

# LAWYERS JOURNAL

## Attorneys Against Hunger campaign leaders use new ideas to tackle old challenges

by Tracy Carbasho

It's that time of year again when the legal profession and business community open their hearts and reach into their pockets to help those suffering from hunger in Allegheny County.

The annual Attorneys Against Hunger campaign of the Allegheny County Bar Foundation runs each year from November through March. Campaign Co-Chairs Mary McGinley and William Stang know that topping the more than \$110,000 raised during the last campaign may require some new ideas. In fact, they have been looking for creative ways to involve more lawyers in the fight against hunger.

"Today's difficult economy presents two major challenges. First, there are more people with need and hunger issues," said Stang, managing partner for the Pittsburgh office of Fox Rothschild. "Second, there is a lot of work to be done in order to continue to raise funds at the levels we have in the past."

McGinley, who serves in an of counsel capacity for Meyer, Unkovic & Scott, said it is challenging to continue raising awareness about hunger in the local region and thinking of new ways for members of the ACBA to help. However, steps have already been taken to bring a fresh approach to this campaign.

"We have expanded our committee and thus our foundation for new ideas. Each member of our committee has a meaningful role in the campaign and helps to raise awareness," said McGinley. "This year, we want to focus on dialogue with various hunger agencies and find out what their current needs are and how our contributions can have the most impact with respect to fighting hunger. Our dialogue will be with both the agencies that we have supported in the past, as well as prospective hunger agencies."

Stang said the challenges are the same with this campaign as they have been in previous years, but the state of the economy has created a more difficult environment for raising funds and helping those in need.

He believes the challenges can be partially addressed by asking members of the AAH Committee to increase their number of personal contacts in the legal community. Having a longer list of contacts means an increased likelihood of more donations and additional volunteers to package and distribute the food to area agencies.

McGinley and Stang, both of whom have participated regularly in fundraising and outreach events in previous years, know what it takes to have a successful campaign.

"It requires a hands-on committee, generous support from the bar, and a great staff at the Bar Foundation, all of which

we have," said McGinley. "Every year, I have the same concerns and every year, the local legal community steps up."

Stang added that success is contingent upon awareness of the difficulties that so many families are facing, as well as the ingredients mentioned by McGinley.

"Every year, we reevaluate how we can make the biggest difference in the fight against hunger," he said. "That means looking at the agencies we've given to in the past, as well as new requests. Mary and I will review the amounts we have raised in past years and set a goal for this year. I expect our goal for the coming year will be an increase over last year's amount and I'm cautiously optimistic that we will meet the goal."

The ACBF donates 100 percent of the campaign proceeds to local hunger services organizations. Typically, the benefactors include 16 agencies.

Four outreach events will be held during the campaign, beginning with the annual Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh's Thanksgiving food distribution at the August Wilson Center on Nov. 10. Information about volunteering for upcoming events is available by contacting Lisa DiStefano-Bauer, foundation assistant, at [lbauer@acba.org](mailto:lbauer@acba.org) or 412-402-6681.

"Through these events, the legal community can help organize, distribute or serve food at one of the hunger agencies that we support," said McGinley. "For those who want to take a more active role, we welcome them to join our committee, which is the strategic force behind the campaign. And, of course, monetary contributions are always welcome."

Stang and McGinley thanked the lawyers, volunteers and ACBF representatives who have contributed and volunteered in the past.

"Last year alone, we assisted well over 1,000 families having hunger issues," said Stang. ■

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*-Mary McGinley, Attorneys Against Hunger Co-Chair*