

## Nonprofits Guide Youth Preparing for College and Careers

With timely legal help from Lawyers Alliance and our volunteer attorneys, nonprofits are better able to work to improve the lives, opportunities, and outcomes for young adults.

In recent years, the number of high school students enrolling in college immediately after high school has decreased. The mental and financial stress created and exacerbated by the pandemic and continued economic uncertainty has created additional challenges, including a rise in chronic absenteeism in New York City schools and less interest and ability to pursue a four-year degree. Nonprofits across the City are working to help young people overcome these barriers, addressing both embedded and newer concerns by dedicating staff, programming, and resources towards serving the needs of students and disconnected youth. With timely legal help from Lawyers Alliance and our volunteer attorneys, these nonprofits are better able to work to improve the lives, opportunities, and outcomes for young adults.

### Preparing students for and providing access to college opportunities

Nonprofits working to improve college readiness offer mentorship, school year and summer enrichment, counseling, college preparation classes, application guidance, and exposure to college experiences. Programs help participants prepare for academic success after high school.

**Case Example:** For more than 150 years, **Goddard Riverside** has been providing numerous programs to help meet people's basic needs, including food, shelter, and education, bringing the community together for mutual aid and social action. Since 2011, Goddard has offered the Options Center and

Options Institute, which support low-income and first-generation New Yorkers in getting into, paying for, and graduating from college or skill-specific certificate programs. When Goddard's lease for the Harlem community center where it holds these programs was set to expire, it sought legal assistance to renew the lease. **Lawyers Alliance** helped review and negotiate a new lease agreement so that Goddard could continue to house its Options programs in the space, reaching more than 900 students and 650 educational professionals each year. "Lawyers Alliance has been a great partner to Goddard Riverside, we are so grateful for their expertise and generosity," says Rod Jones, Goddard's Executive Director.

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Photo Credit: Goddard Riverside

**Goddard Riverside's Options Center and Options Institute help students get into, pay for, and graduate from college.**

inside



Photo Credit: Radio Diaries

*Attorneys Help Nonprofits Navigate the World of Technology*

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*Law Firm Appeal Supports Vital Services*

# Nonprofits Guide Youth Preparing for College and Careers

Nonprofits understand that students often need support and resources to help them be successful in college and beyond.

Braven supports students throughout college, providing needed skills and networks.

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## Helping students navigate and succeed in college

For many students, getting to college is only the first step. Nonprofits understand that these students often need support and resources to help them be successful in college and beyond. Many offer comprehensive services that support students and families as well as work to dismantle economic and racial inequalities that serve as barriers to success.

**Case Example: Braven** supports untapped students from college to career by partnering with universities and employers to offer a two-part experience that begins with a credit-bearing college course followed by a post-course experience that lasts through graduation. Fellows emerge from Braven with the skills, experiences, and networks they need to land a strong first job and get on a path to economic freedom. Braven sought to understand and update its governance documents to comply with best practices. Pro bono attorneys from **Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP** reviewed and updated the bylaws, certificate of incorporation, and conflict of interest policy. Additionally, they drafted a whistleblower policy and Board resolutions in connection with banking and financing. All were adopted by the Board, providing Braven with practical and compliant documents. Sheila Lopez, Braven's General Counsel, says, "Davis Polk's expertise and support have strengthened our corporate governance and internal controls, which has been crucial as Braven grows to a 100+ person organization serving over 6,000 students across eight sites. We are incredibly grateful for their commitment to ensuring the next generation of leaders emerges from everywhere."



Photo Credit: Braven

## Providing opportunities for occupational and career pathways

While college is a viable option for many young people, career opportunities provide a positive alternative for others. Nonprofits working to improve access to career pathways offer youth employment, internship, and apprenticeship opportunities; occupational development; job training; and related services to help disconnected youth entering the workforce achieve short- and long-term economic self-sufficiency.

