The phones light up just before 9AM. The very first call is from a young mother on the Eastern Shore who has left her abusive husband and desperately needs a divorce. Michelle, MVLS' veteran Pro Bono Program Manager, gathers the important facts - they have been separated for over a year and despite working two jobs, she's struggling to support her family...
Notwithstanding budget cuts, increased demands for service and an economy that didn’t improve, MVLS volunteers and donors made all of the difference in meeting the needs of Marylanders who were unable to afford legal representation last year. To be specific, 676 MVLS volunteers helped 3,741 Marylanders (whose total household size exceeded 9,700 people) in cases that made real the effects of unemployment, lack of healthcare and family discord in our clients’ lives. Our volunteers helped these families navigate the complexities of Chapter 7 bankruptcy proceedings, contested custody cases, foreclosure and landlord-tenant proceedings to name just a few.

The three clients profiled in this report are representative of the challenging cases our volunteers accept and their willingness to tackle difficult and time consuming cases – without compensation.

As has been widely publicized, all legal services providers funded by Maryland Legal Services Corporation were cut 5% in 2012, and much deeper cuts are likely next year if the Maryland General Assembly eliminates court filing fee surcharges that support legal services. At the federal level, the Legal Services Corporation, which funds legal aid organizations nationwide, announced that budget cuts will result in legal aid staffing cuts of 8% in 2012. With fewer legal aid lawyers, the role of the private bar in bridging the projected gap in services will be even more important.

To ensure that MVLS is well-positioned to respond to the expected increase in demand for legal services, but without additional revenue, the MVLS board and leadership team spent the past year evaluating our programs for impact, alignment with our mission and sustainability. As a result, MVLS support of certain non-core programs will end and these programs will be transitioned to other organizations. Our pro bono mission and core program, however, will continue and expand as it has for over 30 years.

The MVLS board and staff are committed to meeting the growing need of low and moderate income Marylanders for legal services now and in the coming years, despite state and federal budget cuts. We are confident we will be able to do this because of our strong volunteer lawyer panel of over 3,000 lawyers and the financial support of many hundreds of donors.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Sullivan
Executive Director

Lawrence D. Coppel
Board President
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At 10AM, the state’s largest pro bono legal services organization is humming like a beehive. While paralegals answer frantic calls, three law student interns are scrambling to prepare case files for volunteer lawyers. Down the hall, Richard, MVLS Deputy Director, reviews client case files to make sure they meet guidelines, handles volunteer attorney requests, and plans training sessions for our volunteer panel of over 3,000 lawyers.

Total number of people impacted by MVLS services - 9,751

Just before 12PM, the paralegals brace for the lunchtime rush when many of Maryland’s “working poor” find time during their lunch break to call MVLS about filing Chapter 7 bankruptcy, preventing foreclosure, or dealing with a tax issue.

At 1:00PM, there is silence. Just as quickly as the phones started ringing four hours earlier, client intake stops for the day. Over a short four hours, our paralegals and interns answered 200 calls. Each caller was in crisis. Each story was compelling. Although many callers were referred to other human services providers, many others qualified for MVLS services. They experience relief, as well as peace of mind, knowing an MVLS volunteer has agreed to represent them, free of charge.

This is pro bono in Maryland. This is MVLS.
ABOUT MVLS

The mission of MVLS is to provide quality pro bono legal services to Maryland’s working poor. Founded in 1981, MVLS has 3,700 attorneys on its volunteer panel who have accepted over 73,000 pro bono cases for low-income Marylanders. Experienced volunteer attorneys are drawn from every sector of Maryland’s legal community and include partners in the largest law firms, solo practitioners, corporate counsel and government attorneys.

MVLS SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Adult Protective Services and Guardianship Review Board Project (APGRB)
MVLS represents 300 Baltimore City indigent adults under public guardianship at review hearings as well as alleged disabled adults in emergency guardianship hearings.

Community Development Project (CDP)
The Community Development Project matches nonprofits that serve low-income communities with volunteer lawyers who help with transactional legal needs.

Debtor Assistance Project (DAP Clinic)
The Debtor Assistance Project provides pro se debtors a half-hour free consultation with an experienced bankruptcy attorney at the U.S. Bankruptcy Courts in Baltimore and Greenbelt.

