

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Legal Services
of the Hudson Valley

Protecting Rights
Promoting Justice



**COMMUNICATE
ADVOCATE**

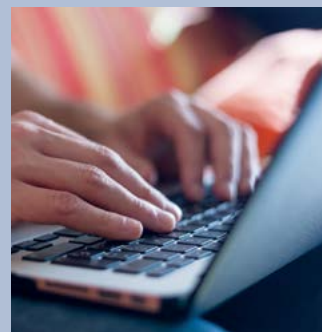
**SUPPORT
INFORM**



**TRANSITION
PIVOT**



EDUCATE





A Message From Our CEO

As I contemplate what I wanted to share with you about 2020 and LSHV, I realized that this is the most excited and hopeful that I have felt in the last 14 or 15 months about where LSHV is and where we are going. Much of the uncertainty that we have all grappled with is cleared up and we finally can see a future beyond the pandemic. We have all struggled in different ways over the last year, and I hope that you can share in my optimism that there is a light at the end of this pandemic. Seeing how LSHV has evolved and navigated through these unprecedented times is remarkable and reinforces that resiliency, creativity, and compassion are baked into our organizational DNA.

I want to take this opportunity to publicly express my gratitude to our staff and board of directors. Specifically, I want to say thank you to the:

- **Legal professionals** – who quickly adapted to working remotely in ways that we could never have envisioned before the pandemic; continued to be the front line for many of our clients; provided invaluable support and ensured that clients could continue to connect to our services;
- **Staff Attorneys** – who figured out how to meet clients virtually; appeared in court remotely; created innovative trainings and KYR videos; stayed client-centered; tried to make sense of confusing and sometimes contradictory administrative and executive orders; met clients in parking lots to sign wills and other documents; and never wavered from their zealous advocacy;
- **Managers (AICs/Supervising Attorneys)** – who took the term “go with the flow” to a whole different level; became experts in PPE and CDC guidance; modeled compassionate leadership in supporting staff while also dealing with their own anxieties and stresses; and rolled up their sleeves to ensure continuity of our services;
- **Intake Staff** – who are the true backbone to LSHV; who picked up the phones every day, never knowing what they would hear; and comforted clients who didn’t know how they could pay their rent and put food on the table;
- **Pro Bono Unit** – who figured out a way to engage and train volunteers remotely; who supported interns by creating a virtual community; and brought new partners to our housing project despite not being able to meet in person;
- **Grants Unit** – who tirelessly put in applications for specialized CARES funding and all other programs; analyzed grant applications to understand requirements; and continued to update Legal Server;
- **Development Department** – who figured out in less than two weeks how to transform an in-person event to a virtual fundraiser; tirelessly researched and submitted applications for funding to private foundations; continuously posted EVERYTHING we were doing on social media; and found creative ways to engage and communicate with our stakeholders;
- **Finance Department** – who ensured that we would be able to apply for a PPP loan as quickly as possible; who then figured, then re-figured, and then re-re-figured so many more times our organization’s budget as we learned about funding; successfully completed a fiscal audit – remotely, and continued to get our bills paid;
- **Human Resources Department** – who became experts on all of the COVID guidance and continually changing employment laws; provided support to all of us who needed to figure out how we were going to handle our own personal struggles and maintain working; figured out how to onboard new staff remotely; and continued to plan supportive programming for all of us;
- **Union Leadership** – for being collaborative partners with management and ensuring that staff feedback was incorporated into LSHV’s decision making about safety protocols and return to work;
- **Inclusion Council** – for fearlessly pushing us to have uncomfortable conversations addressing institutional racism and oppression and the role we can play to break these systems; for enlightening us with articles, videos, and other resources to support us on our journey to becoming a more equitable and inclusive organization; and for sending us a lot of fun facts every month celebrating different cultures;
- **Affinity Group Members** – for taking the time to create safe spaces for colleagues to share struggles, victories, and providing support to each other through these difficult times;
- **The Leadership Team** – I am truly grateful to have the support of such talented, patient, intelligent, compassionate, and creative people to rely on; their steadiness and flexibility in the storm enabled LSHV to make it through to the other side;
- **Donors** – for attending our virtual fundraiser, answering our calls for help and generously supporting our fundraising efforts; and sticking with us through these turbulent times;
- **And last but not least** – the LSHV Board of Directors who gave of their time, talent and resources to ensure the organization not only survived, but thrived, during this crisis and beyond. Working alongside this devoted and compassionate group of individuals is an honor and privilege.