**Case Example: JobsFirstNYC** creates and advances solutions that break down barriers and transform the systems supporting young adults and their communities in pursuit of economic mobility. It brings together community, corporate, human, organizational, private, and public resources to connect young adults and their communities to better economic opportunities, improving outcomes for more than 10,000 young people since 2007. Lawyers Alliance has supported JobsFirstNYC on a range of legal solutions for more than 10 years. Recently, a volunteer attorney from **New York Life Insurance Company** assisted with a review and update of the organization's website privacy policy to reflect best practices. The new website is an important tool to keep program participants and donors informed. In addition, a pro bono attorney from **Wells Fargo & Company** is developing a policy document regarding the establishment of an endowment and a volunteer attorney from **Linklaters LLP** is refining contract templates for JobsFirstNYC's work with consultants. Marjorie Parker, President and CEO, says, "JobsFirstNYC is confident that with this pro bono assistance, various areas of our work that need legal expertise have been serviced well through the partnership with Lawyers Alliance."

Lawyers Alliance thanks **The Frances L. and Edwin L. Cummings Memorial Fund** for supporting Lawyers Alliance's efforts to strengthen nonprofits engaged in college readiness and career pathways. For more information about our work with nonprofits focused on educational and economic opportunities, please contact Senior Staff Attorney **Ciarra Chavarría** or visit the **Nonprofits section** of our website.

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# Law Firm Appeal Supports Vital Services for Nonprofits

Lawyers Alliance's 2022–2023 Law Firm Appeal is grateful for the leadership of co-chairs **Julie H. Jones** and **John E. Sorkin** of **Ropes & Gray LLP**.

The appeal is Lawyers Alliance's largest source of general operating support, helping our organization respond to the changing legal needs of nonprofits that are building a better New York. It is a shining example of how law firms coming together support Lawyers Alliance's mission to be a pro bono leader.

Ms. Jones, Ropes & Gray's chair, leads a global firm whose unique combination of excellence, high performance, and public service garnered it *The American Lawyer's* "Law Firm of the Year" award in 2022, and have put it in the top-three of the AmLaw A-List for five years in a row. The firm is a founding member of the Law Firm Anti-Racism Alliance and has been in the top 10 firms for female equity partners for the past seven years.

In addition to her leadership role, Ms. Jones is one of the world's top corporate lawyers, with countless accolades for her work on behalf of some of the world's largest companies and investors. She has guided numerous multi-billion dollar deals across industries, and has been described by clients as "a preternaturally cool-headed negotiator." She is an active champion of the firm's pro bono program and "practice with purpose" ethic.

"Lawyers Alliance provides vital support to our communities. We are proud to champion its work," said Ms. Jones. "Donations of all sizes will help Lawyers Alliance fulfill its mission to improve our communities and help people in need. John and I want to thank the many firms that have joined or will join the Appeal this year."

Mr. Sorkin, co-managing partner of Ropes & Gray's 500-lawyer New York office and a partner in the firm's private equity transactions and M&A practices, advises a broad range of clients on U.S. and cross-border M&A transactions, including strategic and private equity acquisitions and dispositions, leveraged buyouts and other transactional and corporate governance matters. He also regularly counsels many of the world's leading investment banks on financial advisory matters. Mr. Sorkin is recognized as a leading lawyer for M&A and private equity transactions by numerous industry guides. He is also active in the firm's pro bono efforts.

"When firms support the Law Firm Appeal, it allows Lawyers Alliance to provide attorneys with rewarding pro bono opportunities that serve their communities and sharpen their skills," said Mr. Sorkin. "The impact of this work is felt far and wide."

To donate, please contact Lawyers Alliance Development Manager **James Valentin**.



**Julie H. Jones**



**John E. Sorkin**

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## In Brief

### Not-for-Profit Corporation Law (N-PCL) Revisions Provide Flexibility

In November 2022, Governor Hochul signed A9969 (Paulin)/S9047 (Comrie), to modernize New York's Not-for-Profit Corporation Law (N-PCL) to allow Board members to provide unanimous consent to Board actions via an electronic Board portal, allow Board vacancies to be filled for the duration of a vacant seat, and codify that conflicted directors who leave a meeting do not disturb the quorum. Lawyers Alliance staff worked with Nonprofit New York's Government Relations Council to identify N-PCL provisions that needed updating. Our staff drafted bill language and a memo in support that we submitted together with Nonprofit New York and New York Council of Nonprofits. Read our [Legal Alert](#).