Foreclosure Prevention Pro Bono Project
MVLS has a full-time housing counselor on staff to help distressed homeowners in Maryland facing foreclosure.

Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC)
The Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic provides pro bono legal assistance to low-income Marylanders with tax issues, including denial of the Earned Income Tax Credit, audits, innocent spouse relief, filing back taxes, and setting up payment plans.

Project HEAL (Health, Education, Advocacy, and Law)
Project HEAL is a medical-legal partnership between MVLS, The Johns Hopkins Children’s Center, and Kennedy Krieger Institute. Our lawyers are part of an interdisciplinary team that includes physicians, nurses, social workers and other health care providers.

Reduced-Fee Family Law Project (Judicare)
The Judicare Project is a reduced fee program that provides free legal services to clients who otherwise would be unable to afford representation in highly contested custody and family law cases.

Washington County Courthouse Clinic
Experienced family law attorneys provide free advice and other services in a clinic setting to low-income litigants at the Family Law Self-Help Clinic in the Circuit Court of Washington County.
“We were nervous because we didn’t know what was going to happen at first. But Mr. Lano was on top of everything. He reassured me and talked me through each step, explaining what could happen, both positive and negative. He was awesome. And the outcome was perfect.”
Keira Patterson-Rice was going to lose her home. Her husband had been laid off and they weren’t able to keep up with their mortgage payments. The lender had already filed for foreclosure in circuit court, so the result seemed inevitable—until MVLS volunteer attorney James Lano accepted the case pro bono. After reviewing their file, he discovered that the lender denied her request for a loan modification under HAMP (President Obama’s loan modification program) based on inaccurate information. Contrary to the lender’s assertion, the second lienholder, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (MDHCD), had not refused to cooperate during the modification process. In fact, there was no record of the lender ever contacting the MDHCD in the first place. Attorney Lano’s intervention exposed the lender’s awkward position. After months of run-around, the lender not only granted Ms. Rice a full loan modification under HAMP, but it also gave her a principal reduction of approximately $80,000 spread out over three years—a bonus from the lender, no doubt to avoid further legal action.
Unfair Debt Collection
Case Stopped

Ms. Laura Phillips, 92 years old and recently widowed, remains independent and lives on her own. Because seniors often are targets for the unscrupulous, her children have instructed her not to answer the door to strangers, and if she doesn’t recognize the name on caller ID, not to answer the phone. So the arrival of a court summons in the mail one day, demanding payment of a $4,000 debt she believed she’d paid off two years ago, came as an unwelcome shock to Ms. Phillips. As often happens, being on the receiving end of a law suit leaves people confused and anxious. Even Ms. Phillips’ daughter, a retired business teacher, wasn’t sure what to do. Fortunately, she knew one of her former students, Alicia Wilson, worked as an associate at Gordon Feinblatt LLC, a respected Baltimore law firm. Ms. Wilson, an active MVLS volunteer, agreed to represent Ms. Phillips through MVLS. She promptly filed a notice of intention to defend the suit. After investigating the debt buyer’s claim, she noticed serious inconsistencies in the amount claimed and the records the debt buyer produced to support its demand. Added to the document mess, Ms. Phillips’ never deviated from her assertion that the debt was paid in full. Armed with the facts, Ms. Wilson called the debt buyer’s attorney to see if they could resolve the matter. Opposing counsel was not easily persuaded, but after several negotiation sessions over a six week period, Ms. Wilson prevailed and the debt buyer dismissed the claim with prejudice.
Laura P. Byrd, Ms. Phillips’ daughter said she was relieved by Ms. Wilson’s fast resolution of her mother’s case, noting “Alicia did a marvelous job for us, and I don’t know what we would have done without MVLS.”
“Our case was very tough but Ms. Mays is a fighter. She communicated well not only with us but with the other attorneys and judges. She knows her stuff and stands her ground and I love that about her.”
Sandra Ferguson loves her grandchildren, Makayla and Aminah, her daughter’s children who she’s raised for most of their lives. Her mission in life was to protect them from their neglectful, unstable, and sometimes abusive parents. Legal custody had never been an issue with the parents, they just weren’t interested in the girls. But when they discovered a possible financial advantage in having legal custody, Ms. Ferguson found herself in the middle of an ugly and prolonged custody battle. Unable to continue to pay her first lawyer, she came to MVLS seeking help. MVLS intake paralegals knew the right lawyer to call in a custody case like hers and connected her with MVLS volunteer Susan Mays. Mays took over the case and accelerated the process. In less than a year, Ms. Ferguson was granted custody of her grandchildren and the parents no longer could challenge Ms. Ferguson.
**Volunteer of the Year**

