

Ways to Win BIG in your Career:

Educate, Advocacy, and Awareness

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

–Martin Luther King, Jr.

This issue of NALA *Facts and Findings* focuses on family law. As I prepared my thoughts for the education column in this edition, I pondered on my professional experience regarding family law matters and I thought of human trafficking. What is human trafficking? “According to the Office of Refugee Resettlement¹, “victims of human trafficking are subjected to force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of commercial sex or forced labor.” It exists in rural, suburban, and urban locations. Human trafficking is sometimes known as modern day slavery. “It usually occurs in the United States when people from other nations are brought in illegally to serve as free labor.”² Texas Governor Greg Abbott declared January 2016 as Human Trafficking Awareness month in Texas.³

Since this article will focus on education, awareness, and advocacy, I will take you on my journey surrounding human trafficking. If you recall, I mentioned in a previous Ways to Win Big in Your Paralegal Career article that my most notable *pro bono* service experience thus far occurred when I joined Sabre GLBL Inc. I noticed that the company has a Passport to Freedom sector wherein the organization assists victims of human trafficking and domestic violence. During the fall of 2014, my managing attorney and I discovered ways that the legal team could serve the Passport to Freedom sector and that way was through *pro bono* service.

Education

We coordinated and attended an in-house training CLE hosted by Mosaic Family Services and the Human Rights Initiative of North Texas wherein the Sabre legal team in Southlake were trained on how to apply special immigration relief (including visas) and provide other legal services for human trafficking victims. This was the first step in the team’s own initiative to provide *pro bono* work in support of two local

organizations focused on the issue: the Human Rights Initiative of North Texas and Mosaic Family Services, a non-profit that assists refugees and immigrants.

Advocacy

Thereafter, I quickly got involved by assisting with the planning, coordination, and implementation of Sabre’s first Inaugural *Pro Bono* Legal Advisory Clinic with the Sabre Legal Team in Southlake and Passport to Freedom charity partners, Mosaic Family Services and GRACE (Grapevine Relief and Community Exchange). The inaugural Sabre *pro bono* legal clinic kicked off in January 2015 at GRACE in Grapevine, Texas and it turned out to be a huge success. The legal team members were able to volunteer and assist victims of human trafficking with domestic violence and immigration legal issues. It proved to be a very rewarding experience. The second *pro bono* legal intake clinic took place in July 2015 and it was more successful than the first with a 37% increase in client intake. I am happy to announce that we conducted our third *pro bono* legal clinic on January 21, 2016 and it turned out to be a successful event.

Awareness

As a result of effective *pro bono* service with the Passport to Freedom sector, I along with Tyra Jordan (Sabre Corporate Social Responsibility Manager) was able to represent Sabre during a Human Trafficking Prevention Business Partnership Press Conference at Children At Risk in Houston, Texas. There Children At Risk CEO Dr. Sanborn, Representative Senfronia Thompson and Senator Joan Huffman (authors of the human trafficking bill that was passed in the Texas 84th Legislature), Chelsie Kramer who represented the Texas Association of Business, and a representative from the Office of the Texas Secretary of State collaborated and brought awareness to the issue of human trafficking and agreed to take a stand to combat human trafficking.

I also serve as a volunteer with the National Center for Missing Children and will continue to partner with them to bring awareness and educate communities about child sex trafficking and cyber-bullying in an effort to put an end to this issue which





affects families throughout the United States and the rest of world. It is my hope that you will consider volunteering your time to learn more about issues that affect families and figure out a way to help and serve those families.

Another organization that you might consider learning more about is CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)⁴. I know several paralegals who are CASA volunteers and they truly enjoy serving in this capacity. They are the voices of children who otherwise wouldn't have an opportunity to be heard. I truly believe that greatness is achieved through service. If you ever thought about how you can be great and *Win big* in your career and in life, consider collaborating with your company or another organization to bring awareness and advocacy to issues that affect human rights and families.

¹ See <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/endtrafficking/resource/about-human-trafficking>

² See <http://lawstreetmedia.com/issues/law-and-politics/human-trafficking-alive-united-states/>

³ See <http://gov.texas.gov/news/proclamation/21832>

⁴ See <http://www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPIsE/b.5301295/k.BE9A/Home.htm>

✉ divaesquire57@gmail.com

F&F