

Notables

SOCIETY | CHARITY | STYLE



GL Homes President Misha Ezratti, Legal Aid Society Executive Director Bob Bertisch and GL Homes Community Relations VP Sarah Alsofrom at Lotus Palm in Boca Raton. [TRACEY BENSON]

On Saturday night Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County celebrates diamond anniversary at black-tie ‘Justice for All’ fundraiser

For 75 years, the nonprofit organization has been a beacon of hope, legal representation and protection for our community’s most vulnerable residents.

By Steve Dorfman • Notables Staff Writer

For those who grow up in — and age out of — foster care, life comes with innumerable challenges.

And for those who must navigate this path while also having developmental disabilities, the task would be nearly impossible.

Thank goodness, then, that they have a dedicated partner to help them as they begin this journey — a partner who will both protect and represent them: the Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County.

This kind of representation is just one of a myriad of ways that Legal Aid Society has been impacting lives since its founding 75 years ago.

Through its in-house staff of lawyers and Pro Bono Project, the nonprofit organization is focused on making sure all Palm Beach County residents have equal access to the basic rights they deserve. This means bringing real justice to real people — which it provides annually to more than 8,000 disadvantaged residents with no-cost legal assistance as well as a variety of community education and outreach programs.

Of course, the Legal Aid Society’s noble mission would not be possible without support from local benefactors — the most passionate of whom will be gathering on Saturday at 6 p.m. at the Kravis Center for the annual black-tie Justice for All fundraiser, which will celebrate the organization’s



Justice for All Gala Co-chairs Edrick and Sia Barnes, and Abigail and Hampton Beebe. [CAPEHART]

75th anniversary (so everyone, wear your diamonds!).

Chaired by Sia and Edrick Barnes and Abigail and Hampton Beebe, the event will honor Legal Aid volunteers and donors who have made exceptional contributions to the pursuit of equal justice.

Honorees will include the following:

- Greenberg Traurig, LLP will receive the And Justice for All award in recognition of their pro bono legal work for Legal Aid Society clients.



Ileane Greenfader of Coldwell Banker (center) with Rachel Arvelo and Lovely Alexis. [CAPEHART]

JUSTICE

from 1D

- Michelle Suskauer, Esq. will be presented with the Suzanne and John Foley Serving Justice Award for her longstanding dedication to the organization’s mission.

- Kathy Leone will be the inaugural recipient of the Harreen Bertisch Children’s Advocacy Award, acknowledging her commitment to improving the lives of children, particularly those in Palm Beach County’s foster care system.

And speaking of the foster care system, one of the organization’s biggest benefactors — GL Homes — has, since 2017, several times a year taken a group of developmentally disabled young adults (age 26 to 32) to various activities (bowling, swimming, golf, ball games, museums — and next month pickleball) to promote their socialization skills and introduce them to experiences many of them have never had before.

These young adults were in foster care but aged out. Now, they are part of Legal Aid Society’s Guardian Advocacy Program — without which these vulnerable folks would



Harreen Bertisch Children’s Advocacy Award recipient Kathy Leone (left) with retired Florida Supreme Court Justice Barbara Pariente. [TRACEY BENSON]

likely be homeless.

GL Homes President Misha Ezratti lauds Legal Aid Society for its impact on the community: “Legal Aid Society does so much more than dispense free legal advice. They advocate for the disadvantaged to protect their personal safety, enhance their opportunities and living conditions, and promote self-sufficiency. Our longstanding volunteer efforts with Legal Aid’s developmentally disabled clients have helped to turn their lives around. These young adults have secured employment,

developed healthier lifestyles and improved their socialization skills. We’re so proud of their accomplishments.”

Legal Aid Society Executive Director Bob Bertisch — who has been helping the nonprofit for 43 years — is effusive in his gratitude for GL Homes’ support: “It’s companies like GL Homes that allow us to achieve our historic 75-year anniversary milestone. Since 2017, we’ve worked closely with them to provide enriching, life-changing experiences for the young adults in our guardianship program.”

In discussing GL Homes’ involvement with Legal Aid Society, GL Homes Vice President of Community Relations Sarah Alsofrom notes that “there is no other organization that advocates so tirelessly for the legal rights of our most vulnerable citizens to receive shelter, food, healthcare, safety and education. Legal Aid Society provides a voice that serves as justice for all.”

TICKET INFO

What: Justice for All 75th Year Celebration Gala
When: Saturday, 6 p.m.
Where: Cohen Pavilion at the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts, 701 Okeechobee Blvd., West Palm Beach
Tickets: \$250
Website: legalaidpbc.org
Email: events@legalaidpbc.org