

Community Service Projects Mark Young Lawyers Conference Year

by Maya M. Eckstein, 2006–2007 Young Lawyers Conference President



I started this bar year with an article about the Young Lawyers Conference's extensive history of doing good works for the community. This past year was no exception. With the guidance of the YLC board of governors, program chairs and circuit representatives, the YLC:

- Provided free legal services to true American heroes—first responders—through the **Wills for Heroes** program. The conference provided free wills, advance medical directives and powers of attorney to police officers, sheriffs and firefighters in Charlottesville, Richmond and Lynchburg.
- Finalized and distributed the *Juvenile Rights Handbook*. Developed in partnership with the JustChildren program of the Legal Aid Justice Center, the handbook provides persons younger than 18 and their parents information regarding rights and responsibilities in the schools, with the police and in the courts. With grants recently awarded by the American Bar Association and the Virginia Law Foundation, the YLC will translate the handbook into Spanish and increase its distribution.
- Continued to advance the status of women and minorities in the legal profession through its **Minority Pre-Law Conference**, at which the YLC encourages college students to consider law school and the legal profession. The YLC held pre-law conferences in Northern Virginia and Lexington. Two hundred college students attended the programs.
- Expanded its work related to immigration. The **Immigration Outreach Committee** helped educate Virginia's juvenile and domestic relations judges with a panel discussion on special immigrant juvenile (SIJ) status that is afforded to some undocumented and unaccompanied minors who have been abused, abandoned and neglected. The special status gives the juveniles the opportunity of permanent residency. The committee also hosted a continuing legal education program in Hampton Roads on the immigration consequences of criminal convictions, and held a similar program in Northern Virginia that included a mock immigration trial focusing on SIJ.
- Partnered with the State Board of Elections to distribute "Know Your Rights and Responsibilities" voting-rights pamphlets to thousands of voters across the commonwealth.
- Continued to champion the rights of domestic-violence victims. The YLC

Domestic Violence Safety Project distributed 100,000 safety and legal brochures and provided training to lawyers on how to provide pro bono assistance to domestic-violence victims.

- Held the **Oliver Hill/Samuel Tucker Law Institute**, a free, one-week overnight camp for at-risk high-school students to encourage them to enter the legal profession.

These are just a few examples of the many good works done by the members of the Young Lawyers Conference this year. The YLC is proud of its achievements and proud of those who made them happen. We invite you to join us in making next year even more successful.

Visit the Young Lawyers Conference Web site at www.vayounglawyers.org/.