**YOLLETTE S. ATKINSON**

Yollette’s commitment to pro bono work sets a high bar for others. She is the definition of going ‘above and beyond.’ Last year alone, Yollette accepted 16 pro bono cases from MVLS. The variety of cases she’s willing to accept is remarkable and includes family law, bankruptcy, foreclosure, name change, and tax controversy. Furthermore, she exponentially expanded her impact on pro bono legal services by mentoring three other volunteer lawyers this year.

**Law Firm of the Year**

**GROSSBART, PORTNEY & ROSENBERG**

At Grossbart, Portney & Rosenberg, a consumer debt and bankruptcy firm, pro bono is a team effort. Robert Grossbart is a prolific volunteer who regularly accepts foreclosure and bankruptcy cases, instructs other volunteers at consumer bankruptcy trainings, and mentors individual volunteer lawyers. His partner, David Portney, also accepts pro bono cases from MVLS as well as volunteering regularly for the Debtors Assistance Project at the U.S. Bankruptcy Court. Since its founding in 1989, the firm has helped thousands of people regain their financial footing.

**MVLS Partnership Award**

**FRANK E. TURNEY**

One of MVLS’ most dedicated volunteers, Frank, a solo practitioner, has represented 54 bankruptcy clients since joining our panel in 1999. His unwavering commitment to the underserved was illustrated this year with the culmination of a three-year litigation battle on behalf of an MVLS client with disabilities. Frank achieved a remarkable outcome for our client in federal bankruptcy court by persuading the court to discharge over $300,000 in student loan debt as part of her Chapter 7 bankruptcy case. Frank’s precedent-setting achievement makes a unique contribution to bankruptcy law that will help future bankruptcy petitioners with disabilities.

**Ten-Year Volunteer Award**

We are pleased to announce two recipients of our Ten-Year Volunteer Award. This award acknowledges those exceptional volunteers who have accepted at least one MVLS pro bono or reduced-fee case every year for ten consecutive years. Our FY 2012 Ten-Year Volunteer Award recipients are:

**SUSAN MAYS**, Anne Arundel County

**JASON C. RIDGELL**, Howard County
Volunteer lawyers are the engine that runs MVLS. Without them, our clients would have to face the legal system alone. And so we say, “Thank you!” to all the volunteers whose names you see below. We also thank our dedicated volunteers who continued to work on pro bono and reduced fee cases from prior years.

We are proud to report that in FY 2012, 676 volunteer lawyers donated 13,144 billable hours, valued at over $3.9 million, representing MVLS clients. Listed below are the names of MVLS volunteers who accepted a new case between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012. Volunteers are listed by the county of their primary office. If the volunteer accepted more than one case it is noted in parenthesis.

