



# HOUSTON BAR ASSOCIATION

## Legal Services Community Support Public Education

Do you have legal questions? Call LegalLine, 1st and 3rd Wednesday, 5-9 p.m., 713-759-1133

The Houston Bar Association's 11,300-plus member attorneys have a continued commitment to serving the legal profession and the community.

Established in 1870, the Association's purpose was to maintain high standards in the legal profession and provide legal education for Harris County attorneys. Today the HBA, the fifth largest voluntary bar association in the nation, still

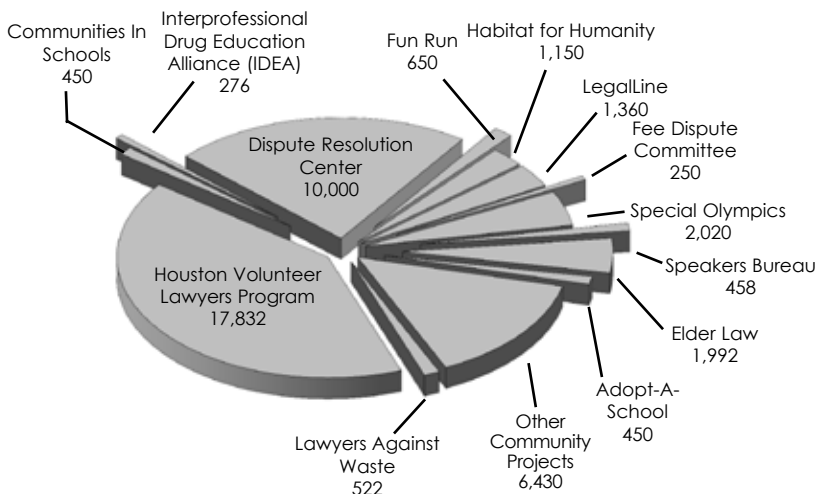
adheres to those basic principles, but has expanded its goals to include public service and better access to legal services for all citizens in the Greater Houston area.

HBA continuing legal education and professional development programs for attorneys are second to none. HBA members contributed over 43,840 volunteer hours to community service projects last year.

The HBA is a non-profit organization supported solely by member dues. In 1982, the HBA established the Houston Bar Foundation, its charitable arm through which many of the HBA's community service projects are funded.

This flyer describes the many ways the HBA serves you and the community. Please visit our website at [www.hba.org](http://www.hba.org) for more information and resources.

### 43,840 Volunteer Hours in Fiscal Year 2010-2011



### Did You Know?

- Membership in the Houston Bar Association is voluntary. An attorney does not have to join the HBA to practice law in Texas.
- The Houston Bar Association is an information and resource service for its members and the public. If you have a question about legal services or the administration of justice, we will try to answer your questions or direct your call to someone who can provide the answers you need.
- While the Houston Bar Association has no attorneys on staff and cannot give legal advice, we may be able to refer you to an appropriate program for help.
- The Supreme Court of Texas licenses attorneys and the State Bar of Texas, through the Commission on Lawyer Discipline, governs attorneys, including investigating complaints and handling discipline. For more information, call the State Bar Grievance Committee at (713) 758-8200 or their toll-free number, 1-800-932-1900.

## Legal Services

### AIDS Outreach Program

The AIDS Outreach Committee assists the Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program in providing legal services, assistance and education for persons with HIV/AIDS, caregivers and health professionals. For information, call (713) 759-1133.

### Dispute Resolution Center

When problems threaten to become lawsuits, the Dispute Resolution Center offers citizens a free alternative to legal action. Services include community-based mediation, court-ordered mediation, arbitration, and moderated settlement conferences. Trained mediators and moderators bring together persons on both sides of an argument and help them reach an agreement before the problem leads to a costly lawsuit or violence. If you have a problem or lawsuit, you may be able to resolve it through the DRC. For more information, call (713) 755-8274.

### Elder Law Program

Senior citizens have unique legal needs. Attorneys visit senior centers to provide legal advice on a bi-monthly basis. An annual Will-A-Thon provides no-cost wills and medical directives to low-income seniors to assist them with estate planning. The Elder Law Committee also assists in preparing the free Elder Law Handbook. For Will-A-Thon dates, visit [www.hba.org](http://www.hba.org). For more information, call 713-759-1133.

### Houston Lawyer Referral Service

Houston Lawyer Referral Service can recommend a competent attorney who will set up an initial consultation for a reduced fee. Citizens can then decide if they would like to continue the services of that attorney at the attorney's regular fee scale. For income eligible citizens, HLRS has a panel of attorneys who agree to handle cases on a reduced fee scale. HLRS maintains a large panel of attorneys who handle all types of cases. To be referred to a lawyer, call (713) 237-9429 or (800) 289-4577.

### Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program

Houston attorneys volunteer their time to provide legal services in civil matters for Houston's needy citizens. This program helps those who cannot get help through other legal aid programs and is based on income eligibility. Special units within the Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program handle family law, AIDS, problems of the elderly, low-income tax matters, and veterans' issues. HVLP also sponsors monthly legal advice clinics. To reach the program, call (713) 228-0732.

### Legal Handbooks

The HBA offers free handbooks in English, Spanish and other languages that answer questions on elder law, family law, and consumer law. Copies of the legal handbooks are available online at [www.hba.org](http://www.hba.org) and printed copies are available in the HBA office. To have copies mailed to you or to obtain multiple copies, call

the HBA office at (713) 759-1133 for more information.

### LegalLine

Many times, citizens need answers to legal questions or simple legal advice that can be given over the telephone in just a few minutes. Or, citizens may need a referral to other legal or social service agencies. On the first and third Wednesday of each month, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., volunteer attorneys answer telephone calls from the public. On the first Thursday of each month, the Mexican-American Bar Association and the Hispanic Bar Association answer Spanish calls during Consejos Legales, from 6-8 p.m. The LegalLine number is (713) 759-1133.

### Veterans' Legal Clinics

Volunteer attorneys provide advice and counsel to veterans at a Veterans' Legal Advice Clinic held every Friday afternoon from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center. No appointment is necessary. Legal advice clinics are also held at some residential facilities for veterans and on two Saturday's each year. If veterans need further legal assistance, they may be referred to a pro bono attorney through the Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program. For more information call (713) 228-0732.

# Community Support

## Adopt-A-School

The HBA is a partner with B.C. Elmore Middle School in the North Forest Independent School District, providing volunteers for tutoring, mentoring, and campus beautification, as well as donating books, school supplies and other learning tools. In addition, the HBA provides field trips, a newsletter, and other programs to enrich the learning environment. For more information call (713) 759-1133.

## Paul E. Stallings Blood Drive and Be The Match Bone Marrow Donor Program

For the ninth year the Houston Bar Association partnered with the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center for a blood drive within the legal community. A new component will encourage HBA members and the public to be tested as bone marrow donors and to join the national Be The Match Registry. The HBA's campaign will continue during the 2011-2012 bar year. For more information call (713) 759-1133.

## Cell Phone Donation Program

HBA members donate used cell phones and battery chargers to benefit residents of local women's shelters and women in potentially violent situations. Phones are recycled through a cellular company's program that refurbishes and sells the phones to raise money for shelters that provide women with access to emergency assistance. For more information call (713) 759-1133.

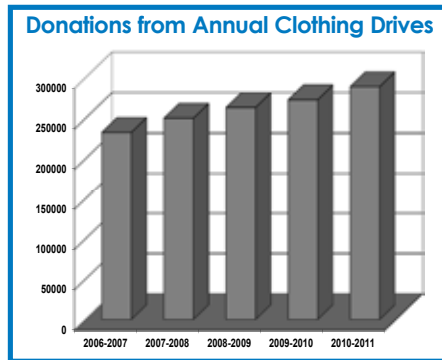
## Children's Art Exhibits

The HBA has constructed permanent art display cases at the Harris County Family Law Center. Artwork for these cases is provided by community agencies and schools. If you know of a group that would like to display art, call (713) 759-1133.

## Clothing Drive for the Homeless & Children's Clothing Drive

HBA members and support staff from law firms and corporations throughout the city have donated nearly 173,000 coats and other articles of

winter clothing to the HBA's annual coat drive for the homeless. Over 116,100 items, including clothes, diapers, and toys, have been collected in a



special spring children's clothing drive that is held each year. The items are distributed to homeless and needy citizens through local shelters and missions. For more information, call (713) 759-1133.

## Communités In Schools

The Houston Bar Association partners with Communities in Schools Houston on the Summer Legal Internship Program, which provides high school students internships and employment opportunities at Houston law firms, corporate legal departments and public legal institutions. For information, contact CIS Houston at (713) 654-1515.

## Fee Dispute Committee

The HBA Fee Dispute Committee sets up panels of attorneys and lay persons that will arbitrate disputes for free between attorneys and clients involving legal fees. For information or to obtain a Fee Dispute application, call (713) 759-1133 or visit [www.hba.org](http://www.hba.org).

## Habitat Project

The HBA each year collects funds and recruits volunteers for the construction of homes through Houston Habitat for Humanity. To date the HBA

has funded and built 14 homes. For information call (713) 759-1133.

## HAY Center Project

The HBA partners with the Houston Alumni and Youth (HAY) Center to provide legal education and support programs to youth who are aging out of the foster care system and to HAY Center staff. For information call (713) 759-1133.

## John J. Eikenburg Law Week Fun Run

The HBA has raised over \$929,000 in support of The Center, which provides education, job training, socialization, and health care to developmentally-disabled persons. A family event open to the public, the Fun Run features a certified, sanctioned 8K course, as well as a one-mile competitive run for children and a one-mile family walk. For more information, call (713) 759-1133.