# Cornerstone Awards Honor Outstanding Pro Bono Achievements

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
**CORNERSTONE**  
AWARDS  
1997-2022

## Front row, left to right:

Rex L. Niswander, *Morrison & Foerster LLP*; Karol Robinson, *Herrick, Feinstein LLP*, who accepted on behalf of Fred R. Green; Debra Sapp, *Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP*; Nancy Marchand, *Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP*, who accepted on behalf of Mario Verdolini; Ashley E. DeLuca, *Ballard Spahr LLP*; and Anthony Cassino, who accepted on behalf of Institutional Honoree *Milbank LLP*

## Second row, left to right:

Amber M. Degn, *ABC News / Disney General Entertainment*; Kristen A. Truver, *Alston & Bird LLP*; Douglas Dua, *Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP*; Oren Epstein, *Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP*, who accepted on behalf of Bruce Goldner; William Xiong, *Ballard Spahr LLP*; and Katherine Hughes, who accepted on behalf of Institutional Honoree *Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP*

## Top row, left to right:

Aditya (Dean) Ramanathan, *Brown Rudnick LLP*; Keith McMurdy, *Bloomberg L.P.*; and Steven M. Lutt, *White & Case LLP*

An enthusiastic crowd of nearly 100 volunteers, nonprofit clients, colleagues, and friends and family gathered at **Paramount** on November 17 for the 2022 Cornerstone Awards. **Sarah Harp**, Senior Vice President, Senior Counsel, Corporate Transactions and Securities of Paramount Global, and Lawyers Alliance's Board Secretary, welcomed everyone to the celebration of pro bono excellence.

**Elizabeth M. Guggenheimer**, Executive Director of Lawyers Alliance, said, "As we mark the 25th anniversary of the Cornerstone Awards, we are pleased to celebrate the spirit of pro bono service together. This year's amazing honorees, including two exceptional law firms and 14 individuals, along with all of our volunteers, have provided outstanding legal services that strengthen nonprofit programs, operations, and finances."



Photo credit: Bill Bytsura

## Institutional Honorees

For **Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP**, commitment to pro bono has been a core value of the firm since its inception, and in recent years it has emphasized leadership in nonprofit law, offering holistic legal advice to pro bono nonprofit clients and drawing knowledge from across the firm. Cleary has partnered with Lawyers Alliance on 59 different pro bono matters for 52 organizations since July 1, 2017, as well as dozens of projects involving attorney externs. Cleary was the first firm to sponsor an extern at Lawyers Alliance. From 1989 through this year, 89 Cleary associates have worked full-time at Lawyers Alliance for four to six month rotations. **Katherine C. Hughes**, Cleary's Director of Pro Bono – U.S. and a former Lawyers Alliance Cleary extern, accepted the award on behalf of the firm.

**Milbank LLP's** strong community service ethic is reflected in its more than 25-year pro bono relationship with Lawyers Alliance. The firm expects all of its attorneys to dedicate a minimum of 25 hours to pro bono work annually. In 2021, Milbank topped 57,000 pro bono hours globally and handled 700 active cases, with more than 95 percent of its U.S. lawyers taking on pro bono matters. As part of this work, Milbank attorneys worked on 50 different legal matters for 39 Lawyers Alliance clients in the past five years, helping organizations to navigate leases, contracts, governance issues, and strategic alliances. **Anthony Cassino**, Pro Bono Counsel at Milbank, accepted the award on behalf of the firm.

## Individual Honorees

The Individual Cornerstone Award winners are 14 talented individuals selected from more than 2,000 business and transactional lawyers who volunteered through Lawyers Alliance during the past year.

**Amber M. Degn, ABC News / Disney General Entertainment:** This in-house counsel is one of Lawyers Alliance's most reliable volunteers, working with eight nonprofits on waivers, releases, and participation documents.

