

Pro Bono News

FALL 2018

Pro Bono Challenge

The firm encourages every attorney to achieve the aspiration set forth in New York Rule of Professional Conduct 6.1 of providing **at least 50 hours per year** of pro bono legal services to poor persons. The Pro Bono Challenge will reward lawyers who meet thresholds of hours of pro bono legal services in a given calendar year with certificates and Kramer Levin-branded prizes at each level to be awarded at the annual Marvin Frankel Pro Bono Awards Ceremony in April. The 2018 levels include:

20 hours: Pro Bono Counsel **50 hours:** Pro Bono Advocate **100 hours:** Pro Bono Champion

New Pro Bono Initiatives

Legal Services NYC U-Visa Screening Clinic

This summer, in conjunction with Legal Services NYC, Kramer Levin hosted a U-Visa screening clinic. The clinic's goal was to screen low-income immigrant crime victims who seek legal status through a U Nonimmigrant Status visa. After an hour-long training session from Legal Services, Kramer Levin and Assured Guaranty attorneys teamed up and met with clients, walked them through a series of questions, and reviewed documents to determine if the clients were eligible to apply for a U-Visa.

We will be hosting another U-Visa screening clinic at Kramer Levin on November 29 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. This time, we will be working with in-house attorneys from our client Bank of Montreal. For those interested in taking on a full representation U-Visa case, we will host another clinic in March 2019.

Legal Aid Society's Know Your Rights Presentations

Kramer Levin has committed to assisting The Legal Aid Society's Community Justice Project with conducting "Know Your Rights" (KYR) trainings in schools focusing on police encounters and unlawful stops. The object of the KYR workshops is to educate the students about their legal rights when dealing with law enforcement, familiarize them with key legal terms, and generally provide information about where they can seek help if they have been subject to an unlawful stop/search. The workshop also provides practical advice and skills for getting through an encounter safely and calmly.

The Legal Aid Society's Community Justice Project conducted a training at Kramer Levin for attorneys and paralegals on October 24 to launch the project in celebration of National Pro Bono Week. Those who attended the training will have the opportunity to partner with The Legal Aid Society to provide KYR presentations to local schools and community groups.



From left to right: Jamie Porco, Jasmina Chuck, Anthony Posada and Victor Dempsey.



Victor and Anthony showing the audience a skit they act out with students at the Know Your Rights Trainings.



Pro Bono Committee

Chris Auguste
Aaron Frankel
Co-chairs

Anna Thea Bridge
Director of
Professional
Development

Jamie Porco
Associate Director
of Professional
Development and
Pro Bono Programs

Randall Allen
Michelle Ben-David
Barry Berke
Dan Berman
Rita Celebrezze
D'Souza

Sarah Hanson
Barry Herzog
Susan Jacquemot
William Johnson
Elena Keil

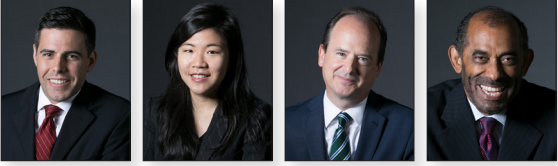
Jennifer Klein
Sam Koch
Michael Korotkin
Darren LaVerne
Hannah Lee
Daniel Lennard
Gil Liu

Laura Milano
Alejandro Ortega
Laurence Pettit
Andrew Pollack
Jacqueline Ryu
Robert Schmidt
Norman Simon

Gary Tarnoff
Jeffrey Taub
Jeff Trachtman
Reyhan Watson

Pro Bono Highlights

KL Blazes Trail for Affordable Housing Finance



Kramer Levin represented HomeOwnership Lending LLC, through its parent company Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB), on a pro bono basis in connection with an innovative \$3,740,000 revolving credit facility that closed on Sept. 20, 2018, in partnership with National Cooperative Bank, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and with generous support from the Robert and Jane Toll Foundation. HomeOwnership Lending has a not-for-profit purpose that offers loans to low-income households purchasing in limited-equity cooperatives. This is in furtherance of UHAB's mission to empower low-income residents to take control of their housing and to enhance communities by creating strong tenant associations and affordable co-op apartments in New York City. The credit facility will significantly increase HomeOwnership Lending's capacity, enabling many more low-income individuals to become homeowners. The Kramer Levin team included Real Estate associate **Randall Allen**, Corporate Finance associate **Sara Hung** and former associate Audrey Kim. Banking and Securitization partner **Laurence Pettit** supervised the matter with the assistance of Corporate partner **Christopher Auguste**.

