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# Legal Ease

The Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley's  
Bi-monthly Newsletter

July 2021



*Meet  
Zachary  
Brown!*



Our Newest  
Practicing  
Attorney



Zachary Brown is a Robert F. Kennedy '51 Public Service Fellow at Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley and joined the office in 2020. Originally from Houston, Texas, Zachary is a recent graduate from the University of Virginia School of Law. Throughout law school, Zachary engaged in pro bono, clinic,

and internship work with the Legal Aid Justice Center in Charlottesville, Virginia. Now as a practicing attorney, Zachary assists clients with a variety of case matters, including unemployment compensation, consumer issues, and eviction defense.

Aren't you a recent graduate? Why did you seek out employment at The Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley (LASRV)?

*The Robert F. Kennedy '51 Public Service Fellowship provided me with dedicated funds for a year of employment. I was familiar with legal aid work through my internship and practice clinic at the Legal Aid Justice Center in Charlottesville. With dedicated funds from my fellowship, I reached out to LASRV here in Roanoke. Although I was not a licensed attorney, they understood that I wanted to make an impact in the lives of poor people quickly. Instead of waiting until I was a practicing attorney, LASRV allowed me to start making change right away!*

What does a typical day look like for you?

*The work I do is similar to my work at the Legal Aid Justice Center. I keep up with my clients and confer with other staff about case strategies, along with how to go about pursuing certain legal issues. Today, I worked with two of our staff attorneys, Mona Raza and Jarryd Smith. I might also meet with my supervisor David Beidler, as well as other staff, to simply pick their brains about unfamiliar areas of law. Lastly, like with most attorneys, a typical day may involve going to court. No matter what day it is though, there is never a dull moment at LASRV!*

You mentioned your work in housing law. What kind of legal services are involved with consumer issues and eviction defense? Can you give one example of both and tell us how you have helped your clients?

*Consumer issues usually involve making sure a business transaction complies with all federal and state laws. These may include anything from purchases of used vehicles to taking out loans from online lenders.*

*As for evictions, let me give an example. A client of mine was facing eviction after the home she lived in for eight years was purchased by someone else. The new owner illegally tried to raise the rent and did not provide proper notice of eviction before suing my client. After the first case was dismissed by the court, my client was sued a second time for more money than was owed. I took the case to trial and the court ruled in my client's favor. My client found a new place to live and did not have to pay any extra money. Success!*

Unemployment compensation has many layers. What are some specific things people should know/be aware of in legal issues surrounding unemployment compensation?

- **COVID-19 Benefits:** *Because of COVID-19, there is more than one type of unemployment compensation available. It is important to know which*

*you have applied for and which you have been approved for.*

- **VEC Appeals:** *While most things from the VEC can be appealed, not all appeals are treated equally. Appealing a disqualification? Good.*
- **Appeal Timelines:** *A federal judge recently ordered the Virginia Employment Commission to process backlogged claims much faster, so, hopefully, delays may become much shorter. If pursuing unemployment benefits as a stable source of income, take potential delays into account.*
- **Local VEC Office:** *Many of my clients do not know about the local VEC office. Its address is 3601 Thirlane Road NW. If you need to speak to someone at the VEC, go to the local office and request a phone appointment!*

What do you think would happen to the clients you serve if we didn't have LASRV?

*I believe we provide a valuable service to the community and have a wide-ranging impact in the lives of the vulnerable. Whether it is the mother with three children going through an unlawful eviction, whether it is the eighty-year-old who is going to lose a source of income necessary for his survival, or whether it is the young adult subject to a used car scam, LASRV is a resource that can make a difference. Contact us to see if you are eligible for our services!*

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## The Second Annual Jaunt for Justice 5K is Coming Your Way October 2, 2021!



[The Roanoke Valley Paralegal Association](#) will host the second annual “Jaunt for Justice 5K,” a 5K Run/Walk to benefit [The Legal Aid Society of](#)

[Roanoke Valley \(LASRV\).](#)

Both runners and walkers are welcome! Your registration and participation will go to LASRV's Annual Fund. This fund provides critical dollars that enable us to provide FREE legal services with our amazing attorneys and paralegal.

For those who want to support our cause but cannot participate in person, we will offer the alternative of participating in a Virtual 5K this year as well.