**ANN ARUNDEL**

Mary Albrecht-Jordan (2)
Nathan Baker (2)
Randi K. Bocanegra (2)
Elena Boisvert (4)
Christopher P. Brown
Holland Brownley (13)
Lisa Buckner (2)
Michael Canet (20)
Zakia Y. Chandler (2)
Jeremiah Jacob Chiappelli (2)
Walter S.B. Childs (2)
Cynthia Clark
Linda T. Cox
Pamela Dement-Carpenter (5)
Alan Engel
Jonathan Gladstone (3)
John Gordon (2)
Anthony Gorski (2)
Edward D. Groh (2)
Garland Hall
Monica Hall
Aisha Hilliard (2)
Suzanne Houle
Alan J. Hyatt
Kim Y. Johnson
M. Christine Joyce
Bernard Kennedy (8)
Michael W. Kennedy (7)
Darshan P. Kharod (2)
Joseph Laumann (7)
Ron Marryott
Susan Mayes (2)
Saul McCormick
Timothy Mummert (6)
Matthew Olson (4)
Allen Paltell
Stacey Ragan (2)
David Ruben (5)
James Sauer (4)
Donna Schaeffer
Anthony I. Butler (6)
David Cahn
Shawn Carter (48)
Brian Chappell (2)
Maria Elena Chavez-Ruark (2)
Mary Claire Cheeshire
Caroline D. Cisarco (4)
Robert Clark
Thomas Coyle (2)
David W. Cohen
J. Allan Cohen
Robert D. Cole
Lister Collazo-Dingle (2)
Natalie T. Collins (9)
Sarah Conkwright
Delores Cooke (2)
MyEsha Craddock (4)
Brian Crepeau
Patrick G. Cullen (5)
Dennis E. Cuomo
H. Scott Curtis
Christopher Dahl
Kenneth Davies (28)
Cendoria Y. Dean
Christopher P. Dean (2)
Gerardine Delambo (10)
Rudolph DeMeo (6)
Deborah Devan
Philip F. Diamond
Michelle Dickinson
A. Donald C. Discepolo (3)
Mario V. Dispenza (3)
Adrienne N. Dixon (2)
Mark Dopkin
John H. Doud
Sondra Douglas
Ronald J. Drescher (2)
Neil Dubovsky
Sheila Durant (29)
Carl E. Eastwick
Jonathan Eisner (2)
Lon Engel
Martina Evans
Jude Ezeala (12)
Matthew Fader
John T. Faulkingham
Dana Fiduzzo
Linda A. Fitzpatrick (2)
Andrew Fontanella (9)
John Fox
Dale Garbutt (2)
Matthew D. Garcia
Gregory Garrett
Morris L. Garten (2)
Jerome Geraghty
Francesca Gibbs
Michele Gilman
Sally Gold (2)
Sandra Goldthorpe
Bruce Goodman
Eric Gordon (7)
Kristy N. Grace (5)
Anika Griffith-Zubar
Ann Grillo (2)
Seth Groman
Robert Grossbart (26)
Benjamin Grossman
Jeston Hamer
Roanne Handler
Clifford Hardwick
Constance Hare (10)
Tatasha D. Harris (5)
Daniel Hatcher
Donald Hecht
Camille M. Henley
Kristin Herber (2)
L. Stephen Hess
Sandra Holmes
Jonathan Hoover
Catherine K. Hopkin
Robin M. Hough (2)
Lydia Hu
Peter C. Ismay (2)
David Jackson
Kendra Randall Julivet
Venroy July
Daniel Katz
Stephen P. Kauffman
Mary T. Keating (2)
Walter Kirtman
Susan Kirwan
Marc Kitvitz (6)
Susan Klein (5)
Frederick L. Kohl
Art J. Kodeck (3)
Jill A. Kolodner (7)
Alan Kreshtool (3)
Jude Ezeala (12)
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Art J. Kodeck (3)
Jill A. Kolodner (7)
Alan Kreshtool (3)
Jude Ezeala (12)
2012 MVLS Volunteers

Lori Simpson (4)
Erika F. Daneman Slater (3)
Edward C. Stedige
Sharon Snyder (2)
David Solan (2)
David Sommer
Yolanda Sonnier
Bruce C. Spizer
Mark Stanley
Aryeh Stein
Bobbie Steyer
Mattheau J.W. Stout (2)
Victoria Bulerzyski (6)
Steven Sullivan
Brad Swallow (16)
Bryon Szojchet (5)
Rebecca Tabb
Lewis J. Taylor
James Temple (6)
Debra Thomas (2)
Elva E. Tillman (4)
Paul J. Tortora
Shauntee Curry Trye
Erick Tyrone
Nathan Vaccaro
Thomas Valkenat (2)
Max Van Orden (2)
Doris Green Walker (5)
Irving Walker (8)
Roland Walker
Diana M. Wang
Deborah Warner
Michael Wasicko
Laurie M. Wasserman (2)
Benjamin Whetzel
Erica White (8)
James Wiggins (2)
Steven Wilder (5)
Romaine N. Williams
Alicia L. Wilson (2)
Edward Zamarin (3)
Joseph Zauner (2)
Danielle Zoller
Alan P. Zuberberg (2)