KL Obtains Pre-Trial Release for Client as Part of the Firm's Bail Reform Project Efforts



Kramer Levin obtained the pre-trial release of an indigent defendant on a fully unsecured bond in Brooklyn Criminal Court as part of the firm's ongoing efforts in the Bail Reform Project in partnership with Brooklyn

Defender Services. The defendant had previously been detained on a \$30,000 bond. Kramer Levin successfully argued that the defendant's lack of prior criminal history, strong character, and community ties and the relative lack of evidence against him should favor his release pending trial on an unsecured bond, which did not require the defendant or his family to pay any money to the court up front. Litigation associate **Alejandro Ortega** represented the defendant. Litigation partner **Darren LaVerne** oversees the Bail Reform Project.

KL Successfully Obtains Permanent Residency Status for Josue Ramirez Castro



Kramer Levin successfully obtained lawful permanent residency status for Josue Ramirez Castro under the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' "Special Immigrant Juvenile Status" program. Several current and

former Kramer Levin individuals have worked on this case since

2014, including former Litigation associates Jennifer Diana, Rachael de Chacon and Benjamin Arrow, current Litigation associate **Alejandro Ortega**, Business Immigration Law Clerk **Melissa Drennan**, and staff assistant Inez Dominguez. Special counsel **Jason Moff** oversaw this matter.



Associate Alejandro Ortega and client Josue Ramirez Castro at Kramer Levin offices.

KL Obtains Name Change for Transgender Client



In July 2018, Employment Associate **Sarah Hanson** successfully obtained a name change for L.P., a transgender client. L.P. was assigned a male gender at birth, but identified as female early in her life. L.P. worked closely with her Kramer Levin team to facilitate her name change and attended court in mid-July to receive her name-change order. L.P. was thrilled with the result and excited to be recognized by the name of her choice.

KL Obtains Asylum for Jamaican Victim of Violence



Despite two misdemeanor convictions, Kramer Levin successfully obtained asylum for Mr. R., a Jamaican, who

contracted HIV after being brutally assaulted simply because he was gay. Mr. R. is now married, living in New York and has successfully completed the written portion of the NYC Fire Department Entrance Exam. Litigation associates **Max Nowak**, **Anna Schoenfelder**, and former associate Alex Traum worked on the matter under the supervision of IP partner **Aaron Frankel**.

KL Successfully Negotiates Lease for Precycle LLC



Introduced through CAMBA, Inc., a Brooklyn-based nonprofit organization that provides social services to New Yorkers in need, Kramer Levin successfully negotiated a lease for Precycle LLC in Brooklyn,

New York. Precycle is scheduled to open in Bushwick this November as a bulk supply grocery and produce store. Modeled off Saratoga Spring's farmer's market, Precycle will sell locally-sourced, farm-to-table produce in a plastic-free environment. Real Estate associates **Daniel Stewart** and **Jacqueline Ryu** worked on the matter under the supervision of Kramer Levin Pro Bono Committee Co-Chair **Chris Auguste**.

KL Files Third Circuit Amicus Brief on Behalf of Mainstream Religious Groups Opposing Foster Care Agency That Refuses to Work with Same-Sex Couples

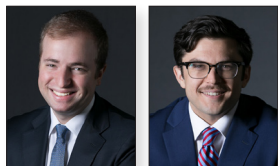


Kramer Levin has filed an amicus brief on behalf of major religious organizations and individual faith leaders in a case now pending before the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit addressing the claimed right of a foster care agency to refuse to certify otherwise qualified same-sex couples as foster parents, notwithstanding antidiscrimination provisions in the agency's contract with the City of Philadelphia.

The Kramer Levin brief, filed in *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia*, documents the growing support among mainstream U.S. religions for fair and equal treatment under the law for LGBT individuals and their families. The brief opposes arguments by the foster care agency that enforcing the antidiscrimination obligations to which it agreed impinges upon its religious liberty.

The Kramer Levin team that drafted the brief includes Litigation partners **Jeffrey Trachtman** and **Norman Simon** and special counsel **Tobias Jacoby** and **Jason Moff**, with assistance from associate **Elise Funke** and paralegal Cedric Comeau.

KL Files an Amicus Curiae Brief on Behalf of Everytown for Gun Safety



On Oct. 29, 2018, Kramer Levin filed an amicus curiae brief in the Florida Supreme Court on behalf of our clients Everytown for Gun Safety and The Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, two of the leading

organizations in the United States devoted to advocating for responsible gun laws and reducing gun violence. Our brief argues that a recent amendment to Florida's Stand Your Ground law violates the separation of powers provisions of Florida's Constitution and is thus unlawful. Those provisions provide that only Florida's Supreme Court may promulgate procedural rules, and such rules may only be repealed by a two-thirds majority of the State Legislature.

