

# Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A

BUILDING COMMUNITIES  
ENSURING OPPORTUNITY  
ACHIEVING JUSTICE

FALL 2011



## Returning to Perfection

By Victor Torres, Director, Disability Advocacy Project

IN OCTOBER, 2005 Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A and Cleary Gottlieb Hamilton and Steen agreed to initiate a Pro Bono Social Security project



Liana R. Vitale,  
Associate, Cleary Gottlieb  
Steen & Hamilton LLP

whereby we would train their first year associates to handle Social Security Disability (SSD) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) denials at administrative hearings. The project has been very successful

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Summer Experience as  
an Intern at Brooklyn A

Brooklyn A Summer Fun!



### SAVE THE DATE:

ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP  
AWARDS BENEFIT

November 17, 2011

#### AWARDS

**Sargent Shriver**

*Honoring a legacy of public service*

**Harvey Lawrence,**

*President & Chief Executive Officer*

*Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center*



For more information contact  
Gloria Ramón, 718-487-2328, gramon@bka.org

# Summer Experience as an Intern

with Brooklyn A

By Megan Houston, Community and Economic Development Unit



THIS PAST SUMMER, I was a legal intern at Brooklyn A's Community and Economic Development (CED) Unit, in the East Brooklyn Office. The CED Unit

represents a variety of not-for-profit community groups in need of transactional legal support. One such client is a newly formed not-for-profit environmental organization in Canarsie. During my internship, I helped the

organization develop its corporate governance documents (conflict of interest policy) and apply for federal tax exemption. The CED Unit also supports (i.e., bylaws and conflict of interest policy) and apply for federal tax exemption. The CED Unit also supports not-for-profit affordable housing groups with their real estate transactions. A longtime client of Brooklyn A's is a community group in Cypress Hills, who has an ongoing small homes resale development project. After the group found an eligible purchaser for one of their renovated small homes, I helped prepare and coordinate the documents required for the title closing.

Another facet of the CED Unit is its Green Building Law and Justice Project. One of the Project's goals is to identify issues that may arise when clients seek to implement green building practices, and then recommend ways to mitigate any such issues. For a model contract, I helped clarify sustainable objectives and party responsibilities. As many of Brooklyn A's clients are affordable housing developers, healthcare providers, schools, and community based organizations who are interested in incorporating green building measures into their housing and facility development projects, one of my tasks was to provide a summary of green building laws and best practices. I drafted a green building law memo that highlights the national, state, and local codes, as they relate to energy efficiency standards, and the relevant criteria that optional green building programs may require.

The CED Unit is a team of intelligent, enthusiastic, and very experienced lawyers who are dedicated to their clients and enjoy their profession. It was an honor to work with them.



Recent tour of a modular construction factory based in Brooklyn with Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation.

## Thank you to all our summer volunteers!

Brooklyn A is proud of all their 2011 Summer Volunteers and their accomplishments.

You made this summer a very successful one through your work and dedication.

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**Perfection**

with Cleary winning 100% of all cases referred to them. In 2009 we referred the case of Jane B.\* to Cleary. Jane B. was being treated for a long standing Bi-Polar Disorder that was clearly documented by her psychiatrist. The case was assigned to Liana Vitale who represented Jane B. before an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) who at the time was still new to the bench. Unfortunately, an unfavorable decision was rendered by the judge and Liana Vitale, who had done a great job preparing for the hearing, was crushed by the decision. We immediately decided to appeal to the Appeals Council. In the mean time Jane B. was advised to reapply for SSI disability benefits.

The Appeals Council decided to deny Jane B.'s appeal while at the same time the Social Security Administration denied Jane B.'s second application for SSI. A decision

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was made to appeal the Appeals Council's decision to Federal Court while also requesting a hearing on the SSI denial. The Federal Court appeal resulted in Jane B.'s case getting remanded for a new hearing. Meanwhile, Jane B.'s SSI denial was heard by another ALJ who determined that she was indeed disabled due to the Bi-Polar Disorder. Subsequently, the remanded hearing was held and Liana Vitale submitted evidence to show that Jane B.'s Bi-Polar disorder continued unchanged and that she was receiving SSI as a result of an ALJ decision that found that Jane B.'s Bi-Polar Disorder was disabling under Social Security's rules. This time a favorable decision was issued and Jane B. was awarded her retroactive SSI benefits. Liana Vital not only won Jane B.'s case but restored Cleary's perfect record. Congratulations to both Liana and Jane B.!

*\*The actual name of client has been changed to protect their identity.*

# Brooklyn A Summer Fun!



Annual Staff Outing at the Brooklyn Cyclones.

Thank you to Councilmember Diana Reyna for supporting Brooklyn A!!



Thank you to Joseph Lipofsky, Board Member, for visiting us this summer and talking with our interns about his career as an attorney.



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