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IN BRIEFSM

Holiday 2010

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Happy Holidays from BGS

By Firm President Jeffrey Johnson



Greetings from your friends and counselors at Barna, Guzy & Steffen. In the last IN BRIEF issue of the year, it is our custom to highlight just a few of the community service projects in which our staff has participated

over the last twelve months. This year, as usual, I am pleased by the long and impressive list of our employees' volunteer endeavors.

BGS has been recognized as a leader in support of volunteerism and service to the community. As an organization, BGS reinforces this position with its employees by expressly including service in the BGS Mission Statement. I've set forth below a few relevant excerpts from our Mission Statement:

"Our mission is to be recognized as the best and most innovative law firm in our market.

... We will pursue this vision in a collegial atmosphere which:

... Recognizes the value of a meaningful community, professional and civic life...."

I'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of the BGS employees for their participation in these worthy projects.

On behalf of all of us at Barna, Guzy & Steffen, I wish you a very Happy Holiday and a joyful and prosperous New Year.

Habitat For Humanity

For the seventh year, BGS worked on a Habitat for Humanity home. The group worked on renovating a single-family home in East St. Paul. Unlike last year, which featured constant rain and temperatures in the 40's, May 6, 2010 was warm and sunny.

Five attorneys from BGS participated: Bill Huefner, Scott Lepak, Susan Tegt, Susan Sheely, and Dan Ganter. Three staff members also helped: Brian Harvison, Sandy Nelson, and Sarah Thies.

The men got the better assignment, nailing siding in the sun. The women spent much of their time in the dark basement refinishing railing and trim, but both groups worked hard that day.

As usual, we all enjoyed our time together helping this great charity. BGS is proud of the commitment to this charitable event made by its attorneys and staff.





Stockings for Soldiers

Last year, Barna, Guzy & Steffen paralegal Terry Paul and his wife, Vicki, coordinated a third successful Stockings for Soldiers event at Barna, Guzy & Steffen.

The program, created by Paul and his wife, seeks to send a little Christmas cheer to deployed Minnesota units both of the National Guard and Reserve. They obtain the names of individual soldiers, and make them a stocking and a card. The stockings and cards are then handed out to volunteers at the firm (staff and

attorneys), along with a list of most requested items from Soldiers. The volunteers fill the stocking with gifts/items for the individual soldier and personalize the card. Many of the volunteers received personal responses from the soldier. The volunteers put the stockings in a separate envelope and return it to the Paul's for shipping. The law firm of BGS provides the funds for the postage on the shipment.



Pictured are just a couple of the many soldiers who received stockings in 2009

BGS Takes Pro Bono Aspiration to Heart

The Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct state that every lawyer should “aspire” to provide at least 50 hours of pro bono legal services each year. Unfortunately, because this is merely an aspiration and not a requirement, many lawyers fail to meet this goal. Most have good intentions, but simply can’t find room in their busy schedules to provide pro bono legal services. This is not the case at Barna, Guzy & Steffen, where the firm has made a strong commitment to serving worthy pro bono clients.

Among the firm’s active pro bono attorneys is Kip Peterson, whose practice focuses on corporate law and business transactions. Over the past year, Kip has represented two non-profit corporations – The Liz Logelin Foundation and The Diaper Drive – throughout the process of incorporation and applying for tax-exempt status. These organizations support particularly worthy causes and both have made an immediate impact on the community, providing support for families in need. BGS considers it a privilege to represent these organizations.

The Liz Logelin Foundation

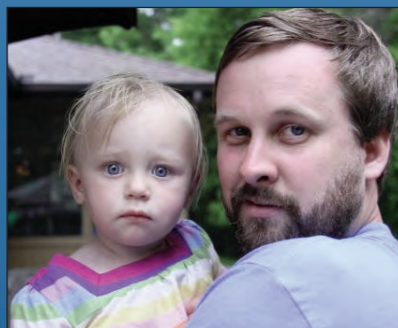
27 hours after the birth of their first child, Matt Logelin’s wife, Liz, passed away. Matt turned to the blog he had originally started to share news and photographs with family members to mourn. As Matt’s story spread, he began receiving support from a growing number of complete strangers.

In honor of Liz, Matt established The Liz Logelin Foundation to assist families who find themselves in the heartbreaking, catastrophic situation of having lost a spouse, life-partner, and parent. The Foundation’s goal is to financially assist these families as they deal with

the loss of their loved ones and struggle to move forward.

Matt’s blog, available online at www.mattlogelin.com, is followed by thousands of people around the world. His story has been featured in the Star Tribune and People Magazine and he has appeared on Oprah and Rachel Ray. His book, “Two Kisses for Maddy: A Memoir of Loss & Love” goes on sale in April and 7% (Liz’s lucky number) of the proceeds will benefit The Liz Logelin Foundation.