Florida's Stand Your Ground statute provides immunity from prosecution to defendants who use force, including deadly force, under certain circumstances, and eliminates the common-law duty to retreat, if reasonably possible, before doing so. The amendment at issue, which was enacted by the State Legislature by a simple majority in order to repeal and replace a procedural rule created by the Florida Supreme Court, shifts the burden to the prosecution to prove, by clear and convincing evidence at the preliminary stages of a case, that a defendant is not entitled to immunity under the statute after the defendant has made a prima

facie case of entitlement. The amendment at issue in this case makes it even more difficult to prosecute violent crime, and is likely to lead to increased violence, including gun violence.

The case is *Love v. State*, No. SC18-747. The Kramer Levin team includes Litigation partner **Darren LaVerne**, associates **Daniel Ketani** and **Timur Tusiray**, and paralegal Cedric Comeau.

Shelby Kearney Interviewed by ABC27 News Highlighting Pop's House/Walk A Mile In My Boots Festival



Kramer Levin's very own Shelby Kearney was recently interviewed by ABC27 News (Harrisburg, PA) regarding the Walk A Mile In My Boots Festival organized by and benefiting Pop's House, a non-profit that offers housing, meals, job and life skills assistance to homeless U.S. veterans.

Inspired by her father, William "Pop" Kearney, Shelby founded Pop's House in 2014, with an aim to address the reentry challenges facing the homeless veteran population.

The Walk A Mile In My Boots festival took place on July 28 in Harrisburg and featured a 5K run/walk, live music and stage performances, and food and craft vendors.

KL Obtains Discharge of a Federal Parent PLUS Loan for Cancer Victim



Special counsel **Susan Jacquemot** represented a 55-year-old mother and cancer victim in connection with her application for the discharge of a federal Parent PLUS loan, which the client had obtained to help pay for her daughter's college education. Based on the supporting medical evidence that

Susan obtained from the client's treating physician, the client was able to obtain a full discharge of her loan on the basis of total and permanent disability.

KL Wins a Contested Child Support Proceeding on Behalf of HerJustice Client Naashia Bettis



Kramer Levin obtained a pro bono victory on behalf of our HerJustice client, Naashia Bettis, in a contested child support proceeding in Manhattan Family Court. After a three-day trial, the court entered a final support order in June in favor of our client, and against the respondent (father to their shared two-year-old child), ordering \$130 in weekly payments, and \$7,335.71 in retroactive payments under the temporary order that was in place when we took on the case. Litigation associates **Erin Klewin**, **Jessica Weigel** and **Ross Peyser** worked on the case, and Litigation partner **Alan Friedman** supervised. Paralegals Pamela Badolato, Jerry Henriquez and Tom Keckeisen assisted.

Congratulations and Welcome to the New Pro Bono Committee Members!



Michelle Ben-David
Litigation Associate



Daniel Lennard
Litigation Associate



Andrew Pollack
Bankruptcy Associate



Jeffrey Taub
Corporate Associate

Upcoming On-Site Clinics — Mark Your Calendars!

NOVEMBER 29, 2018

Legal Services NYC
U-Visa Screening with
Bank of Montreal

MARCH 19, 2019

Legal Services NYC
Full-Scope U-Visa Clinic

APRIL 16, 2019

Community Legal
Services in East Palo
Alto DACA/Asylum
Clinic in the Silicon
Valley Office

Honors and Awards

Kramer Levin Lands in Top 10 for Pro Bono in Vault's 2019 Law Firm Rankings

Vault's 2019 Law Firm Survey named Kramer Levin a Top 10 Best Law Firm for Pro Bono. Vault also named the firm in the top 25 for LGBT Diversity. Vault's ranking of the most prestigious law firms in the country is based on the assessments of lawyers at peer firms.



Kramer Levin Ranks First for Associate Satisfaction and Career Opportunities in 2018 Chambers Associate Survey

Kramer Levin achieved high marks in the 2018 Chambers Associate Survey, which included number one rankings for both Associate Satisfaction and Career Opportunities. The firm also ranked very highly in the Benefits and Lifestyle Survey, Best Firms for Pro Bono and the Diversity Survey.



The annual Chambers Associate Survey is based on associate feedback, with listed firms demonstrating strong performances in those areas.

Kramer Levin Receives Legal Aid Society's 2018 Pro Bono Publico Awards

Kramer Levin received the Legal Aid Society's 2018 Pro Bono Publico Award for "Outstanding Service to the Legal Aid Society and Its Clients." Litigation special counsel **Susan Jacquemot** and former associate Kurt Denk also received awards for providing exceptional legal services to low-income New Yorkers. The award was presented by the Honorable Rolando T. Acosta, the Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division First Department, on Oct. 16, 2018, at The Prince George Ballroom in New York.



If you have a matter, award or honor suitable for inclusion in the next *Pro Bono News*, please contact Jamie Porco in the Professional Development Department at ext. 7529.