



PISGAH
LEGAL SERVICES

Justice Matters

THE NEWSLETTER OF PISGAH LEGAL SERVICES

Pursuing Justice. Improving Lives.

FOURTH QUARTER

2016

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Dwayne and Elizabeth's family endured terrible living conditions, and were almost wrongfully evicted. The vacancy rate for rentals in WNC is as low as one percent, leaving low-income people with few and often unsafe options. "Finding a home in Madison County to rent is almost impossible," says Elizabeth.

Family Finds New Home for the Holidays

WHEN YOU SUPPORT PISGAH LEGAL SERVICES, YOU ARE HELPING FAMILIES THAT ARE STRUGGLING TO FIND DECENT AFFORDABLE HOUSING, A REAL SCARCITY IN WNC.

Like thousands of other people in our region, Elizabeth and Dwayne were paying a lot of rent money for a house with serious problems. Theirs had sinking floors and foundation, a roof that allowed rain water to pour in, and a bathtub that was close to falling through the floor.

Not only did their landlord refuse to fix the problems, he tried to raise their rent. When they said no and tried to negotiate for repairs, he moved to evict them, a practice Pisgah Legal attorneys see all too often.

The family came to Pisgah Legal Services. Attorney Molly Maynard stopped the eviction, gave them time to find a better place to live and helped them avoid homelessness. They will now celebrate the holidays in a much better home where they feel safe. Elizabeth says they are so grateful – not just for the legal help – but also for the way they were treated.

"There was no judgment towards me or my family because of our income. Pisgah Legal is an organization that truly does care about people and their problems."



THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT IS STILL LAW. IF YOU NEED HEALTH INSURANCE SIGN UP BY JAN. 31, 2017.

Call: 1-855-733-3711 or visit www.pisgahlegal.org.

Help is Free with a Trained Assister.

In Uncertain Times, We Will Not Waiver

THANK YOU FOR STANDING WITH PISGAH LEGAL SERVICES TO PROVIDE JUSTICE FOR ALL

Dear Friends,

For nearly 40 years, Pisgah Legal Services has fought for the most vulnerable low-income people in our mountain region and you, our compassionate and committed supporters, have stood with us to pursue justice and improve lives.

Together we're standing up for children, people with disabilities, victims of abuse, people of color, the elderly, the working poor and immigrants.

First the good news! This year we have several new projects to tackle problems of poverty and injustice in our region. Through the "CLASP" partnership with Vaya Health, we are helping people with mental, physical and developmental disabilities move out of institutional settings and live independently.

Without an attorney to advocate for these clients, many of them would have no path out of unsuitable group homes and other institutions.

We are thrilled to have new partnerships with the Mediation Center, Safelight and SAFE to help stop child abuse by securing legal custody for children with a safe parent or guardian.



Pisgah Legal Services recently received two new grants from the NC Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts, one to work on community economic development to improve housing and job opportunities, and a second to prevent low-income home owners from losing their homes to foreclosure.

Through innovative programs like these, Pisgah Legal helps more than 15,000 people each year. But in the current climate, many of our clients are scared of what the future holds.

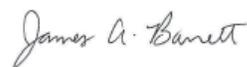
We remain steadfast and committed to providing equal access to justice for our clients, to help protect them from the ravages of poverty and abuse. As MLK, Jr. reminded us, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice."

"We remain steadfast and committed to providing equal access to justice."

We hope you will stand with us as we continue to protect the vulnerable. Volunteer or make a gift today.

From now until Dec. 31st, all gifts to the Children's Law Project will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$75,000. Thank you for your support!

