



Dear **Friends**,

*Summer is the perfect season for growth, and at MidPenn, our work has truly blossomed. The open house on July 17, held at our headquarters on North Cameron Street, was a wonderful opportunity to connect, share, and showcase the real-world impact of civil legal aid. We welcomed community partners, supporters, and friends into our space, sharing firsthand how our staff and volunteers work tirelessly to support clients facing challenges in housing, family law, public benefits, and more.*

*This gathering also marked mid-point in our annual campaign, Pursuing Justice - Improving Lives, which runs from June 26 through September 25. With your generosity, we're strengthening the legal safety net for low-income Pennsylvanians - helping survivors of domestic violence, veterans, families facing eviction, and individuals navigating public benefits crises.*

*To celebrate the campaign's climax, you're warmly invited to our Access to Justice Awards event on September 25 in Lancaster, PA. Join us as we honor the volunteer attorneys, law firms, and community leaders whose dedication contributes meaningfully to access to justice in our region.*

*Thank you for believing in our mission and helping us build a more equitable society. As summer continues - and even as we stay focused on our work across 18 counties - know that your support makes a deep and lasting impact. Please mark your calendar - we would be honored to celebrate with you.*

*With sincere gratitude,  
Rhodia D. Thomas, Esq.  
Executive Director*

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## **Bridging the Justice Gap: Community Panel Explores Legal Deserts in Rural Pennsylvania**

MidPenn Legal Services recently hosted a dynamic and thought provoking panel discussion focused on increasing access to justice in rural areas, with a special emphasis on the growing challenges posed by legal deserts - regions where there are too few attorneys to meet community needs.

The moderated panel by Rhodia D. Thomas, Esq., Executive



Director of MidPenn brought together leaders from legal, academic, governmental, and faith-based sectors to explore how collaborative strategies can address these service gaps and ensure equitable access to justice in places like Centre County. Panelists included Ryan Cummins, Esq., Managing Attorney, Jill C. Engle, Esq., Interim Association Dean, Penn State Law, Reverend Jes Kast, Pastor, Faith United Church of Christ, and Faith Ryan, Director with Centre County Office of Adult Services. The panel examined how legal services, in partnership with academic institutions and the faith community, are uniquely positioned to support vulnerable populations in rural Pennsylvania.



### **LITC Secures Life-Changing Tax Relief for Domestic Violence Survivor**

The Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) recently achieved a remarkable victory for a domestic violence survivor, eliminating more than \$200,000 in federal income debt she had jointly owned with her ex-husband.

For ten years, our client worked at her ex-husband's pizza shop, unaware that he had failed to pay federal income taxes. Controlled by years of physical and emotional abuse, she was never allowed to question financial matters or make decisions.

After carefully reviewing her medical and financial records, Attorney Hamilton filed a Petition for Innocent Spouse Relief with the IRS for tax years 2017-2020. The IRS determined she qualified for relief, removing her from liability for the joint tax debts.

This outcome not only lifted an overwhelming financial burden but also gave our client a fresh start toward rebuilding her life free from abuse.

On May 28, Attorney Doug Hearn was recognized with the Friend of the Center Community Service Award during Centre Safe's 50th Anniversary Award Luncheon. The award celebrates Doug's longstanding commitment to advancing safety, justice, and advocacy for survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Centre County. His dedication and collaborative spirit have made him a trusted ally to Centre Safe and a powerful advocate for the communities we serve.

Congratulations, Doug, on this well-deserved honor!



### **MidPenn Engages at "Stop the Violence" Community Outreach Event**

In June, Leslie A. Martinez-Arce, and Yinet Perez Vega, Esq., represented MidPenn Legal Services at the Stop the Violence community outreach event held at Penn Park in York, PA.





Throughout the day, Leslie and Yinet connected with community members to share information about the wide range of services offered by MPLS. In addition, they distributed contact information and general resources from the York County Bar Association (YCBA), ensuring attendees left with valuable connections and tools to address their legal needs. MidPenn is proud to partner with community organizations in promoting awareness, prevention, and access to justice.