I thank you ALL. I look forward to starting this next chapter in LSHV’s history about how we took the hardship we and our clients experienced and turned them into lessons in how to build a stronger organization and a fairer justice system for all of our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel C. Halperin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rachel C. Halperin
Chief Executive officer

COVID-19 and Beyond

2020 will be forever remembered as the year of COVID-19! When we closed the office and sent our staff home to work remotely in March 2020 we had no idea that we would have to accept this new reality and change the way we provided services to our clients and the community for more than a year! Even after a hybrid return to work in July 2020, remote work remained the norm. In fact, we remained in a hybrid model throughout the region for the first half of 2021 – we plan to return everyone to the office in September 2021!

Timely communication became more important than ever during the pandemic! Everything was changing so quickly we needed to ensure the information we were providing was the most up-to-date available. LSHV embraced social media platforms Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn YouTube and Instagram as a way to share information quickly and timely and to educate the public and our clients about the resources available and how to apply.

Social Media allowed us to host our 2020 Equal Access to Justice Gala virtually at the last minute and present important information through our Know Your Rights Videos for clients and community members to access easily. Our dedicated staff produced 36 Know Your Rights Video in just over a year. We averaged a 23% increase in the number of followers across all of our platforms and our e-News increased its average open rate to 18.9%

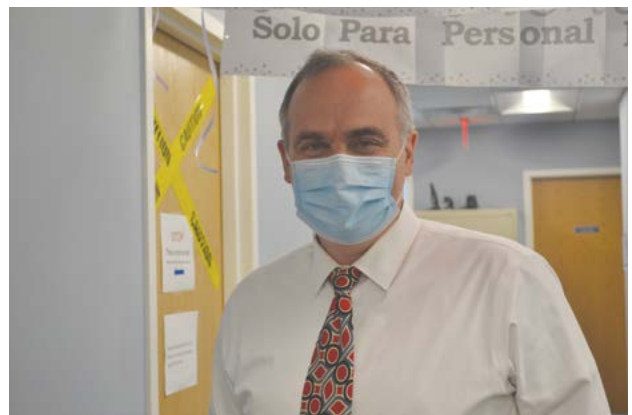
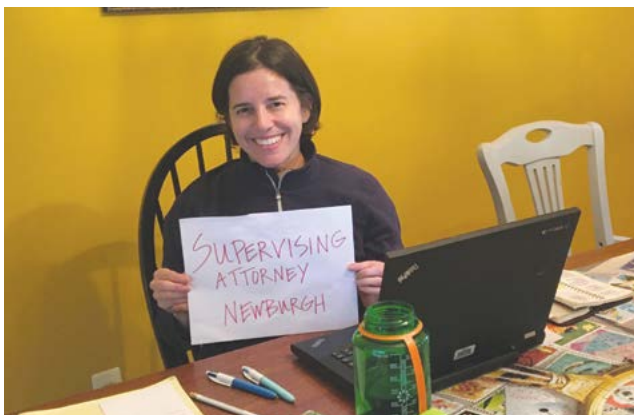
We updated our website with information daily, providing updated rules and court openings and closings throughout the region. We also started the long journey of re-designing our website to function more efficiently – we launched the new site in February 2021.



Not only did LSHV continue to help the people who already qualified for our services, but many more people became eligible as the COVID-19 crisis developed. The courts in New York remained open for emergency cases and LSHV – an essential service provider as per the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) – was on the frontlines advocating for clients in civil matters.

