

**THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY'S JUVENILE RIGHTS PRACTICE
PRO BONO APPELLATE ADOPTION PROJECT**

The Legal Aid Society is seeking *pro bono* partners to help achieve the goal of expediting the adoption process for children in New York City. Chief Judge Judith Kaye, together with Governor Pataki, Mayor Bloomberg, and the Commissioner of the New York City Administration for Children's Services, have initiated "Adoption Now", which has the goal of finalizing thousands of adoptions in New York State, the majority of which involve our clients, foster children in New York City.

A major barrier to achieving this goal is the delay in the appeal of Family Court cases in which children have been freed for adoption. As a result, children are forced to wait years for their new family. The Legal Aid Society, counsel for the vast majority of these children, is seeking *pro bono* counsel to assist in perfecting appeals and ensuring that adoptions go forward.

The *Pro Bono* Appellate Adoption Project, overseen by Gary Solomon, Director of Legal Support and Judith Waksberg, Director of the Juvenile Rights Practice's Appeals Bureau, will accelerate the adoption of hundreds of children. The hallmark of the project is a law firm's senior attorney working closely with Ms. Waksberg on an appeal and subsequently supervising the firm's junior attorneys. In keeping with the goal of expediting these appeals, the *pro bono* attorneys will have approximately a month to prepare the brief. Sample briefs on similar issues will be provided and experienced appellate attorneys will be available for consultation. *Pro bono* counsel also may have the opportunity to follow the child through the adoption process.

As usual in *pro bono* cases, The Legal Aid Society will remain counsel to the children, providing training and mentoring to participating volunteer attorneys.

For further information contact: Marlene Halpern, Supervising Attorney for *Pro Bono*,
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