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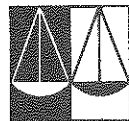
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**PUBLIC INTEREST LAW
CENTER OF PHILADELPHIA**

FEBRUARY 1997

PROGRAM REPORT

A BRIEF REPORT ON 1996

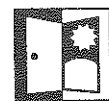
with Our Appreciation

1996 was a year of restoration for the Law Center, and one marked by significant achievements in our advocacy for people with disabilities, for communities victimized by environmental polluters, for Philadelphia's schoolchildren and for victims of abuse and discrimination. We had some staff changes: long time secretaries Rose Lucas and Loraine Ricci left to pursue other opportunities; Barbara Ransom rejoined the firm after serving at the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission; Jon Richter left to attend law school and was replaced by Heather Bendit, an attorney with experience in civil rights litigation, as the Director of Development. With the assistance of Board member Marshall Greenberg, the Board and staff of the Law Center devoted significant time and resources to creating a plan for the long term growth and stability of the firm.

We are proud of the quality legal services we deliver at no fee to our clients. Thanks to a large attorney fee in one of our disabilities cases and a 60% increase in law firm giving, we ended our year in the black. However, our finances are tight; an accumulated deficit created cash flow problems during most of the year and this problem is likely to occur again in 1997. We rely on the generous support of our friends to enable us to achieve our goals. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many friends whose generosity and unwavering commitment to the Law Center allows us to continue improving the lives of others.

- Donald K. Joseph, Chairman of the Board

PROGRAM REPORTS



DISABILITIES RIGHTS

Many thanks to the **Impact Fund** for its \$12,000 grant to support our class action suit filed under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), on behalf of Pennsylvania's children with developmental disabilities. The federal law mandates that children with disabilities be included in regular classrooms and receive an effective education. This generous grant underwrites a portion of the cost to survey the state's delivery of support systems. Additional financial support is needed to cover the entire cost of the this project... This month, Tom Gilhool trained parent advocates from over 26 states at conferences in Florida and Tennessee regarding enforcement of IDEA. At our last Board meeting, Tom discussed the historical basis of IDEA, which was enacted by Congress following a successful class action suit brought by PILCOP in Pennsylvania.

EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION

Applicants for the SEPTA police force must run faster than applicants to the Philadelphia Police Department, the State Police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Secret Service and the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency. This requirement has eliminated nearly all qualified women who have applied to serve as SEPTA police since 1991. In fact, the current SEPTA police force of 227 only includes 11 women. This month, Lisa Rau of Kairys, Rudovsky, Kalman, Epstein and Messing and Michael Churchill of PILCOP filed a class action suit against the Southeast Transportation Authority (SEPTA) alleging that the running requirement discriminates against female applicants. You may be interested to know that one of our clients, Altovise Love, has served as a member of the Philadelphia police force for the last three years; another, Catherine Lanning, has served as a member of University of Pennsylvania's police bicycle patrol for the past year and a half.

PROGRAM REPORTS

Continued



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

For the past three years, the air quality in the Port Richmond section of the City has recorded the highest lead concentration in the nation because of emissions from the Franklin Smelting and Refining facility located there. After years of effort by the Law Center, a settlement agreement was reached this month between Franklin Smelting, the EPA and the Bridesburg Civic Council, represented by the Law Center's Jerry Balter, to reduce the air pollution created by the Franklin Smelting and Refining facility. Under the agreement, Franklin Smelting is required to install emissions control equipment which will reduce lead emissions by 83% and other particulate emissions by 50%.



FAIR HOUSING

Thanks to a generous gift from the **Connelly Foundation**, we will prepare and distribute brochures to area housing counselors explaining the rights of housing consumers protected by the Fair Housing Act...The right of fair housing organizations to bring enforcement actions against property owners who violate fair housing law was challenged last month in a case filed by the Law Center against one of the largest property owners in the Philadelphia area. Although this issue was settled many years ago by the United States Supreme Court, a recent decision in another fair housing case in this District has disturbed this long settled proposition of the law. With the invaluable assistance of our co-counsel at Stradley, Ronon, Stevens & Young, the Law Center has filed an extensive brief on this important issue and the National Fair Housing Alliance filed an amicus brief which supports our position.



EDUCATION PROJECT

Trial began last month in a class action suit filed by rural and poor school districts seeking fair funding. This case is a companion case raising the same issues as our Philadelphia School District Desegregation case. The Supreme Court finally issued a briefing schedule in our case; the issues to be addressed are whether the Commonwealth was properly brought into the action and whether the Commonwealth Court exceeded its authority in ordering the state to direct additional monies to the Philadelphia School District.



POLICE PROJECT

Thanks to the generous support of the **Samuel F. Fels Fund**, Karen Black has begun reaching out to community leaders and community organizations in Philadelphia to learn what their concerns are, about the quality of police services in the city and what their needs are from the police. This work is part of our effort to improve the quality and delivery of police services to this community. Karen is being assisted by Julia Kellison, a second year law student at Temple Law School.

UPCOMING EVENTS

On Thurs., March 27 from 4-6pm, we will sponsor a panel discussion at Temple Law School with the Coalition for Social Justice on the effectiveness of Title VII on workplace discrimination. On Thurs., April 3, we will hold a conference on environmental racism and government's role in siting waste disposal facilities in minority communities; it will be held at the DoubleTree Hotel in Philadelphia from 12-2pm. Later in April, we hold a second education conference, this time focusing on regional cooperation issues.



PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTER OF PHILADELPHIA

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