As we prepare for life after the pandemic, we anticipate more residents of the Hudson Valley facing homelessness than ever before with the eviction and foreclosure relief due to expire later this year. The pandemic also resulted in a rise in domestic violence victims being forced to shelter-in-place with their abusers – we anticipate these individuals will seek assistance as they begin to go back to activities outside of the home. And many will continue to need assistance navigating the complex bureaucracies of applying for food stamps, unemployment, and other government assistance.

Ensuring that our neighbors have access to quality civil legal services will be essential in the region's recovery. Access to civil legal aid was, and will continue to be, a lifeline for people facing the loss of basic necessities needed to help mitigate the destruction the pandemic inflicted on marginalized communities.



Board of Directors

LSHV relies on our board of directors for leadership, guidance, networking, fundraising and so much more. We are always grateful to those who devote so much of themselves to our mission and recognize that as volunteers they have many options for their time, treasure and talent and we are extremely fortunate that they chose LSHV as the recipient. Each year, as new members join our ranks, we are sad to see long-time friends step down. We thank those board members who have served LSHV with their commitment and dedication during their terms and beyond.



Al Donnellan, Managing Partner, DelBello Donnellan Weingarten Wise & Wiederkehr, LLP stepped down from LSHV's Board of Directors in April 2021 after 10 years of devoted service. He most recently held the office of President helping to guide and lead the organization and working closely with our former CEO. In addition, he stepped up to help get us through the COVID-19 pandemic and help guide us during this critical year. His generosity, his spirit and his devotion have helped transform LSHV into the organization it is today delivering much needed legal

services to those who simply could not afford an attorney during moments of crisis.

David Posner, McCabe and Mack LLP, retired from LSHV's board of directors in April 2021 after serving as a member and most recently the Vice President of the board. He too, stepped up

extending his tenure for another year while remaining vigilant during COVID. Living and working in Dutchess County, David represented us in the upper counties of the Hudson Valley and was helpful in identifying special needs our clients in those areas were facing and identifying future trends.

Philip Halpern, retired from LSHV's board of directors in 2020 to become a United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York. Phil was a loyal board member and believed that LSHV was doing God's work in representing individuals in civil cases throughout the region who would not otherwise be able to secure legal representation.

Jonathan M. Kozak is a principal with the White Plains, NY office of Jackson Lewis P.C. He left LSHV's board when his term ended after devoting many hours to LSHV's mission. He was an advocate for LSHV throughout the region.

Justin Sher is founder and managing partner of Sher Tremonte LLP and stepped off the board in 2020. Justin was a committed board member during his tenure and always willing to share his knowledge and tap his network on behalf of LSHV.

Sarah Chianese joined the LSHV board as a client board member in 2010 and resigned when she moved out of state. She was always willing to share her insights and ideas at meetings and was a pleasure to work with.

Kenneth Thompson joined LSHV's board in 2008 as a client board member and represented our upper counties. He lived in Kingston and therefore had a unique perspective of life in the area and the changes that were occurring. Ken was a devoted board member attending meetings by video before it was the norm.

Barbara Finkelstein Retired in December

At the end of 2020 we said farewell for now to our long-time CEO Barbara Finkelstein. Barbara was the first woman to lead LSHV and did so for 25 years. The organization grew tremendously under her direction, increasing its footprint to include seven counties in the Hudson Valley, Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, Sullivan, Rockland, Ulster and Orange. She expanded our service



area by opening additional offices in Westchester County, and opening new offices in Spring Valley, Peekskill, Monticello and Goshen and grew the staff to meet the demand for services to 160. She increased the operating budget from \$1 million per year to over \$20 million through fierce

advocacy and public education and awareness campaigns to our local and state law makers.

Confined by COVID restrictions we held two Zoom farewells for Barbara so that everyone could share stories and good wishes as she moved on to the next chapter.

