

2008 – Ten Year NMCLA Anniversary Year

January 1, 2008 marked the beginning of the 10th anniversary year of Christian Legal Aid of New Mexico. Events to celebrate this important milestone are planned for the coming year.

It was just ten years ago this spring that the stirrings began for a new Christian legal aid program in Albuquerque which would provide organized, regular service directed primarily to the poor and homeless. It would provide both legal and spiritual help with an evangelistic emphasis to convey the love of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and for the glory of God. The initial test interview effort was suggested and directed by Sherrie Trescott, the then legal aid director of the Young Lawyer division of the Albuquerque Bar Association. She recruited John Robb to experiment with the providing of services to poor and homeless clients of the Health Care for the Homeless, a group with which we had no prior experience.

The original organizing group incorporated and became a board of directors, developed the outlines of the specific program for serving the clients of homeless shelters, recruited and trained the first batch of Christian lawyers and law student

volunteers, entered into agreements for cooperative efforts between the New Mexico Christian Legal Aid (NMCLA) and Noon Day Ministries, Joy Junction and Albuquerque Rescue Mission and opened our doors for service at year end.



1st NMCLA interview, Jim Roach 1998

We pause for a moment this year to celebrate this anniversary. We fondly remember the pioneers who were responsible for founding the organization as we simultaneously pursue our plans for an even more successful future.

Preventative Law and Community Education (PLACE) Reaches Record Heights

PLACE, a cutting edge service, made a vigorous 2008 start at Noon Day Ministries where a total of 833 clients attended three preventative law brief sessions. Sessions inform clients how to keep from getting in trouble with the law, how to avoid legal barriers to preserving marriages and families and how to obtain and retain necessary public benefits. The PLACE program, will be taking its road show to Joy Junction and Albuquerque Rescue Mission in March and April. Approximately 2400 persons within a five month period



PLACE Training at Noon Day

from the fall of 2007 through January of 2008 have attended the sessions. This total exceeds by more than 50% the 1500 total persons planned by the Board of Directors and targeted during the Alliance Defense Fund/Christian Legal Society \$5,000 grant year which extends from the spring of 2007 to the spring of 2008. Moreover, the January 2008 sessions generated a greater interest, participation and response from participants than we had ever encountered before at Noon Day.

Volunteers Honored for Extraordinary Service

All of our volunteers deserve honor and praise for faithful service that makes Christian legal aid possible. Two of those volunteers, Sherrie Trescott and Laura Boyett were singularly honored in January at the annual volunteer appreciation banquet for their enthusiastic contributions.

Sherrie Trescott

Sherrie, received the award from John Robb for the longest serving volunteer in NMCLA. She was also recognized for her extraordinary participation in eight of the nine fall sessions of PLACE in the fall of 2007. These were in addition to her regular assignments during the year. Mr. Robb also referred to her leadership in the test services offered at the Health Care for the Homeless long before active NMCLA volunteer service began.



Sherrie Trescott and Laura Boyett

Laura Boyett

Laura, one of the longest serving volunteers in the program, was honored in a presentation made by Ann Marie Puglisi. Laura was honored her regular service for so many years where she has never missed a beat and for the unbridled enthusiasm and example she has brought to the program and to all of our volunteers. Commuting 20 miles from Los Lunas where she lives and has her office has been no bar to her faithful service.

Congratulations, our grateful thanks and hats off to Sherrie and Laura and to all of our volunteers for their outstanding commitment and service.

2008 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

The annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner held at Landry's Seafood House on January 25, 2008 was a resounding success. Forty two people attended and participated in fun, fellowship, and a wonderful dinner. One of the highlights of the evening was honoring and recognizing two outstanding volunteers, Ms. Sheri Trescott and Ms. Laura Boyett. They were honored for their selfless service to NMCLA clients and tireless work on behalf of the organization.

Ruthie Horn Robbins, Co-Chair of the Board of Directors, Noon Day Ministries, was the featured speaker and delivered an inspiring and heartfelt message. She encouraged and thanked volunteers for their commitment to serving the needy in Albuquerque. Her message provided insight into the legacy of giving established by her father. Ms. Robbins' words were moving and inspired many who attended the event.



Ruthie Horn Robbins and Dr. David Robbins

Another highlight of the evening was the special music. Billy Isidoro, a gifted and talented local singer/songwriter, composed a song specifically for the event. Volunteer Rich Neeley and NMCLA's Coordinator added to the trio. The lyrics to the song could not have been more perfect to capture the spirit in which NMCLA delivers its services.



Volunteers and guests at the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

Website

NMCLA is proud to announce our new website! The site features NMCLA information and our mission. A unique calendar feature gives volunteers access to important dates and schedules. We hope the website will generate interest and inspire potential volunteers to become involved with NMCLA. Visit our site in April, at www.nmchristianlegalaid.com.

Volunteer Training

Volunteer Training is scheduled for April 25, 2008, at the State Bar of New Mexico, 5121 Masthead NE, from 12:00 – 4:00. This training will include information on Homeless Court, working with mentally ill clients, Criminal Law, Metro Court, public benefits, referral resources, and Legal FACS. Lunch will be provided. Please call John Robb at 768-7216 for more information.

Dennis Lihte Retires

On December 31, 2007 Dennis Lihte retired as Executive Director of Noon Day Ministries. He served for 19 years and was a faithful supporter of NMCLA. NMCLA sees approximately 70% of our clients in one-on-one private interviews and more than 60% of the clients receiving PLACE services at Noon Day. We express our grateful thanks for his long-time dedicated service.

Danny Whatley, Noon Day's New Executive Director

Danny Whatley has a long history of service in law enforcement and a strong interest in helping the needy. He begins his journey at Noon Day with a commitment to serve the Lord in ministries to the homeless. Danny has already shown support to NM Christian Legal Aid and PLACE services. Welcome Danny and we look forward to many years of continued success with you and Noon Day.



*Danny Whatley at
Volunteer Appreciation Dinner*

Fellowship Luncheon

On February 15, 2008, Dennis Plummer, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Homelessness Project, met with volunteers and Board members to provide information regarding



*Judge Browning, Jim Roach
Dennis Plummer, Robyn Hoffman*

the Albuquerque Opportunity Center, VetTran and the Respite Program. There are no selection criteria or application process to receive AOC shelter; any man

over the age of 18 who is homeless is eligible to receive services from AOC. To make a reservation: Call the reservation line, 344-4340, daily at 8:30am. Beds are reserved on a first-call, first-served basis. Visit their website: <http://www.abqaoc.org> for more information.



*Lynn Gentry, John Bannerman
Leah Quesada*

Board Elections

At the January 2008 meeting of the Board of Directors, officers were re-elected to the following positions:

Chairman:	John Robb
President:	Jim Roach
Vice President:	Robyn Hoffman
Treasurer:	Jim Wertz
Secretary:	Honorable John Romero
Members:	Jenica Jacobi
	Ann Marie Puglisi

THANK YOU!

Thanks so much for your continuing support of NMCLA. Private donations help us embrace new challenges and opportunities. Recent gifts from donors include:

Tom Montoya
Ellen Skrak
Mitch Jofuku and
Robyn Hoffman