

Dade Legal Aid

August Newsletter

Dear Friends & Supporters:

As we look back on a summer of service, we are reminded how very fortunate we are to have so many dedicated pro bono attorneys, supporters, and law student interns who helped us provide quality legal services to those who need it most. We are overwhelmed by the numbers of newly recruited attorneys, firms and contributors who have fulfilled their pro bono aspirational goals with Put Something Back! This month's newsletter highlights several of our outstanding students and others who made a difference. Thank you for your continued support and participation in Put Something Back. It doesn't take a lot to make a lasting impact; it just takes you!

With gratitude,

Karen J. Ladis
Executive Director

LEARNING THROUGH SERVICE



Top Row: Valentina Arguelles, Alejandro Machado-Millán, Erin Briley Carlin

Bottom Row: Matthew Rizzo, Yaneli Riancho, Luis Fuentes

This summer, Dade Legal Aid welcomed over two dozen talented interns who are gaining hands-on legal experience while supporting our mission of expanding access to justice. We are excited to introduce some of the interns in our Guardianship & Elder Law and Domestic Violence Departments.

Guardianship & Elder Law Interns

Valentina Arguelles is a rising 2L at St. Thomas University College of Law and a graduate of Florida International University. This summer, she is interning with the Guardianship & Elder Law Department, where she is exploring her interests in guardianship law and intellectual property while learning from Dade Legal Aid's dedicated attorneys.

Alejandro Machado-Millán is a Venezuelan attorney who earned his law degree and LL.M. in Tax Law from Santa María University before completing an LL.M. at Florida International University in 2025. Currently the Immigration Department Manager at Alex Hanna Law and a candidate for admission to the New York Bar, he brings extensive legal experience and passion to the Guardianship & Elder Law team.

Erin Briley Carlin is a rising 3L at St. Thomas University College of Law and earned her bachelor's degree in Political Science from Arkansas State University. She is spending the summer with the Guardianship & Elder Law Department, where she is building practical legal experience while pursuing her interests in estate planning, intellectual property, and transactional law.

Domestic Violence Interns

Matthew Rizzo is a rising 3L at St. Thomas University College of Law and a graduate of Florida International University. Working with the Domestic Violence Division during this summer, he has gained experience with injunction proceedings and advocacy for survivors while continuing to develop his litigation skills.

Luis Fuentes is a rising 2L at St. Thomas University College of Law. During his internship with the Domestic Violence Division, he has observed hearings, assisted with drafting legal motions, and worked alongside dedicated staff attorneys. He is grateful for the mentorship and opportunity to serve the community while growing as a future attorney.

Yaneli Riancho is a rising 2L at the University of Miami School of Law and earned her bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Florida International University. This summer, she is conducting legal research and assisting with domestic violence matters while also gaining courtroom exposure through the Federal Bar Association's Judicial Intern Academy and the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office.

Thank you to our incredible supervising staff attorneys for training and supporting our interns!

Friendly Reminder: Your Annual Pro Bono Commitment

As members of The Florida Bar, attorneys are encouraged to help ensure equal access to justice by fulfilling their annual pro bono commitment and reporting to the Florida Bar. There are two ways to satisfy this professional commitment: through accepting a case or providing 20 hours of volunteer legal service or a \$350 "Buy-in" financial donation to Dade Legal Aid. Every hour volunteered and every dollar donated helps expand access to legal assistance for individuals and families who otherwise could not afford it.

[Take a Pro Bono Case](#)

Click the link above to accept a pre-screened pro bono case through Put Something Back and help provide legal services to those who need them most.

[Make a Donation](#)

Click the link above to support access to justice with a contribution to Dade Legal Aid and help expand legal services throughout our community.

Whether you give your time or make a financial contribution, your support strengthens access to justice in Miami-Dade County. **Thank you for making a difference!**

In Case You Missed It...

- The 16th Annual Getting a Head Start on Pro Bono for Summer Associates was graciously hosted by Hogan Lovells Cadwalader.
- Summer Clinics at the Courthouse are in full swing where we are assisting low-income clients.
- The newly re-named Robert C. Josefsberg Leadership Academy launched this summer.
- Paul Lipton was the featured speaker at Session I that took place at Rumberger/Kirk.

- This year's 34th annual Nuts & Bolts of Family Law Seminar took place virtually and featured top practitioners in the field.
- We held an in-person Wills Workshop featuring Liz Hughes, Esq., of Akerman LLP.
- We presented at the 36th annual Bankruptcy Skills Workshop at UMLaw.
- Saul Ewing welcomed us to speak at the firm on pro bono service.
- Morgan Lewis invited us to the firm to discuss the importance and impact of pro bono service.
- Duane Morris invited us to the firm to speak about pro bono opportunities.
- Our team participated in an in office training featuring Joe Ankus on the topic of Mental Health and Wellness.
- Our staff participated in the Family Court Division Lunch and Learn Sessions on the Role of the GAL and Professionalism in Family cases.
- Executive Director Karen Ladis received the Outstanding Community Service Award presented by the Miami Dade Bar Probate and Guardianship Committee for her dedication and service.
- Senior Supervising Attorney Steven Paulson received the 2026 Criminal/Legal System Professional Award from the Florida Council Against Domestic Violence.
- Staff Attorney Brittany Bonner was reelected to another term as Director of the Miami Dade Bar.
- Joshua D. Silver, Esq., received the Pro Bono Service Award in recognition for his outstanding service.
- Kelly Araujo, Justice Fellow, leaves us at the end of summer to embark on her first year at UPenn Law School. We wish Kelly the best of luck in all of her endeavors!

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