Barbara's legacy lives on. She was a trailblazer in the field of social justice and has inspired and empowered so many during her career. We thank her for her advice, expertise, counsel, knowledge, dedication, advocacy and commitment to the field and mission of LSHV.

[Go to our YouTube Page to view Barbara's Farewell Message.](#)



Helping Clients Through It All

As we look back over the last year, we can't help but recognize the struggles and uncertainty many of our neighbors faced. Our clients included a breast-cancer survivor who fell behind on rent during her medical treatments. Another was a grandmother trying to provide a stable home for her own children as well as her adopted grandchildren, or the single mom who was being evicted by a landlord who was unwilling to make the necessary repairs on a rental unit. Also, a group of residents of a mobile home park where the owner refused to provide potable water and other basic services. Statistics show that tenants are twice as likely to win their cases when they have an attorney because most have legitimate legal defenses that could keep them in their homes if raised in court. Had our clients not had access to our services, they may have lost their cases and ended up in area homeless shelters or on the street.

Mrs. Jones* worked as a home health aide for a client who was hospitalized due to COVID. Unfortunately, that meant Mrs. Jones was unexpectedly laid off. The timing could not have been worse. She and her husband had just adopted their two grandchildren ages 5 and 9 and also had twin 18-year-olds still living at home. At the time of the adoption, the Jones' made the decision to grow their family to include their grandchildren rather than have them placed in foster care. Being with family generally leads to much better outcomes for children in the short and long

run and Mrs. Jones wanted what was best for her children and grandchildren.

The family depended on Mr. Jones to supplement the loss of income by working overtime, but due to the pandemic, overtime was not consistent, and they ultimately fell behind on rent. Mrs. Jones was fearful that her family would become homeless and be out of options. Then the eviction notice was served. This is when Mrs. Jones came to LSHV for assistance and met Staff Attorney Katy E., who quickly determined that the Jones family rent was above their means and worked diligently with our partners at Section 8, The Department of Social Services (DSS) and other local service providers to adjust Mrs. Jones income status, to lower her monthly rent payments and to apply for emergency financial assistance programs. Katy also advocated to have repairs in the client's apartment rectified by the landlord.

In the end, Mrs. Jones received financial assistance to pay her back rent through local grants and she is now paid up to date. Katy was able to negotiate the repairs with the landlord, renegotiate a favorable rent and any fees assigned. With the recertification of her Section 8 voucher, her rent was now affordable, and Mrs. Jones and her family's habitability are now stable.



approximately

535,078

Hudson Valley residents
eligible for our assistance



144



staff members
including

90 attorneys

and

29 paralegals

in 10 offices across
the Hudson Valley



12,142

cases handled

27,380

individuals impacted in
all households served
including



3,206

seniors



10,022

children

9,202

clients served, including

3,027

domestic violence survivors

3,894

persons with disabilities



70% of our
clients are women

Government Grants and Special Funding

New Program Launched Even During A Pandemic

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley became home to Westchester County's first multidisciplinary Family Defense Unit this year. The unit is set up to help parents navigate the challenges of the Child Welfare system.

All families deserve to live together in safety regardless of circumstance. Using a nationally recognized model that combines attorneys, social workers and parent advocates, the Family Defense Unit fights to prevent painful family separations and works to reunite parents and children who have been separated through the court process.

Our goal, in every case possible, is to prevent a child being removed from their parent's custody and care. Additionally, every parent in our program receives a legal check-up and a social work case management plan. That means we will help obtain the legal and social services needed to keep families safe and stable.



Thank you to our partners and funders in this endeavor.
The NYS Office of Indigent Legal Services
Westchester County Department of Social Services
Redlich Horwitz Foundation

Thanks to Our COVID Partners!

