

Pace Community Law Practice: Using the Law to Do Good



■ (l-r) Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman, Pace University President Stephen Friedman, Pace Law School Dean Michelle Simon

THE HONORABLE Jonathan Lippman, Chief Judge of the State of New York, hailed the Pace Community Law Practice (PCLP) at a celebration held on April 4, 2013. Judge Lippman joined Pace Law School Dean Michelle Simon, Pace University President Stephen Friedman, students, professors, judges and elected officials to mark the first seven months of successful operation of the groundbreaking “legal residency” program.

The PCLP provides affordable, high-quality legal services to residents of Westchester County and the Hudson Valley while also providing the opportunity for recent Pace Law School graduates to sharpen their practical skills under the supervision of an experienced attorney. The graduates serve one-year Fellowships. Designed to be similar to a medical residency program, they also receive training that will equip them to open solo and small practices.

“With millions of New York State residents unable to afford market rates for legal services, the Pace Community Law Practice is exactly the kind of innovative new program that law schools should be creating to help close the ‘justice gap,’” said Judge Lippman, add-

ing, “Pace Law School is on the cutting edge of legal education and public interest lawyering.”

In its first half-year of operation, the Pace Community Law Practice has helped more than 250 clients on a variety of matters including immigration, employment, and family law cases. Working under the supervision of Karin Anderson Ponzer, Fellows handle all aspects of the cases including community outreach.

The clients are charged on a sliding scale basis and the Fellows receive salaries and benefits from Pace Law School, said Jennifer Friedman, executive director. Funding for the PCLP comes from client fees, Pace, as well as grants from private donors and foundations.

“We were honored to receive seed money from the Richard Ottinger Hall dedication campaign,” said Friedman. “Dean Ottinger has been very supportive of our efforts. In so many ways, the Pace Community Law Project fulfills the goal he shared at the dedication of Ottinger Hall—‘to use the law to do good.’”



■ (l-r) PCLP Legal Fellows Craig Relles, Sara Morton, Shari Hochberg, Sarah Hollender

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of legal education and public interest lawyering.”*

—The Honorable Jonathan Lippman, Chief Judge of the State of New York