



THE TLTV PROGRAM IS HELPING LIVES

BY ALEED RIVERA, Chair, TLTV Committee



The first veteran's legal clinic was held on August 20.

On August 13, the intake volunteers were trained to be ready to assist the veterans to complete the forms and to determine if the veterans are financially qualified to receive pro-bono legal representation on matters. But even if the veterans were not financially qualified, all of the veterans who had appointments were able to meet with attorneys and receive legal counseling and advice.

The Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans (TLTV) Committee met the Tuesday before to finalize all the preparations. To respect the attorneys' time and manage the program's resources, the chair set up two shifts of five attorneys per shift, plus five attorneys from the committee to serve as facilitators between the clients and the attorneys.

August 20 came with anticipation running high. All the plans had been made, and now was time to see how well the plans functioned. As 2:00 p.m. approached, the attorneys for the first shift were checked in and given information folders, and the law students and Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas (LANWT) personnel were ready to start the intake process. As the clients arrived, the process began. It was refreshing to see how everyone worked together to make sure that we were able to provide the veterans who attended the clinic with the assistance that they needed. By 5:00 p.m., all of the clients had been interviewed, and the first clinic was a success. Plus we learned several lessons about how to make the next one even smoother.

The feedback that we have received

from the veterans who attended the clinic has been very positive. Even those whom we were not able to help beyond the clinic stage were very grateful for the advice that they received and stated that they felt empowered with the information that the attorneys provided. One of the e-mails that we received stated the following: "Y'all have helped countless veterans begin to re-learn responsibility! It is an integral part of our becoming part of society instead of a-part from." This type of feedback just re-affirms our enthusiasm and commitment to this program, and we hope you will join us too.

Volunteers are still needed. To be an intake attorney during the clinic, you must contact the chair, Aleed Rivera, at chair@txltvx.org at least one week prior to the clinic.

More volunteers are especially needed to take pro-bono cases from the clinics. Of the 17 veterans who were interviewed, six of the cases qualified for the pro-bono network. The others were either over-income or in conflict with LANWT, and those cases will be assigned to the In-House TCBA Veteran Pro-Bono Network.

There are two pro-bono networks being set up exclusively for veterans' cases. The main network will be run by LANWT. Cases that are conflicted out or that do not meet LANWT's case-acceptance priorities (such as criminal matters) will be referred to an In-House TCBA Veteran Pro-Bono Network. LANWT and TCBA are working together to meet the needs of 250-300 veterans expected through this program during the current bar year. We expect that close to 80% of the cases will

involve issues of family law, and many will be for non-felony criminal matters.

Your help is still needed as part of either of these pro-bono networks.

The veteran clinics will be held from 2:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. on the third Friday of each month, except for December. The dates for the remaining clinics are October 15, November 19, January 21, February 18, March 18, April 15, May 20, and June 17. The location of the clinics will change, and the volunteers per clinic will be advised of the location.

Sponsorships are available to help defer the costs of each clinic. A sub-committee has mailed letters to local businesses and law firms to request sponsorships. We will appreciate your consideration of this request at whatever level is comfortable to your firm. All help is appreciated. Again, the committee appreciates the efforts of MHMR of Tarrant County in coordinating this program and in enthusiastically supporting the program. Juris Fabrilis generously donated a website -- check out www.txltvx.org--and has furnished the application tool to keep all the records online. We are also on Facebook and Twitter, so everyone can keep up with this worthwhile program. To volunteer, download the form from the TCBA website or from the TLTV website and fax it to 817-335-9238. For more information, contact Pat Leake at the TCBA offices (817-338-0492) or email her at pat@tarrantbar.org.

Our sincere thanks to all of you attorneys, law students and volunteers that made this first clinic possible.

FAMILY COURTS NEED MORE BEARS



Each year TCBA seeks donations of Bears & Books for children who are part of an adoption proceeding at the Family Courts. This year we are starting a little early.

Monthly adoption days handle 25 to 50 cases a month. Stuffed bears or cuddly animals are given to all of the children who are adopted, and other

children who are part of the adoptive families are given books.

To see the glee in the children's eyes as they hold that the stuffed bears or animals is a blessing. You can be a big part of this joy by furnishing the medium-sized, stuffed bears and other animals. Although TCBA's biggest collection even is held when we ask you to put donated, stuffed animals under the trees at the annual Holiday Party, the family courts are running

out of stuffed animals now. So the next time you are in a store and see a cuddly stuffed animal, pick it up, give it a squeeze, and visualize the glee in the eyes of a child. Purchase that toy or some children's books for all ages and drop them in the boxes that will be placed at the Docket Calls and luncheons held between now the Holiday Party on December 9. If you want to make a cash donation, make it payable to the Tarrant County Bar Foundation. **Make a child smile!!**