In March 2020 like so many others, LSHV had to adapt to a new way of doing business. We quickly adjusted in order to respond to the changing community needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic by expanding or developing our programming, and our technological infrastructure. LSHV:

- created a COVID update link,
- published and continued to update COVID-19 information on our website,
- added two COVID questions to our client prescreening and Intake processes,
- purchased computer equipment and technology to enable staff to work from home,
- adapted software applications to ease document sharing and signing,
- installed Ring at our physical locations to respond to clients, vendors and mail carriers,
- increased cleaning services and PPE in all offices according to NYS guidelines.

None of this would have been possible without the support of our funders who gave us the funds to purchase the equipment and the necessary supplies. Thank You!

Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley with Berkshire
Taconic Community Foundation – Pivoting to Respond

Emergency Food & Shelter Orange County

Emergency Food & Shelter Putnam County

Emergency Food & Shelter Westchester County

Field Hall Foundation

Friedman Family Fund

Gerstner Philanthropies

Kingston Community Development Block Grant COVID

Legal Services Corporation

Community Fund of Bronxville, Eastchester & Tuckahoe

Dyson Foundation

NY Bar Foundation

Office of the Attorney General

Putnam County Savings Bank

St. Faith's House Foundation

United Way of the Dutchess-Orange
Region

Wells Fargo Foundation

Westchester Community Foundation

White Plains Community Development Block Grant COVID

Yonkers Community Development Block Grant COVID



Additionally, several of our donors supported our efforts by converting their dollars to general operating in 2020 to help us through the crisis. And thanks to our devoted Finance Department we also secured a PPP loan to help maintain our workforce.

New Staff and Promotions



Kindra Dunston –
*Development
and Communications
Coordinator*

Kindra started in January 2020 as the Development Assistant out of the White Plains office and was quickly promoted to Development and Communications Coordinator where she manages the private donor database, assists with the private fundraising, and coordinates the external marketing efforts for the organization.



Jefferey Liu – *Reporting
Manager, Grants and
Finance*

Jeffrey grew up in Brooklyn New York and currently lives in Queens.



Patrick Manning - *Staff
Attorney*

Patrick is a Staff Attorney within the Housing, Elder Law, and Public Benefits Units out of the Spring Valley Office. He previously worked as an ADA in both the Crimes Against Children and Special Victims Bureaus at the King's County District Attorney's Office, an Investigative Attorney at the NYS Inspector General's Office, and in civil practice.

Angela Olcese - *Accounts Payable
Specialist*

Angela is an Accounting Specialist at LSHV and manages the integration of the organization's online accounts payable system.



Abigail Pearlman - *Staff
Attorney- CSS, Yonkers*

Abigail is the Community Service Society (CSS) Attorney in the Yonkers office. All of the clients she serves have some sort of mental illness. Abigail interned for LSHV in the White Plains office a summer and is so happy to be back working at LSHV.



Barbara Reilly - *Staff
Attorney*

Barbara is a General Practice Staff Attorney in the Mt. Vernon Office. Prior to LSHV, she worked at a Civil Defense firm where her focus was on general liability.



Michelle Sagiv - *Staff
Attorney, Housing*

Michelle is a Housing Staff Attorney in the Mt. Vernon Office. Prior to LSHV, Michelle worked in family law in Washington D.C. and volunteered for a non-profit organization providing assistance on public benefits and immigration issues.

