



## Northeast Ohio attorneys' pro bono worldview

by Stephanie Beougher

Reporting pro bono activity is voluntary in Ohio, so it is difficult to get an accurate measurement of free legal services that attorneys in the state are providing. In a report by the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation to the Supreme Court of Ohio, 2,515 lawyers reported they had provided more than 96,508 hours of pro bono legal services in 2009—or an average of just over 56.6 hours per attorney. Among the largest percentage of attorneys (23.4 percent) taking part in the anonymous reporting were those who live in Northeast Ohio. For two attorneys in Cleveland, Craig Owen White and Andrew Zashin, pro bono volunteer work has taken them beyond U.S. borders to foreign countries in need of their expertise.



### Craig Owen White: Planting seeds of change

For the past three years, Craig Owen White, a partner at Hahn Loeser & Parks in Cleveland, has been traveling to South Africa through the International Senior Lawyers Project (ISLP) to teach attorneys about commercial law. "Because of

Apartheid, there were very few black businesses in the formal sector and so there were virtually no black commercial lawyers," White says. "South Africans won their freedom because Mandela, a lawyer, and others used the rule of law, and now we're making the case for black South Africans that they can do the same with commercial law." White says 450 delegates have gone through the training program, and every year more countries express interest in commercial law training. In August, he spent time in Zambia for an intense four-day program.

As a member of the New York-based ISLP's board, White is enthusiastic about the impact that ISLP's core of volunteers is having in South Africa and 41 other countries with projects designed to advance democracy, media, human rights and economic development. "We see ourselves as modern-day Johnny Appleseeds; you plant the seeds of change, you wait patiently, and you have to believe that in 5 to 10 years mighty trees will grow."



### Andrew Zashin: Creating an international nonprofit

Family law attorney Andrew Zashin, Zashin & Rich Co., LPA in Cleveland, has dealt with international custody issues, but says his blood boiled when he read that a man's children would not be returned to Israel because the U.S. judge agreed with the mother that it was a war zone. "It upset

me profoundly, and I contacted the Israeli lawyers to offer help with U.S. court," Zashin says. "There is a dearth of practical in-

formation on this kind of issue, and people and courts just don't know what to do." Zashin's answer to the lack of information has been to form the Center for International Child Custody and Relocation (CICCAR).

Pronounced "key-car," CICCAR is based in Israel—where Zashin frequently travels while maintaining his practice in Ohio. Zashin is assembling a group of lawyers, academics and psychological professionals to talk about compliance with the international treaty on child abduction and to help be a resource. The group held its first convention at Case Western Reserve School of Law in Cleveland earlier this year and a second conference took place in Israel in May. "We plan to create position papers on specific international child custody issues and create a unique interdisciplinary panel of experts that might be useful to lawyers and judges."

### Resources

To see more about Zashin's CICCAR, including resources and reference materials, the website is [www.ciccar.org/index.html](http://www.ciccar.org/index.html). Information about the ISLP's many programs and pro bono opportunities is available at <http://islp.org>.

If you know someone in the legal field who has contributed a significant amount of time to his or her community and would be a good subject for a future "Beyond the Courtroom" column, contact Nina Corbut, *Ohio Lawyer* Editor, at [ncorbut@ohioabar.org](mailto:ncorbut@ohioabar.org). ■

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