



Lawyers Alliance  
for New York

Connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities



November 12, 2012

**Jason Habinsky and Christine M. Fitzgerald  
of Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP  
Trusted Employment Counsel Strengthens Community-Based Organizations**

**Accomplishment:** Recipients of Lawyers Alliance for New York's **2012 Cornerstone Award** honoring outstanding pro bono legal services to nonprofits, to be presented on November 13.

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**Highlights:** Two members of the Labor and Employment Group of Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP, who collectively advised 18 nonprofit clients through Lawyers Alliance, are being honored with the Cornerstone Award.

Jason Habinsky is Counsel at Hughes Hubbard. He received a B.A. from Union College in 1993 and a J.D. from Tulane Law School in 1996. Christine M. Fitzgerald is an Associate at Hughes Hubbard. She received a B.S. from Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations in 1997 and a J.D. from Boston University School of Law in 2000.

Their work spans a wide range of employment law matters, including time-sensitive consultations, the creation of personnel policies, complex employee classification projects, and collective bargaining advice.

Joint Project

One of their many satisfied pro bono clients is nonprofit **Brooklyn Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra**, whose vision is to educate, engage, and nurture creativity in people of all ages. Special performances are staged in schools and at low-cost community education concerts. The Philharmonic turned to Lawyers Alliance and Mr. Habinsky and Ms. Fitzgerald for assistance in renegotiating a Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Associated Musicians of Greater New York Local 802, American Federation of Musicians, AFL-CIO. With the contract now in place, the Philharmonic continues to offer world class performances. The organization's Chief Administrative Officer Nancy Bruni says, "I call Jason and Christine law wizards, they are such an asset to our not-for-profit world. We who believe in making a difference through our ears, heart, and soul, need a counterpart in logic and law, and for that we are grateful to Jason and Christine for making a difference and giving us the tools to thrive and compete."

Mr. Habinsky

Mr. Habinsky worked with **Services Now for Adult Persons** ("SNAP"), a Queens nonprofit that offers older adults a senior center, weekday and weekend meals on wheels delivery, referral services, transportation, and other services. He guided SNAP through revisions to its personnel policies, including provisions regarding retirement age, and advised the organization about potential employee terminations. Linda M. Leest, PhD, the CEO and President of SNAP, says of Mr. Habinsky, "Jason was patient and extremely helpful in setting up our personnel policies. He made sure we had all of the mandatory policies and, in addition, he helped me explore policies that would be pertinent to our staff in particular. We use the book even now and will always be grateful for the work Jason put in to bring the policies to completion."

Other Lawyers Alliance clients that Mr. Habinsky has served include **Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project, Future Leaders Insititute Charter School, Girls Educational & Mentoring Services, Haitian-Americans United for Progress, Mutual Housing Association of New York, St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School, and VISIONS/Services for the Blind and Visually Impared.**

Says Jason Habinsky of his pro bono experiences, "I am extremely fortunate and grateful for the opportunity to assist nonprofit organizations through Lawyers Alliance of New York with labor and employment law guidance. There are so many nonprofits doing important work in our community, and I am honored to do my small part to help them in their work to provide services for New Yorkers in need of their assistance."

#### Ms. Fitzgerald

Ms. Fitzgerald assisted **Pajama Program** in revising its employee handbook and also in addressing immediate personnel questions. Pajama Program is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide new books and pajamas to children in need in the United States and around the world, most of whom are waiting to be adopted. The organization, headquartered in New York City with five full-time and two part-time employees, also has 71 chapters nationwide that are staffed by volunteers. This creates a strong legal need for clear and up-to-date personnel policies. Genevieve Piturro, Founder and Executive Director of Pajama Program, notes, "Christine Fitzgerald provided us with very practical legal direction at a time when we had a pressing employee situation to handle within a short time frame. As always, Christine and Lawyers Alliance came through with the help we needed to put together our employee handbook, including the sensitive issue at hand."

Other Lawyers Alliance clients that Ms. Fitzgerald has served include **Brooklyn Community Services, The Caring Community, Future Leaders Insititute Charter School, Literacy Assistance Center, Neighbors Allied for Good Growth, New York City Charter School Center, Scenarios USA, Upper Manhattan Council Assisting Neighbors, and Young Dancers in Repertory.**

Ms. Fitzgerald says, "Through Lawyers Alliance of New York, I have been privileged to work with some amazing pro bono clients on matters such as developing personnel policies and advising on employee disciplinary matters. I have greatly enjoyed assisting clients with their employment law issues so that they can instead focus on serving the New York City community."

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***About Lawyers Alliance for New York:*** Lawyers Alliance for New York is the leading provider of business and transactional legal services for nonprofit organizations that are improving the quality of life in New York City neighborhoods. Our network of pro bono lawyers from law firms and corporations and staff of experienced attorneys collaborate to deliver expert corporate, tax, real estate, employment, intellectual property, and other legal services to community organizations. By connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities, we help nonprofits to develop affordable housing, stimulate economic development, promote community arts, and operate and advocate for vital programs for children and young people, the elderly, and other low-income New Yorkers. During the past year, 12 staff attorneys and 1,428 volunteer attorneys represented 628 clients on 1,026 matters and assisted hundreds of groups through educational programs.

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