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Save the Date:
Oct. 23rd
Justice Forum
featuring
Dr. Imani Perry,
National Book
Award-Winning
Author, MacArthur
Genius, and
Harvard Professor
pisgahlegal.org/justiceforum



Pisgah Legal Staff Member Jessi Stone helped Allen access FEMA funding to repair the roof on his home after it was severely damaged by Hurricane Helene.

An Answered Prayer After Helene

LOCAL PEOPLE TURN TO PISGAH LEGAL FOR SUPPORT AS THEY RECOVER, AND OUR DEDICATED STAFF ASSISTS WITH A RANGE OF HOLISTIC PROGRAMS.

When people come to Pisgah Legal Services (PLS), they often leave with more help than they expected. That was certainly true for Allen.

Allen first contacted PLS a few years ago seeking help with health insurance. In 2024, he returned for a different issue: he had filed his taxes but hadn't received any refunds for the past four years.

During his appointment with PLS Staff Member Jessi Stone, Allen got good news: his refunds were on their way,

and just in time. He had recently been laid off after Hurricane Helene, and his unemployment benefits were running out. Jessi also convinced him to apply for FEMA assistance, even though Allen was skeptical he'd qualify for help to repair his home's storm-damaged roof.

Today, Allen has a new job, his tax refunds, and a newly repaired roof. Reflecting on the experience, he says, "I said a lot of prayers after Helene, and Pisgah Legal was one of those answered prayers."

Working Together to Weather the Storms

WITH YOUR SUPPORT, PISGAH LEGAL IS STANDING STRONG THROUGH MANY CHALLENGES



Dear Friends,

Since last Fall, whenever I meet with fellow non-profit leaders around the state or travel beyond our region, I've noticed a common reaction when people learn where I'm from.

Their faces darken with concern, their brows furrow, and they ask,

"How are you doing since the hurricane? Are things getting better? Are you back to normal?"

Of course, those of us who live here in WNC know the extent of the damage and the extraordinary efforts it will take to fully recover. Still, important progress is being made.

I'm proud of the way Pisgah Legal has contributed to that progress. Our Disaster Recovery Project launched just days after the storm. We trained our attorneys in FEMA procedures and insurance appeals.

We held legal clinics in churches and community centers from Burnsville to Brevard, and everywhere in between. We mobilized volunteers, educated partners, and provided one-on-one legal help to thousands of people.

When people are hurting, we respond. When the systems in place are too complex to navigate alone – FEMA paperwork, insurance denials, housing crises – Pisgah Legal is there. And this work to help folks recover from Helene continues, and will until it's done.

But now we are facing a different kind of storm. **Approximately 25% of Pisgah Legal's budget is tied to federal sources that are being threatened, harming our ability to provide essential aid to people in WNC.**

"We will never stop fighting for people who need us to continue to stand in that perilous gap between them and disaster."

Federal cuts are also adding substantial barriers to important care and harming critical programs like Social Security and Medicaid, which are lifelines for many of our clients.

We are actively working to understand the implications of new policies and the overall uncertainty surrounding federal funding.

We continue to monitor changes in federal law and policy. And we are seeking innovative funding sources to maintain services for people in need while working to sustain the generous community support that has always made our work possible.

Pisgah Legal has stood for justice for 47 years, and that will never change. **We will never stop fighting for people who need us to continue to stand in that perilous gap between them and disaster.**

On behalf of the Board and the staff, **thank you** for your continued support as we continue to stand together in solidarity. We will weather these storms and emerge stronger and even more committed than before.

Jackie Kiger, Executive Director

Vecinos Partnership Creates New PLS Office Location in Franklin

Pisgah Legal is pleased to work in partnership with Vecinos on their new **Community Health Hub** in Franklin.

Vecinos offers free primary and behavioral health care services to uninsured and low-income adults with a focus on Latinx and farmworker communities in eight WNC counties. (PLS staff members pictured at the new Hub location, right.)



Saluting Standout Volunteers

PROFESSIONALS LAUDED FOR PRO BONO SERVICES



More than 250 volunteer attorneys provide thousands of hours of free legal help to our low-income neighbors each year. In May, the Buncombe County Bar and Pisgah Legal Services honored exemplary volunteer attorneys and staff, celebrating their generous pro bono service.

The following received awards (L-R): **MC O'Leary Smith**, Younger Attorney Pro Bono Service Award; **Kelly Davis**, Legal Assistant/Paralegal Pro Bono Service Award; **Anna Stearns**, Outstanding Pro Bono Service Award; **Saul Perla**, Emeritus Attorney Pro Bono Service Award; **Kathy Martin**, Emeritus Attorney Pro Bono Service Award; **Katie Russell**, Managing Director of Community Engagement at Pisgah Legal, recognized for her outstanding work as Chair of the Pro Bono Committee for the past eight years; **Edward Hay, Jr.**, Lifetime Pro Bono Achievement Award.

Interested in getting involved? Visit pisgahlegal.org/volunteer.

Chief Program Officer Named

Molly Maynard has been selected as Pisgah Legal's Chief Program Officer. Over the past 13 years, she has served as Director of the Children's Law Program and as a Managing Attorney. In her new role, she will assure PLS' highest quality of legal representation, the advancement of Pisgah Legal's mission and programs and also lead policy advocacy.



Good News! Giving Challenge Update

Thanks to everyone who participated in our *Justice For All Giving Challenge*. We met and exceeded our goal! With your help, we will hire a fourth immigration attorney to serve the 18-county region.

Special thanks to Dogwood Health Trust for their support as well as the generous donors who matched your gifts. **Well done all!**

PEOPLE OF PISGAH LEGAL



Meet Morgan Burroughs, one of our summer interns.

Morgan graduated from UNC Asheville with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and also earned a Paralegal degree at Western Piedmont Community College.

Morgan says, "My passion is to fight for people with disabilities and fight for a change involving our/their rights! I want to give a voice to those who struggle being heard!"

Working at Pisgah Legal Services allows me to broaden my horizons and hone in on how I want to advocate not only for the disability community, but for those who are less fortunate."



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**“You meet saints everywhere. They can be anywhere.
They are people behaving decently in an indecent society.”
– Kurt Vonnegut**

Jazz for Justice: A Celebration of Community

PISGAH LEGAL FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS COME TOGETHER

On a lovely May evening, a crowd of 400 people gathered at Highland Brewing in Asheville to celebrate Pisgah Legal's work, honor the late Jerry Sternberg, and raise funds to expand access to justice. Guests raised more than \$13,000 for our **Stronger than the Storm Challenge** that night, \$5,000 of which will be matched thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Randall Johnson. Thanks to all the sponsors and guests for making the evening a great success, including Jesse Kitt for these terrific photos.