**Ashley E. DeLuca and William Xiong, Ballard Spahr LLP:** This team assisted a community health center with financing and development of a new clinic in Coney Island, Brooklyn, benefitting this neighborhood in need.

**Douglas Dua, Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP:** For the last seven years, this dedicated attorney has been assisting nonprofits with complex corporate structuring matters.

**Bruce Goldner, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP:** A supporter of Lawyers Alliance for decades, this experienced attorney fosters his firm's pro bono spirit and helps nonprofits protect their intellectual property.

**Fred R. Green, Herrick, Feinstein LLP:** Because of this attorney's thoughtful client counseling and governance work, numerous nonprofits have been able to scale up their operations and fulfill their missions.

**Steven M. Lutt and Julianne Prisco, White & Case LLP:** These expert attorneys have helped multiple nonprofits with their real estate needs, including the acquisition and financing of a building in Brooklyn which will serve as a social service community center for senior citizens.

**Keith McMurdy, Bloomberg L.P.:** This corporate counsel has provided indispensable labor and employment law and governance advice to a range of nonprofits through Lawyers Alliance clinics and full-scope representations.

**Rex L. Niswander, Morrison & Foerster LLP:** For 12 years, this dedicated attorney has shared crucial immigration knowledge with nonprofits, allowing them to hire and keep instrumental team members.

**Aditya (Dean) Ramanathan, Brown Rudnick LLP:** This dedicated lawyer has shared his intellectual property expertise with five nonprofit clients over the last two years, demonstrating a true understanding of nonprofits' needs.

**Debra Sapp, Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP:** This real estate attorney's commitment to pro bono work has helped shelters serving vulnerable New Yorkers.

**Kristen A. Truver, Alston & Bird LLP:** This corporate finance attorney helped form a strategic alliance between two nonprofits, a complicated process that included drafting and negotiating terms of the alliance and restructuring both nonprofits' organizational fabric.

**Mario Verdolini, Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP:** Since 1996, this tax attorney has shared his nonprofit and tax law expertise, which has proven essential to the foundation and growth of countless nonprofits.

Congratulations to all of the 2022 Cornerstone honorees! For additional details and event photos, visit our [website](#).



Photo credit: Urban Pathways

### Cornerstone Spotlight:

Nonprofits play an essential role in providing shelter and other support services for unhoused people in New York City, especially during the cold winter months. For the past five years, 2022 Cornerstone Award honoree **Debra Sapp of Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP** has helped these nonprofits effectively negotiate and document relationships with the government agencies that fund this work and with the landlords renting space for it. With Ms. Sapp's assistance, **Urban Pathways** successfully negotiated a lease for a transitional housing facility in the Bronx and another lease for a new drop-in center in Manhattan to provide services including case management, food, and showers to chronically homeless single adults. **Mark Hurwitz**, Chief Operating Officer of Urban Pathways, said, "Because of Debra's work we were able to expeditiously negotiate complex commercial leases that included buildouts for our new programs. These programs will allow hundreds of New Yorkers to come off the streets and out of the cold this winter, and in the years to come."

## Lawyers Alliance Board of Directors

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# Attorneys Help Nonprofits Navigate the World of Technology

While a for-profit corporation might readily utilize technology and have access to expert advisers when launching a new tech product, nonprofits have to consider all of the associated costs before starting such a venture. Keeping abreast of advancements in technology can be a fiscal challenge for nonprofits. Providing expert pro bono legal help is one way our volunteers can help our clients preserve funds for programming while keeping in compliance with laws related to operating in a digital environment, utilizing tech to provide services, or providing educational programs in information technology.

## Intellectual property rights are essential for arts groups using technology

Pro bono lawyers who provide advice on intellectual property rights offer an invaluable service for nonprofits that produce creative material.

