAVL attorneys dramatically increased their pro bono service in 2009, donating 39% more time to help PLS clients, compared to 2008. MAVL attorneys donated a total of 4,410 hours of service, which is modestly valued at more than \$662,400.

*Volunteer attorneys and PLS' sixteen staff attorneys improved the lives of more than 10,000 low-income people in 2009.*



*After taking a new medication, Christie developed numerous blood clots and lost her right leg. While in the hospital, she was fired from her job. Christie tried for two years to secure Medicaid benefits on her own and was denied. Then volunteer attorney Leah Broker provided free legal help to appeal the denial and secured Medicaid for Christie within 30 days. Leah is one of 315 volunteer attorneys who helped PLS serve more people in crisis in 2009. Christie is pictured above (center) with Leah Broker (left) and Leah's law partner, Anna Hamrick (right). Broker & Hamrick, P.A. provided 470 hours of free legal aid to PLS clients in 2009.*

## 2009 VOLUNTEER ATTORNEY ACHIEVEMENTS

	2009	Increase over 2008
# Hours donated by volunteer attorneys to help PLS clients	4,410	39%
# Cases closed by volunteer attorneys	1,020	41%
# Cases referred to the volunteer attorney hotline	419	59%

# Celebrating A Commitment to Justice

HUNDREDS OF VOLUNTEERS HELPED PISGAH LEGAL SERVE 10,000+ PEOPLE IN 2009

Pisgah Legal Services had many people to thank at the third annual Jazz for Justice event in March. The evening's special guests were two of our most extraordinary, longtime volunteers, attorney Philip J. Smith, with The Van Winkle Law Firm, and community volunteer Terry Van Duyn.

Phil, a former PLS board president, played a key role in helping PLS save its former office, the Gudger House, from being taken in a lawsuit filed by the federal Legal Services Corporation.

Terry, also a former board president, led our Justice For All Capital Campaign, which raised \$5 million so that PLS could move into desperately-needed, larger office space on Charlotte Street in Asheville.



*At the 3rd Annual Jazz for Justice event, Pisgah Legal Services honored outstanding volunteers Philip Smith and Terry Van Duyn.*

Phil and Terry are just two of hundreds of dedicated volunteers who help make it possible for PLS to serve 10,000+ people per year. Thank you to all of you!

This year's Jazz for Justice event raised more than \$27,000, which will help Pisgah Legal Services fill a budget gap in this unusually challenging fundraising climate.

## Thank You Sponsors and Event Committee

MANY THANKS TO THE JAZZ FOR JUSTICE SPONSORS AND EVENT PLANNING COMMITTEE

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### Event Planning Committee

Lynn Kieffer, Event Chair  
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Christine Van Duyn

# In Memoriam

THE HARSH WINTER TOOK A TOLL ON ALL OF US, BUT ONE PLS CLIENT LOST HIS LIFE IN THE BITTER COLD

Last year 20 homeless people died in Buncombe County. Many of these deaths went largely unnoticed by the community; no obituary was written, no funeral held. Pisgah Legal Services would like to acknowledge one of these deaths and the life that went before it.

PLS client Barry Cordell grew up in North Carolina and worked for many years as a mechanic. He had a teenaged son and a close relationship with his brother. Barry became homeless two and a half years ago and lived in the woods near Black Mountain. He lost a foot to frostbite while homeless. He was referred to Pisgah Legal Services for help securing disability benefits—minimal income and Medicaid. PLS paralegal Aundry Freeman tracked down Barry in the woods and helped him secure Medicaid. Soon after, while awaiting approval for the disability income that would have allowed him to afford to rent a place to live, Barry froze to death on one of this winter’s many frigid nights.

The people who call Pisgah Legal Services for help are in crisis. They are about to lose their homes, fearing for the safety of themselves and their children because of domestic violence, or suffering health problems without access to medical care. Our clients face serious problems, but for some--as Barry’s death tragically reminds us--having timely access to legal assistance is literally a matter of life and death.



Barry Cordell - 1963 to 2009

*PLS client Barry Cordell froze to death while homeless and awaiting approval of disability benefits. We sincerely regret that for Barry legal assistance to help save his life came too late. Thank you to Barry’s family for sharing this photo.*

## Is Pisgah Legal Services in Your Will?

**If so**, we would like to know about it so that we can acknowledge your generosity in our publications. Your support will help ensure that PLS is there for people in crisis for generations to come.

**If not**, please consider a planned gift to PLS’ endowment funds. Planned giving options range from a simple bequest in your will to a tax-free gift from an IRA to a complex trust arrangement.

For more information, please contact PLS Executive Director Jim Barrett at 828.210.3408 or [jim@pisgahlegal.org](mailto:jim@pisgahlegal.org).

## COME MEET US!

*Every Friday - Just drop by and ask for Tina Owen  
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.*

Questions? Contact Tina at [tina@pisgahlegal.org](mailto:tina@pisgahlegal.org) or 828.210.3430.

## Giving Made Easy

PLS has automatic monthly giving options that are safe and easy:

- Online credit card payments at [www.pisgahlegal.org](http://www.pisgahlegal.org)
- Bank drafts arranged with your bank
- Online banking payments directed to PLS
- Monthly credit card payments processed at PLS

A \$200/year pledge is just \$16.66/month.

The cost of one lunch - \$10/ month x 12 months goes a long way to help people in crisis.

To set up a monthly gift go to [www.pisgahlegal.org](http://www.pisgahlegal.org) or call Betsy at 828.210.3444.



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Join these generous local businesses in becoming a Partner for Justice. Partners for Justice provide \$5,000 or more per year in financial or in-kind support to Pisgah Legal Services. These important partners receive extensive recognition throughout the year. Contact Tina Owen (828.210.3430) for more information about partnering with us to provide free legal aid to help thousands of low-income people meet their most basic needs.



*Thank you to all of the supporters that make it possible for  
Pisgah Legal Services to help 10,000+ people each year!*