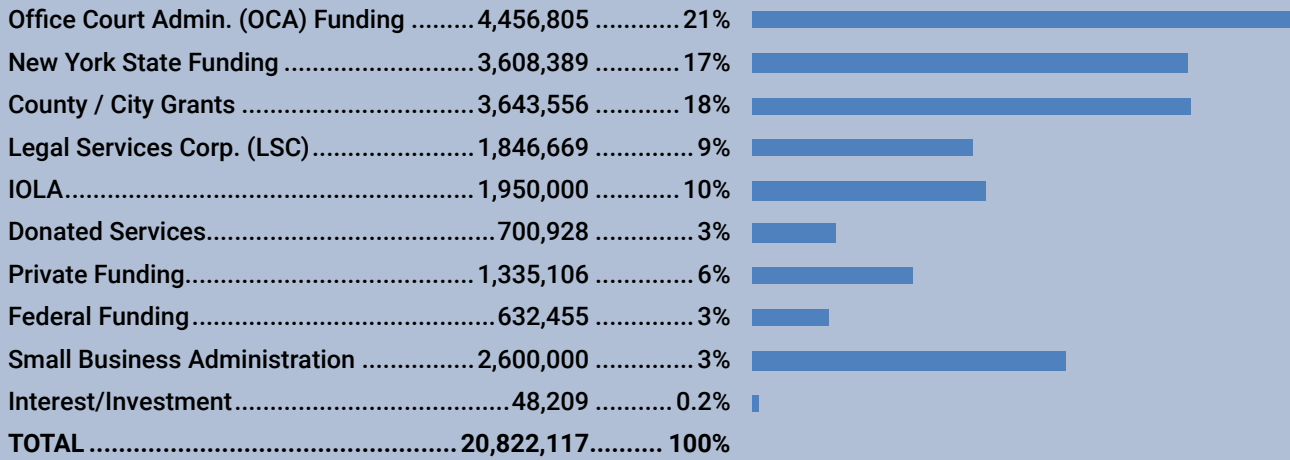


Victoria Wagnerman -
Staff Attorney, Housing

Victoria is a Housing Staff Attorney in the Yonkers Office. Prior to LSHV, she was an Assistant Public Defender at the Dutchess County Public Defender's office. She handled hundreds of criminal cases ranging from low level violations and misdemeanors up to and including major felonies.

Financials

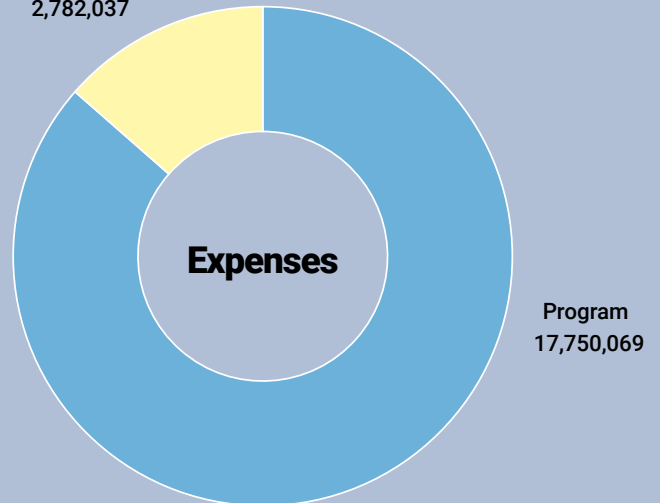
Legal Services of the Hudson Valley 2020 Revenue



Expenses

Program Expenses	17,750,070
Core Mission Support	2,782,037
Total	17,750,070

Core Mission Support *
2,782,037



Note: investment return includes the unrealized stock loss and expenses

This statement covers both Legal Services of the Hudson Valley and its affiliate, Hudson Valley Justice Center.

For a copy of our audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2020, please visit our website or contact us at 914-949-1305 ext. 174.

*Management, General Admin, and Fundraising

View LSHV's full Charitable Solicitation Disclosure Statement at: www.lshv.org/get-involved/

Thank You to Our 2020 Supporters!

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley relies on the generosity of individuals, foundations, corporations, and our local community partners to fulfill our mission of equal access to justice for everyone. The following list includes those who have supported us during the calendar year 2020. Names have been listed alphabetically in categories by cumulative giving for the year. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy and the integrity of this list, but we may have missed something. We apologize for any mistakes that may be present – please let us know if you see something amiss by emailing ebannerman@lshv.org.