**Register before July 31st to get the [Early Bird Discount!](#)**

**We need your help!**

Please follow and like us on our [Facebook page](#)? The more followers we have, the more likely we are to reach low-income residents in need of FREE legal assistance; many of whom have no idea we are here to help them.

**Thank YOU!**

You Can Change Someone's World  
with Your Gift to the  
Annual Giving Campaign



**The Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley's  
Annual Giving Campaign**

## **Begins July 1, 2021, and ends June 30, 2022**

The Annual Giving Campaign is the money raised by The Legal Aid, on an ongoing basis, throughout the year. It provides critically important general operating support, also known as unrestricted support, to meet the needs of our programs and services in a flexible, and immediate way while furthering the overall mission and work we do to provide low-income residents with FREE legal assistance.

Many of the individuals we serve on an annual basis are just one paycheck away from a crisis. That crisis might seem small to you, but to our clients, it can be the end of the world. Your gift to the Annual Giving Campaign can turn that world back around.

When you support [The Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley's Annual Giving Campaign](#), you are helping our attorneys so they can carry out their work on behalf of hundreds of low-income residents in our community. With your annual gift, you are making a crucial difference for people in their darkest hours, when they have no one else to speak for them and nowhere else to turn. Your gift can prevent homelessness, clear a path to employment, and help children and families to thrive.

Make your gift of \$25, \$50, \$100, or whatever size gift works for you, to the Annual Giving Campaign today. Your gift can change someone's world from crisis to calm.

You can also become a [sustaining supporter](#) and make your gift on a monthly basis. All you have to do is select the "monthly" button once you decide on the amount of your gift. Your gift will automatically be deducted on a monthly basis via your credit card, PayPal, or Venmo. You might think, "I can only afford \$5 or \$10 a month. That small of a gift won't add up to do anything." But they do! Small gifts have an enormous impact and can add up to do amazing things to help us help someone in need of FREE legal assistance.

What are you waiting for? YOU could be the reason someone's life is turned around for the better with FREE legal assistance!

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**NEW! Now you can text your gift to  
The Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley!  
Call 202-858-1233 and text "lasrv."**



## [NEWSFLASH! The CDC has extended the eviction moratorium until July 31!](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a historic threat to the nation's public health. Keeping people in their homes and out of crowded or congregate settings — like homeless shelters — by preventing evictions is a key step in helping to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Want to know more?

Read the next article featuring our paralegal, Austin Bouffard.



### **In House Paralegal Connects People in Need of Rent Relief with Money That's Already Here in Virginia**

Austin Bouffard is never completely sure what the day has in store for her. One thing she does know for certain: people need rent relief and they need help with the application, but many don't have automobiles or even computers.

"It's hard to fathom in 2021 someone not having an email, but that's the case for some of our clients," she notes.

Austin operates much like a community outreach specialist. She sends postcards to tenants with eviction issues and lets them know that help has arrived. Her message is simple and straightforward: if you have had a negative financial impact due to the pandemic, you may qualify for rent relief, and helping you get through that process is

my number one job.

"The necessary documentation and all the hoops someone has to jump through can be overwhelming," said Austin. "Proof of income, unemployment records, social security documentation, along with the lease agreement, landlord and tenant household agreement form (RRP), Asset Certification, Virginia W-9 from your landlord, and more. But when we are successful and both tenants and landlords receive rent relief, it's a win-win for everyone."

Individuals seeking rent relief and help with the application process must be eligible for The Legal Aid's services. Visit [www.lasrv.org](http://www.lasrv.org). For more information about the Virginia Rent Relief program visit <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/rmrp>

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Want to learn more about how we're helping low-income individuals with rent relief funds throughout the Roanoke Valley?

Listen to our [interview on WVTF's Radio IQ!](#)

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## Upcoming Events & News

[Jaunt for Justice 5K](#)

Saturday, October 2, 2021

Legal Ease September 2021 Edition

[Subscribe here!](#)



For more than 50 years, Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley has been providing free civil legal assistance to low-income residents throughout the Roanoke Valley. We are the only legal services organization serving the Roanoke Valley and surrounding areas of the Blue Ridge providing a full range of civil legal services include issues involving housing, protection from abuse, custody, divorce for victims of domestic violence, employment and unemployment, consumer problems like debt collection defenses and actions against predatory lenders.



If you or someone you know who can't afford a lawyer and is in need of legal assistance please visit our website. [lasrv.org](http://lasrv.org)



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