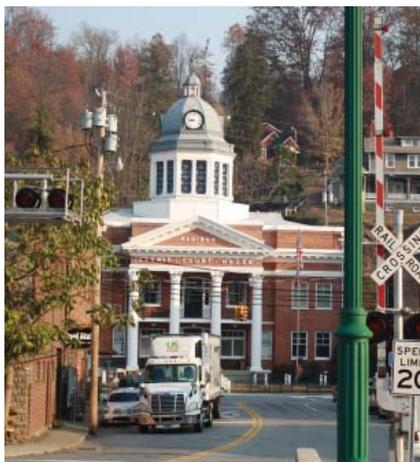
Happy Holidays to You and Yours,



Jim Barrett, PLS Executive Director

New Office Opens in Madison County

LOW-INCOME PEOPLE LIVING IN ONE OF WNC'S MOST RURAL AREAS HAVE A NEW RESOURCE



Now people living in Madison County can meet with Pisgah Legal staff in the town of Marshall. The County is helping make the new office possible by paying the first year's rent for the space at 32 N. Main Street.

PLS Managing Attorney Robin Merrell (below), is a native. After college and law school, she returned to her home. "I love the people of Madison County," she says. "Helping them is exactly why I went to law school in the first place." Clerk of Superior Court Mark Cody says, "It's especially good for elderly people who can't make the trip to Asheville."



Thanks to donors like you, PLS now has offices in Asheville, Brevard, Hendersonville, Marshall and Rutherfordton.

Edelman Inspires At Forum

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN SPEAKS OUT ON CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY



Photos by Jesse Kitt. (Top L-R) Marian Wright Edelman, Susan Mims and Marla Adams talk at the reception. (Below) Edelman speaks to an enthusiastic crowd at Thomas Wolfe Auditorium at the U.S. Cellular Center in Asheville.

On October 5th, more than 1,000 people came to hear the Founder and President of the Children’s Defense Fund, Marian Wright Edelman, at our 6th Annual Poverty Forum. “Ending Child Poverty Now” became the largest event in Pisgah Legal’s history. The event location was moved to the U.S. Cellular Center to accommodate the demand for tickets.

Marla Adams (above), an attorney and long-time Pisgah Legal supporter, said, “I was thrilled to finally meet her and hear her speak. She has been such a bright light for children.”

Edelman encouraged attendees to defend the rights of children and advocate for increased resources on a local and national level. “It’s about adult interests and adult budgets, not children’s welfare, and folks, we have to change that. We must make sure that our children come first.”

Special thanks to the many wonderful sponsors for making this event a success! And thanks to Asheville Channel, you can see a recording of the forum at www.pisgahlegal.org.



PROFILES IN GIVING



We are so grateful to this Asheville brewery & restaurant for their ongoing support.

“For the last four years Wicked Weed has hosted a fundraiser for Pisgah Legal Services.

Our community is unique in the way that we come together and support each other. I really appreciate that, and it’s something we should never take for granted.

We stand with Pisgah Legal Services and will continue to host this event as long as possible – maybe even twice a year!”

**– Rick Guthy
OWNER,
WICKED WEED**



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With only a few days left to reach our fundraising goal, we need YOUR help!

Give by December 31st to the Children's Law Project and your gift will be matched dollar-for-dollar!

We Stand for Justice, and Won't Stop Now!

PLEASE JOIN US TO HELP VULNERABLE LOCAL PEOPLE THAT HAVE NO WHERE ELSE TO TURN.

How Does Your Gift Make An Impact?

Helping children in poverty by advocating for social policies that benefit the youngest among us and by protecting them from harm.

Providing safety from abuse to thousands of survivors of domestic violence with legal action that helps them leave safely and stay away for good.

Avoiding homelessness by assisting families who are being taken advantage of by unscrupulous landlords.

Securing life-saving benefits for those who are desperate for health care and for people living life with serious disabilities.

Because justice is for everyone,
not just those who can afford it.



Jonathan (left) worked at a group home for 20 years before a devastating disease caused him to go blind. Earlier this year Pisgah Legal Caseworker Sioux Free (right) helped keep Jonathan from becoming homeless, and the two became fast friends.

Jonathan says, "Without Sioux, I would have been out on the street."