## Free Driver's License Restoration Clinic Serves York County Residents

Recently, MidPenn Legal Services partnered with the York County Bar Association and the York County Clerk of Courts Office to host a free Driver's License Restoration Clinic in York County. These clinics provide critical legal services to help individuals navigate the often-complex process of regaining their driving privileges after a suspension or revocation.



The event offered free advice, guidance, and hands-on support to residents - particularly those from underserved communities - seeking to restore their licenses. Many participants left with clear next steps, and in several cases, solutions were found on the spot. In total, the clinic assisted 39 individuals, providing both direct resolution and essential guidance for future action.

The next Driver's License Restoration Clinic is planned for this fall. For eligibility requirements or to join the registration list, email [info@yorkbar.com](mailto:info@yorkbar.com).



## MidPenn Celebrates New Harrisburg Office with Open House

On July 17th, MidPenn Legal Services proudly opened the doors of our new office at 100 North Cameron Street in Harrisburg for a special open house. The event brought together members of the Board, staff, local bar association colleagues, law school representatives, and community supporters to celebrate this exciting milestone.

Guests toured our new space, connected with our team, and learned more about the work we do to ensure equal access to justice for vulnerable citizens across our service area. We are deeply grateful to everyone who joined us in marking this new chapter for MidPenn. Your support fuels our mission and strengthens our ability to make a real difference - together.

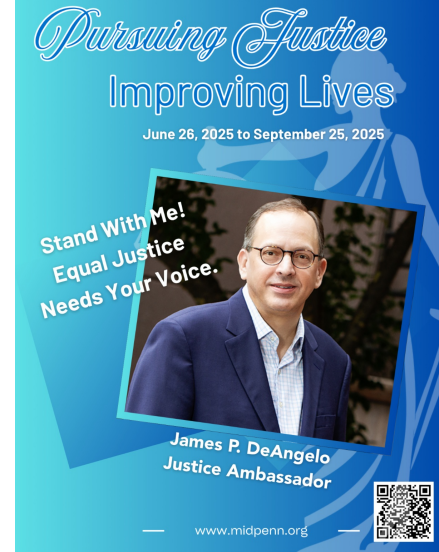
## Celebrating Jim DeAngelo: Advocate, Leader, and Friend to MidPenn

Congratulations to Jim DeAngelo on his retirement! Jim has been a long-standing advocate for equal access to

justice and a dedicated leader within the MidPenn Legal Services community. Over the years, he has served as President of MidPenn's Board of Directors and, in 2022, was honored with the Donald F. Smith, Jr., Pro Bono Award in recognition of his extraordinary commitment to service.

This year, Jim also took on the important role of Justice Ambassador, chairing our Pursuing Justice Improving Lives campaign. Through his leadership and dedication, the campaign gained strong momentum and meaningful support for MidPenn's mission.

We are thankful to Jim for his steady support, generosity of spirit, and his decades of service to the cause of justice. We wish him the very best in his retirement and look forward to seeing the next chapter of his journey.



## MidPenn MLK Program Participants Honored at PLAN Reception

On July 24th, MidPenn's Martin Luther King Summer Intern GeGe George and Martin Luther King Fellow Mallory Turner, both from our Harrisburg office, attended the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network reception recognizing the 2025 Martin Luther King interns. This annual event celebrates the contributions of law students and fellows who are advancing access to justice through their work in legal aid programs across the Commonwealth.

## Upcoming Events

We are delighted to invite you to join us for an

### Access to Justice Awards

as we celebrate distinguished legal professionals advancing equal justice!

# Access to Justice Awards



Join us as we celebrate distinguished legal professionals dedicated to advancing equal justice and commemorate the successful completion of the 2025 Pursuing Justice Campaign.

**September 25, 2025**

5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Riverdale Manor  
62 Pitney Road  
Lancaster, PA 17602

**REGISTER**

MidPenn is now on [BlueSky](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Linkedin](#), [Threads](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

Follow us for the latest information on our program and upcoming events.

**Support Equal Justice**

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Career Opportunities



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