BALTIMORE COUNTY
Dana Adams
Kathleen Adcock (2)
Kelly Albright (2)
Jennifer A. Anderson (2)
Marc Appel
Shakymunire Arati (7)
John A Austin (2)
Stuart C. Axilbund
Andrew Bailey
Charles J. Balint (2)
Tammal Banton
C. Stephen Basinger
Anne Therese Bechamps
Susan Bell
Aaron Besser
Alan Billian
Christina Billiet
Alan Bloom
Toni Boettcher
John K. Burkhardt (10)
Alexander H. Bushel (3)
Karen Byers (2)
Bradford G.Y. Carney
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Howard L. Sollins & Barbara M. Resnick Family Fund
Jacobs & Barney
Marlow & Wyatt
Maryland Psychiatric Partners LLC
Maryland Public Interest Law Project
MECU
Michaels Title & Escrow, LLC
Morton & Sophia Macht Foundation
Nathans & Biddle LLP
PNC Foundation Matching Gift Program
Royston, Mueller, McLean & Reid, LLP
Shawe & Rosenthal, LLP
The Law Office of Laura Penn Stanley
The Law Offices of E. David Hoskins, LLC

GRANTS

Internal Revenue Service
Legal Aid Bureau, Inc.
Maryland Legal Services Corporation
Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
Maryland Department of Human Resources
Washington County Circuit Court

IN-KIND

About Faces Day Spa & Salon
American Visionary Arts Museum
Annapolis Marriott Waterfront
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
Bassignani Winery
Bertha’s ‘Eat Bertha’s Mussels’
Boordy Vineyards
Brick Bodies
Caroline D. Ciracolo
Carroll County Farm Museum
CenterStage
Cheapeake Wine Company
Contemporary Museum
Geppi’s Entertainment Museum
Gordon Feinblatt LLC
Gretta Blatner
Harbor Magic Hotels
Hope Tipton
Hotel Monaco Baltimore
Innovative Gourmet
Johnny Dee’s Lounge
Kerry D. Staton
Let’s Dish
Maryland Jockey Club
Maryland Science Center
Meadow Mill Athletic Club
Medieval Times Dinner & Tournament
Michael S. Cleveenger
Newseum
Honorable Pamela J. White
Papermoon Diner
Port Discovery
Rich Riding Instruction
Rosenberg Martin Greenberg, LLP
Sports Legends Museum at Camden Yards
The Brewer’s Art
The Capitol Grille Baltimore
The Charles Theatre
The Reginald F. Lewis Museum
The Walters Art Museum
Urban Pirates
Woodhall Vineyard and Wine Cellars
Wyndham Baltimore
Peabody Court

MEDIA SPONSORS

The Daily Record

Every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of this listing. If we have inadvertently omitted your name or listed it incorrectly, please accept our apologies and notify us of the error.

Types of MVLS Cases

Administration of Small Estates
Adoption
Adult Guardianship
Advance Directives
Bankruptcy (Chapter 7)
Child Custody
Consumer Disputes
Criminal Record Expungement
Debt Collection
Deed Changes
Denial of Long Term Care
Divorce
Foreclosure Defense
Identity Theft
Landlord/Tenant Conflicts
Name Changes
Nonprofit Transactional Matters
Power of Attorney
Professional License Revocation
Public Benefits Denial
School Suspension
Tax Disputes
Wills
FY 2012 Closed Case Highlights

Cases by Region:
- Western Maryland - 21%
- Southern Maryland & DC Region - 7%
- Eastern Shore - 4%
- Central Maryland - 68%

Cases by Type:
- Consumer & Bankruptcy - 18%
- Education - 10%
- Tax & Income Maintenance - 6%
- Miscellaneous - 5%
- Family Law - 40%
- Housing & Foreclosure Prevention - 21%

FY 2012 Financial Highlights

Income: $1,749,050
- Contributions and Foundations: 28%
- Benefit: 8%
- Government Grants: 64%

Expenses: $1,741,026
- Management & General: 7%
- Fundraising: 7%
- Program: 86%

Numbers Matter

3,741 Total Closed Cases in FY 2012 (9,751 Marylanders helped)
676 Lawyers and professionals who helped MVLS clients
13,144 Hours volunteer lawyers spent representing MVLS clients
$3.9 Total value of volunteer hours (in millions)
286 New volunteer lawyers who joined our panel