If you are interested in learning more about The Liz Logelin Foundation, go to www.thelizlogelinfoundation.org.



Matt Logelin and his daughter Maddy

The Diaper Drive

While cleaning out a closet at home, Kristen Grode found several packages of disposable diapers her children had outgrown. Kristen set out to research where she could donate the diapers and discovered there was a tremendous need for such items but no organization existed to fill the need. Just as the recession has increased the demand on food shelves for things to eat, the need for diapers has also grown. In

fact, statistics show that 1 in 3 American mothers struggle to provide diapers for their children. However, diapers are not covered by WIC or food stamps.

As a mother of two young children, Kristen recognized the importance of clean diapers and began calling family and friends for donations. Before long, The Diaper Drive was born. The Diaper Drive collects disposable diapers, sanitary wipes, and other toiletries and distributes them to local food shelves, shelters, and other organizations where the items are then provided to families in need. The Diaper Drive relies heavily on grass-roots events like “diaper drives” and spaghetti dinners to collect diapers. Collection stations are also located at a number of local churches, grocery stores, and other businesses. Furthermore, now that it is a tax-exempt organization, The Diaper Drive is eligible to receive diapers directly from Kimberly Clark Corp., the maker of Huggies, who has pledged to donate up to 20 million diapers to diaper banks across the U.S.

If you are interested in learning more about The Diaper Drive, go to www.thediaperdrive.org. Also, mark your calendars for January 15, 2011, when The Diaper Drive will hold “The Biggest Diaper Drive in America” in the Mall of America’s Best Buy Rotunda from 9am to 9pm.

Kip R. Peterson is an associate in the corporate department. Kip’s practice includes general business and corporate transactions, contracts, and employment law. You can reach Kip at 763-783-5179 or kpeterson@bgs.com.



The Anoka County Bar Association and Constitution Day

By William D. Siegel

I have the pleasure of serving as 2010-2011 Anoka County Bar Association President. The Anoka Bar Association is the 21st district of the Minnesota Bar Association. Its membership is primarily made up of attorneys that live or work in Anoka County. Our organization seeks to help lawyers become better lawyers by providing social and educational opportunities for its members. It seeks to aid the courts in the administration of justice. It also seeks to provide social information to the public about the law, including connecting people with lawyers who practice in relevant practice areas.

Constitution Day commemorates the signing of the U.S. Constitution on

September 17, 1787. This year Constitution Day was celebrated in schools across the country during the week of September 13-17th. During this week attorneys and Judges of the Anoka Bar Association volunteered their time to teach 5th grade students at Lincoln School of the Arts in Anoka and the PACT Charter School in Ramsey about the Constitution. Students learned the history of the United States Constitution, as well as about the separation of powers, and the Bill of Rights. In the classrooms where I did presentations I divided the class into the legislative, executive and judicial branches. The students learned how a bill becomes law by first proposing a bill in Congress and debating it. The students playing the role of

members of Congress voted the bill into law, then sent it to the student playing the President who had to make a decision to either sign it or veto it. After the President signed the bill into law the students playing members of the Supreme Court considered whether the law was constitutional or not. This turned out to be a very rewarding experience for the volunteers who participated in this event. The Anoka Bar Association hopes to have even more members and schools involved for Constitution Day in 2011.

The Gift of Adoption

By William D. Siegel

As a family law attorney I deal with some of the most emotionally difficult areas found in the practice of law, including divorce, modifications of child custody and domestic abuse. However, there is one area of my practice filled with joy, happiness and love. This area is adoption. At Barna, Guzy and Steffen, Ltd. we have four experienced family law attorneys who regularly do adoptions for clients. The most common type of adoption involves consent adoptions where a step-father is adopting his wife’s child or children and the biological father agrees to the adoption.

On Christmas Eve 2009, I had the joyous experience of starting my holiday by finalizing an adoption. As you may recall,

on that day a winter blizzard hit the Twin Cities. Although this made for an extra white Christmas, it also made travel difficult and treacherous. After almost sliding off the road on more than one occasion, I finally arrived downtown at the Hennepin County Juvenile Court to meet my smiling and joy-filled client and his family. This adoption was unique because it involved a step-father who was adopting his 18 year-old step-daughter. The step-daughter was home from her first year of college and Christmas Eve provided a perfect opportunity to finalize the adoption process. After the hearing was completed my client and his family posed for pictures with the Judge. I left court that day feeling filled with happiness and knowing that I had been a part of a truly special

holiday gift that had been given by my client to his step-daughter.

Adoption laws vary a lot from state to state, and adoption is an area of the law where technical compliance with the law is very important. If you or anyone you know is interested in pursuing an adoption or has another family related law issue, our four family law attorneys offer initial consultations for a minimal fee.

William D. Siegel is a shareholder at BGS practicing in Family Law. For more information about these articles or to set up a consultation for a minimal fee please call 763-783-5148.