\$100,000 or more

The Dyson Foundation

\$75,000 to \$99,999

Redlich Horwitz Foundation

\$50,000 to \$74,999

Gerstner Philanthropies

PepsiCo, Inc. / Charles Biener

Westchester Community Foundation



\$25,000 to 49,999

Anonymous Donor (2)

MBIA Foundation

David and Katherine Moore Family Foundation

United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region

Westchester County Bar Foundation

\$10,000 to \$24,999

Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation

Boies Schiller Flexner LLP / William Marsillo

Louis R. Cappelli Foundation, Inc.

The Thomas and Agnes Carvel Foundation

Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley

The Community Fund of

Bronxville, Eastchester, Tuckahoe, Inc.



DeBello Donnellan Weingarten Wise &

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Sidney & Linda Rosdeitcher

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Field Hall Foundation

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People's United Community Foundation

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PCSB Foundation

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Jane Sovern

United Way of Ulster County

Watson Services Inc.

\$2,500 to \$4,999

Eli Basch

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Jeremiah Frei-Pearson

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\$1,000 to \$2,499

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 Scalise & Hamilton LLP
 Judith Stern
 Ulster Savings Bank
 United HealthCare Services, Inc.
 Walsh & Amicucci LLP
 Steven Wasserman & Rachel Korn
 Wasserman
 Clifford Weber
 White Plains Hospital
 Ralph Wood

\$250 to \$499

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 Daniel Avitabile
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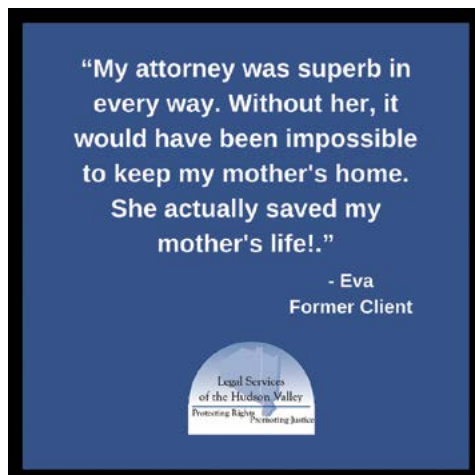
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\$249 and under

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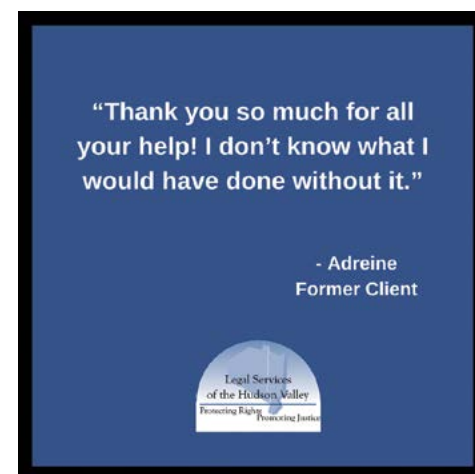
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 David Badtke & Josanna Berkow
 Jacalyn Barnett
 Riley Batman
 Dawn Bennett Ladenheim & Mitchell Ladenheim
 Anne & Richard Bentzen
 June Besek
 Joseph Bial
 Lisa Bluestein
 Lurn Breslow
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 Maureen Brierton
 Collette Briody
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 Lindsey Clark
 Nolly Climes
 Valeria Corral
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 Maureen Crush
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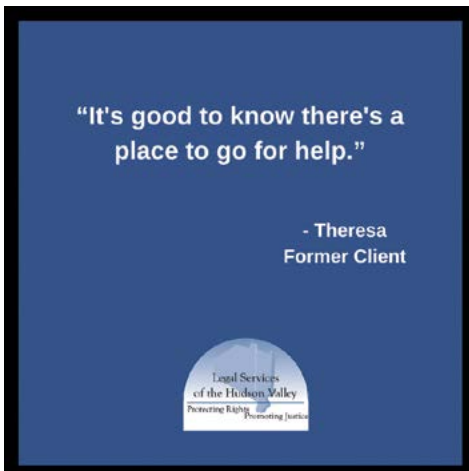
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