368 Pro se petitioners who received advice at the Debtor’s Assistance Project at the US Bankruptcy Court in Baltimore
634 Children and families who received legal assistance through Project HEAL at the Johns Hopkins Children’s Center and the Kennedy Krieger Institute
625 Pro Se Litigants who received legal assistance at the Washington County Courthouse Family Law Clinic
Board of Directors

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Linda J. Botek
Robert S. Brennen
Donald P. McPherson, III

MVLS Pro Bono Program

Student Interns

University of Maryland
Francis King Carey School of Law
Blair Innsis
Michael Levine
Kimberly Murray
Cristina Sproul

University of Baltimore
Dominique Brown

Goucher College
Joanna Farmer

Project HEAL

Student Interns

University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law
Peter Naugle

University of Baltimore School of Law
Hunter McIntyre
Catherine Villareale

Staff

Bonnie A. Sullivan, Executive Director
Richard Chambers, Deputy Director
Stephanie Austin, Director of Annual Fund and Events
Lawrence Burton, Intake Paralegal
Javius Cain, Intake Paralegal
Janet Fedder, Senior Attorney – DHR Contract
Jamie Lee Fontaine, Executive Assistant
Carolyn Malinowski, Managing Attorney – DHR Contract
Tara Z. Miles, Intake Paralegal
Jessica Rich, Intake Paralegal
Sally Snowberger, Foreclosure Prevention Housing Counselor
Rachel Stafford, Staff Attorney – Project HEAL at KKI
Michelle Swift, Pro Bono Program Manager
Hope Tipton, Director of Project HEAL at HLC
Maureen van Stone, Director of Project HEAL at KKI
Cheri Wendt-Taczak, LITC Program Attorney

2012 Award Winners

Volunteer Gary Compton  MSBA Tax Section’s 2012 Pro Bono Award
Volunteer Laurie Hansen  Baltimore County Bar Association’s 2011 Pro Bono Attorney of the Year Award
M. Natalie McSherry, MVLS Board  Maryland Legal Services Corporation’s Arthur W. Machen, Jr. Award
Volunteer J. Harrison Phillips, III  Pro Bono Resource Center’s 2012 Individual Pro Bono Service Award
Ober Kaler’s Project HEAL Pro Bono Initiative and Victoria Sulerzyski, associate, project coordinator  American Health Lawyers Association 2011 Pro Bono Champions Award
Michelle Swift, MVLS Manager of Pro Bono Programs  Maryland Legal Services Corporation’s William L. Marbury Award
Volunteer Elva E. Tillman  Pro Bono Resource Center’s 2012 Government/Corporate Law Department Pro Bono Service Award
Hope Tipton, Director, MVLS Project HEAL at Johns Hopkins Children’s Center  Bar Association of Baltimore City’s 2011 Young Lawyer Presidential Award and 2012 Women’s Bar Association Pro Bono Award
Celebrate Pro Bono

On October 19, 2011, MVLS honored its volunteers, friends and donors at our annual “Celebrate Pro Bono” reception at the University of Maryland School of Law’s Westminster Hall in Baltimore. Two hundred attendees enjoyed a catered buffet, networked with peers, listened to remarks from distinguished keynote speaker Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown and applauded our award winners: Volunteer of the Year, Mark Scurti, Law Firm of the Year, The Kennedy Law Firm, and MVLS Partnership Award winner, Stuart O. Simms.

Benefit

On the evening of March 15, 2012, MVLS hosted a “March Madness” themed benefit at the Sports Legend Museum at Camden Yards. Over 250 MVLS fans watched the NCAA tournament basketball games on three big screens, enjoyed a sports fan menu of stadium fare, played arcade basketball games, met the Towson University and Johns Hopkins mascots, bid on exciting silent auction items and toured the museum. Former Baltimore Colts defensive tackle Art Donovan attended as the Honorary Sports Legend.
MARYLAND VOLUNTEER LAWYERS SERVICE
One North Charles Street, Suite 222
Baltimore, MD 21201-3701

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Combined Charity Campaign – 2420
Maryland Charity Campaign – 1215
Combined Federal Campaign – 49447
United Way of Central Maryland – 2420