**Case Example: Radio Diaries** is a documentary production nonprofit organization recognized for its award-winning, first-person audio diaries and histories. Founded in 1999 by journalist Joe Richman, its mission is to uncover the extraordinary stories of everyday life. Radio Diaries sought expert legal help to negotiate a contract with ESPN for production of a podcast about the longest baseball game in history, and to retain certain rights to that podcast. The podcast was slated to be released on ESPN's "30 for 30" audio podcast, but Radio Diaries wanted to additionally release a version on NPR. The transaction also entailed obtaining clearance to use third-party archival materials and music. A volunteer from **Milbank LLP** provided counsel to Radio Diaries on various aspects of this project, including negotiating the contract with ESPN, assisting with title clearances for the podcast, and preparing releases for the podcast contributors. Without such advice, Radio Diaries may not have been able to complete this project. Nellie Gilles, Radio Diaries' Managing Producer, says, "Radio Diaries felt empowered, as a small nonprofit, by the support from Lawyers Alliance and our pro bono attorney throughout our creative collaboration with a large sports media conglomerate to maintain the rights to the story and our work."

## Fundraising compliance advice benefits a food security organization

When a nonprofit organization solicits donations online on behalf of other organizations, it needs to understand how to comply with fundraising laws with respect to the solicitations.

**Case Example:** Food security became a critical issue during the pandemic, but many New Yorkers aren't accessing all available resources. **Lemontree Foods** operates a text-message helpline that connects hungry people to free food. Last year, the organization connected more than 45,000 people to food pantries, soup kitchens, and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) resources. As part of its work, Lemontree was looking for ways to fundraise for the organizations to which it refers people. Facilitating contributions to third party organizations is a complicated issue. Volunteers from **Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP** advised Lemontree on how to comply with the disclosures mandated by the New York State Attorney General in connection with solicitation of donations and how to handle a circumstance where Lemontree might not be able to remit a donation to a designated donee. "I was impressed by the depth of insight and quick turnaround that the Fried Frank attorneys brought to our issue. As a small nonprofit, it's a major blessing to have support on critical fundraising issues like this," says CEO Alex Godin.

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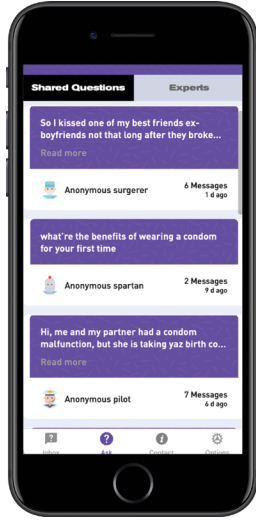
Photo Credit: Lemontree Foods

**Lemontree Foods' text-message hotline connects hungry people to free food.**

## Template partnership agreement enables expansion of services through an app

A lawyer's help in preparing a well-crafted template partnership agreement can be instrumental to the growth of a nonprofit organization.

**Case Example:** Young adults are often caught in situations where going to a parent for help with sensitive issues relating to their health and personal lives can be challenging or intimidating. They might



Graphic: OkaySo

Young adults can seek expert advice through an app developed by OkaySo.

be met with a lack of understanding or with no help at all and are left to cope on their own, possibly seeking inexpert advice from peers. **OkaySo**, which works to improve the physical and mental health of young adults by utilizing technology, has developed an app that allows young people to anonymously seek expert advice on sexual and reproductive health, gender identity, relationships, and mental health, through connections to service providers specializing in these areas. A volunteer attorney from **Clifford Chance US LLP** has prepared a template partnership agreement that OkaySo can use with other partners whose services will be accessible to youths needing guidance. Elise Schuster, co-founder of OkaySo, says, "Partnerships are one of the key ways that we can reach new young people to provide support to them through OkaySo. It was so helpful to think through all of our partnership questions and get support on the contract through Lawyers Alliance and our volunteer attorney. It's made securing those partnerships much easier."

If you are an attorney interested in volunteering, please visit our [website](#).

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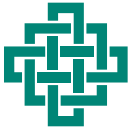
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For more information visit [www.lawyersalliance.org/gala](http://www.lawyersalliance.org/gala)



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## Benefits of Volunteering with Lawyers Alliance

This past year, 99 percent of volunteer attorneys responding to our case closing survey told us that they benefitted from Lawyers Alliance pro bono work in one or more ways:

