

ACC STL Chapter Celebrates 2021 National Pro Bono Month

Members volunteer to provide free legal counsel to individuals and families by partnering with local organizations

October is National Pro Bono Month. This annual opportunity is a way to shine a national light on the pro bono work provided by thousands of lawyers, paralegals, and law students.

For ACCSTL, each year members give hundreds of hours of free legal counsel and guidance, and volunteer for community services projects through programs and events arranged by the Pro Bono Committee. Patricia Duft is the 2021 ACC STL Pro Bono Chairperson, and Senior Legal Director, Medtronic.

“Each October, we are reminded of the impact that we can make as attorneys in our community. ACCSTL members consistently step up and show up to provide much needed free legal counsel to underserved communities, families and individual. By giving back to the St. Louis legal community, we gain much more personally than we professionally give to the clients we serve by preserving access to legal services. This is the foundation of our legal framework,” said Duft.

During the past several years, ACCSTL members have worked with many not-for-profits. Some of the partner organizations members have worked with include:

- Legal Services of Eastern Missouri where ACC STL members have addressed a wide variety of legal matters for clients including small business, real estate, and housing issues.
- Veteran’s Estate Clinic with Missouri Attorney General’s Office and Missouri Veterans Commission where veterans and their spouses receive free legal counsel on simple wills, living wills and power of attorney valued at \$35,000 or less.
- Members supported the Missouri Voter Protection Coalition where members provided support to help citizens understand their voting rights.
- Supported Loaves and Fishes, a local St. Louis area food bank.
- Provided school supplies for St. Louis area schools in our annual backpack/school supply drive.

“So many of you have supported us this year during our limited virtual offerings, I am grateful that we continued to have many new volunteers who supported the microenterprise ‘office hours’ where we were able to help 100 local entrepreneurs with their business planning,” said Duft.

If you want to learn more about becoming a member of the Pro Bono committee, or if you would like to volunteer, please contact Sue Wagner at accstl@qabs.com; or visit the ACC STL Pro Bono website page, <https://www.acc.com/chapters-networks/chapters/st-louis/pro-bono-st-louis>.