## Lawyers Against Waste

Volunteers from the legal community work in conjunction with the City of Houston and Keep Houston Beautiful to organize an annual event to clean a local park. Volunteers pick up trash, mow, weed, and beautify the area. For information, call (713) 759-1133.

## Lawyers for Literacy

Each year, this committee organizes a drive to collect gently-used books for all reading levels for distribution to schools, veterans' facilities and social service agencies. The program also recruits volunteers to participate in reading enrichment programs at schools and libraries. For information, call (713) 759-1133.

## Special Olympics Committee

Attorneys, along with their families and law firm staff, have devoted thousands of volunteer hours to help with Texas Special Olympics events. Volunteers serve as judges, timekeepers, scorekeepers, and "buddies" to the special athletes who compete in events such as volleyball, softball, basketball, and swimming. For more information, call (713) 759-1133.

# Public Education

## Cyberspace Safety

The HBA and the Houston Young Lawyers Association are partnering to distribute the DVD, "R U Safe? Protecting Yourself in Cyberspace," to all schools in local school districts. Produced by the Texas Young Lawyers Association, the DVD includes four different videos that provide information for elementary, middle and high school students, as well as parents, on topics such as cyber-bullying, "sexting," and Internet predators. For information call (713) 759-1133.

## IDEA Program

The Interprofessional Drug Education Alliance (IDEA) is a partnership between the HBA and the medical community. Teams of lawyers and medical professionals visit local schools each fall and spring to educate 5th graders on the legal and medical consequences of substance abuse. For more information, call (713) 759-1133.

## Judicial Polls

Believing that an informed electorate is vital to the efficient administration of justice, the HBA asks its members to respond to three polls concerning the judiciary. In election years, a candidate qualification poll is distributed before the primary, followed by a preference poll before the general election. In non-election years, a judicial evaluation poll gives HBA members the opportunity to evaluate the performance of judges based on various criteria. The results of each of these polls are available on the HBA Web site at [www.hba.org](http://www.hba.org). For more information, call (713) 759-1133.

## Juvenile Consequences Partnership

A partnership of the HBA, the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, the Harris County District Attorney's Office and

the Houston Police Department provides information to youth who have been placed in the deferred prosecution/non-petition program, along with their parents. Each partner discusses its role in the juvenile justice system. For information call (713) 759-1133.

## Juvenile Justice Mock Trial Program

This program has reached over 37,000 students in its 36 years of service, giving them the opportunity to learn about and participate in the judicial process. Working with school districts throughout the area, HBA staff and law students help young teens prepare a "mock trial," assuming the roles of judge, jurors, attorneys, defendants, witnesses, and other court personnel. With the help of the Harris County judges, the students re-enact their trial in a Harris County Courtroom. For more information, call (713) 759-1133.

## KidZone

This section of the HBA website provides information and resources for kids, teens, adults and educators on information regarding safety, legal/government education and helpful links. Visit [www.hba.org](http://www.hba.org) and click on KidZone or call (713) 759-1133 for information.

## Law Student Center

This section of the HBA website provides information and resources for students in Houston's three law schools, to help them make the most of their law school experience and assist them as they transition from law school to practice. Visit [www.hba.org](http://www.hba.org).

## Law Week Activities

May 1, Law Day USA, was set aside by Congress in 1958 as a national day of celebrating the rule of law in our society. The HBA plans a number of special events to educate

and involve citizens in this annual event. Activities include poster, essay and video contests in local schools, legal education programs for children and teens, and extended hours for the LegalLine program. To join the celebration, call (713) 759-1133.

## People's Law School

Twice each year the HBA and the University of Houston Center for Consumer Law present a free program to teach citizens about their legal rights. Attorneys and judges present classes on legal topics such as consumer law, landlord/tenant law, criminal law, and wills & probate, as well as how to select and work with an attorney. Popular author and media personality Richard Alderman, "The People's Lawyer," coordinates the program. For more information, call (713) 743-2165 or visit [www.peopleslawyer.net](http://www.peopleslawyer.net).

## Speakers Bureau

The Houston Bar Association provides attorneys willing to speak on legal topics to schools, churches, and other community groups without charge. To arrange for a free speaker, call (713) 759-1133.

## Voir Dire Program

High school seniors learn about the jury selection process and the importance of jury duty in this program conducted by judges and lawyers in real courtrooms. For information, call (713) 759-1133.

## We Care Cards

The HBA produces a wallet-sized card that provides helpful telephone numbers for teens in crisis. The cards have been distributed free to middle schools and high schools in the Houston area for the past 20 years. For more information, call (713) 759-1133.

## Mandate on Professionalism

In 1989, the Houston Bar Association Board of Directors unanimously adopted "Professionalism: A Lawyer's Mandate," a creed encouraging its members to uphold the highest standards when dealing with clients, other lawyers, and the courts. To obtain a copy of this mandate, call (713) 759-1133 or visit [www.hba.org](http://www.hba.org).