

NEWS RELEASE

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NONPROFIT LEGAL SERVICES AGENCIES JOIN FORCES, RESOURCES United Way support instrumental in collaboration

BUFFALO, N.Y., November 9, 2007 – Through its Not For Profit Resource Center, the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County (UWBEC) has brought together three legal services agencies that are now sharing space, equipment and staff at the Main Seneca Building in Buffalo. This collaboration has resulted in additional convenience for clients as well as administrative savings, although each agency will continue to handle their distinct areas of the law.

The Fund For Alliances, supported by *Community Care* contributions and by the Western New York Foundation, provided \$30,340 in support of the consolidated space arrangement among three agencies:

- Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc.
- Legal Services for the Elderly, Disabled or Disadvantaged of Western New York, Inc.
- Western New York Law Center, Inc.

This financial support enabled the organizations to set up computers, telephone systems and cover moving expenses.

"The United Way promotes and encourages this kind of collaboration, and we're pleased to see how well things have worked in this instance," said Richard Gold, volunteer Not For Profit Resource Center advisory committee chair and Executive Vice President, M & T Bank. "Since these agencies that provide legal services to the poor will be in one building, it will be easier to refer clients to the correct program within the same building. And there are administrative advantages as well. By negotiating for space together, agencies received a better rate per square foot than they would separately."

"This funding is a vital part of our three programs being able to come together to work more efficiently and collaboratively to better serve clients. Thanks to the United Way for all of the time and effort that was put into helping us through this process," said Robert M. Elardo, managing attorney, Volunteer Lawyers Project.

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"This is an exciting effort that will help clients, and we are grateful for the United Way's support. We particularly appreciate all of the time that was spent helping us to clarify the goals of this collaborative effort," said Joseph Kelemen, executive director, Western New York Law Center.

"Due to the small size of each program, we simply could not afford the costs of moving without the assistance of the United Way. We are grateful for this support, and we look forward to their continued guidance as we move forward with this exciting venture," said Karen L. Nicolson, executive director, Legal Services for the Elderly, Disabled or Disadvantaged.

The United Way's Not for Profit Resource Center offers a variety of services and training seminars on topics such as business continuity planning, six sigma quality improvement, digital access learning and group purchasing.

Through the generosity of donors to *Community Care*, United Way invests in results-oriented solutions that address our community's highest priority needs, which makes a lasting difference for children, youth, adults, families and seniors across Erie County. The 2007 *Community Care* campaign is taking place now. For more information on how to donate, please visit www.uwbec.org, or call 887-2626.

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