

FOUNDATION OF THE MONROE COUNTY BAR TO RECEIVE INAUGURAL NCBF-ALPS FUNDRAISING AWARD

The Foundation of the Monroe County Bar is the recipient of the inaugural NCBF-ALPS Foundation Services Award for Innovations in Fundraising. The award is given annually to a bar foundation that has demonstrated creativity and success in its fundraising programs.

The foundation's project, Telesca Center for Justice, provides easy access to legal services and education for clients, lawyers and the Rochester, New York community. The Center is funded by the Partnership for Equal Justice Campaign, a capital fundraising effort resulting in more than \$1.7 million toward the ultimate goal of \$2 million. The foundation acts as the fiduciary for campaign contributions and will play a major role in disbursement of funds and future grant making to the civil legal services organizations.

The Greater Rochester area is served by four legal services organizations-- Empire Justice Center, Legal Aid Society, Monroe County Legal Assistance Center and Volunteer Legal Services Project -- as well as the MCBA and the Foundation of the Monroe County Bar. Until recently, these entities, known as "Equal Justice Partners," were housed in various offices throughout downtown Rochester, forcing low-income clients to travel to different locations for help or simply to determine which agency could best assist them. Today, the organizations are housed under one roof, in a 10-story office building in the heart of downtown Rochester, convenient to public transportation, the courts and other social service agencies. The Center provides a single point of entry for low-income clients, making legal services more easily accessible and allowing for greater cross-collaboration in meeting their varied needs.

The Equal Justice Partners are realizing substantial savings and cost benefits as a result of collaborative efficiencies such as shared common areas, personnel, purchasing and services. By moving to the Telesca Center for Justice, each partner has benefited from a fixed, below-market rent for the next 15 years. From initial savings alone, it is estimated that each entity will save an amount equal to the annual salary of a staff attorney. This savings will be used to hire additional staff, improve existing programs and services or address new and emerging issues.

The organizations have established an administrative workgroup consisting of office managers, administrators and fiscal and operations personnel who are examining ways to improve and expand the collaboration and sharing of services. The workgroup recently negotiated a reduced rate for a new phone system by utilizing the collective bargaining power of the six Equal Justice Partners. Other shared services being examined include janitorial services, purchasing, information technology, and human resources.

The Monroe County Bar Foundation will receive the award at the Joint Luncheon of the National Conference of Bar Presidents, the National Association of Bar Executives and NCBF, on Friday, February 13, at the Midyear Meeting in Boston.