Letter from HAP Board President, Jon M. Katona, Esquire

This year, HAP is reviewing and revising its five-year Strategic Plan, which was last completed in 2013. HAP has assembled a team of board members, HAP staff, and consultants to drive this process. HAP’s mission, “To provide free, high quality civil legal services to individuals and families who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness in Philadelphia,” and “to advocate to protect the rights of persons who are homeless,” continues to guide HAP. In revising its Strategic Plan, HAP will build on what it has done right over the past five years, and address new challenges facing the organization.

The team reviewed HAP’s remarkable successes since its last Strategic Plan. HAP’s SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Project, Veterans Project, and Children, Youth, and Families Project (CFP) have helped several thousand individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. HAP successfully sued New York City to force it to change birth certificate processing procedures, and served as a plaintiff and expert witness in the successful Pennsylvania voter ID litigation. HAP also made itself more financially self-sustaining through contracts to manage SOAR and other programs, and, in the process, earned the respect of government agencies that manage these benefits.

But with success comes challenges. HAP must respond to funding cuts to homeless programs, and address the new landscape for homeless service providers and HAP’s vulnerable clients. Through the strategic planning process, HAP will position itself to better serve its clients and to help ensure homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time.

The past year has been a fruitful one. HAP received a general operating grant as a “high performing non-profit” from the Barra Foundation and a grant from the Oak Foundation (of London) to launch the SOAR Justice Project. And JEVS renewed HAP’s contract to provide SOAR to single parents participating in the Pennsylvania DHS Work Ready Program. Last year, HAP helped hundreds of clients through these and other programs.

On the advocacy front, HAP received $75,000 in legal fees from New York City in connection with the HAP v. New York City birth certificate litigation. More importantly, now that the litigation is settled, the first 50 HAP clients received their birth certificates from New York City. On the home front, HAP successfully stopped Philadelphia’s practice of waking homeless individuals with a foghorn in the Concourse at Suburban Station. Also, HAP attorneys Alie Muolo and Michele Levy submitted a letter to the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs urging Congress to pass Section 3 of S. 1702 - the Homeless Veterans Prevention Act of 2017, which would allow the Veterans Administration to fund legal services for homeless veterans.

These achievements would not be possible without your support. We appreciate your continued generosity, which helps HAP address the challenges posed by the ever-changing environment facing the organization and its many clients. Together, we are working to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness in Philadelphia.

Sincerely,

Jon M. Katona, Esquire
HAP Welcomes

Patrick McNeil joined HAP in early 2018 as a Paralegal. He helps clients who are applying for federal disability benefits through the SOAR Project. Patrick interviews clients, obtains, reviews, and analyzes medical and other supporting records, files claims, writes support letters, and advocates on behalf of clients. Prior to joining HAP, Patrick was a social worker for Resources for Human Development, working directly with those in shelters diagnosed as mentally ill, and linking them with treatment, housing resources, benefits, and more.

Ann Mintz joined HAP in 2018 as a Development Manager. Ann has decades of experience in non-profit management and development with substantial experience raising funds for capital initiatives, programs, and operations. Prior to HAP she served as Manager of Development and Special Projects at the Reading Terminal Market, and Director of Strategy and Development at University City District.

Madeline Sherry joined HAP in 2018 as a Volunteer Coordinator. She recruits and supports law firms and corporate legal departments for HAP’s “Adopt-a-Shelter” program. Madeline organizes introductory and substantive legal trainings for volunteers. Prior to joining the HAP staff, Madeline was a partner in a regional law firm where she focused her practice in civil litigation. Madeline has been involved with HAP since its inception, has served as the President of the Board, and has performed volunteer service with HAP for many years.

Diamond Thomas joined HAP in the fall of 2017 as a Paralegal. She works primarily with the DHS SOAR Project, which provides assistance to disabled youth to obtain SSI benefits as they are released into society as adults. Prior to joining HAP, Diamond worked in litigation with a focus on toxic torts and environmental matters.

2018 HAP Board of Directors

Neta Borshansky
Dennis Brennan
Lynn Charytan
Jon Cochran
Thomas Duffy
Jennings F. Durand
Michael Eagles
Ilana H. Eisenstein
Jack L. Foltz
Kenneth L. Gibb
Laura Grossi-Tyson
Stephen Harvey
Michael B. Hayes
Jennedy S. Johnson
Jon Katona
Gregory Kleiber
Lawrence J. Kotler
Michael D. LiPuma
Sandra Madden
Susan May
Brooke E. McGlinn
Eric Meyer
Margaret A. Morris
Constance Naylor
David Newmann
Brian S. North
Jeff P. Palazzese
Grant S. Palmer
Wesley R. Payne IV
Brian D. Pedrow
Heather E. Rennie
Jessica A. Rickabaugh
Jennifer L. Seme
Carol Nelson Shepherd
Madeline M. Sherry
Nancy A. Smith
George A. Voegele, Jr.
Thomas J. Wamser
Laura Weinbaum
Christopher C. Fallon, Jr.
Scott P. Towers

Executive Director
Marsha I. Cohen
Managing Attorney
Michele Levy
Senior Staff Attorney
Patricia Malley
Staff Attorneys
Neha Y. Chiaramonte
Laura Kolb
Patricia Malley
Alie Muolo
Meg Retz
Michael Taub
Paralegals
Patrick McNeil
Diamond Thomas

Director of Operations
Tanya Rambert
Director of Development
Alexandra Morigi
Development Manager
Ann Mintz
Volunteer Coordinator
Madeline M. Sherry
Office Administrator
Margianne P. Smith
Office Assistant
Joy Harris
HAP has expanded the reach of its successful SOAR Project. In January 2018, with funding from the London-based Oak Foundation, HAP launched the “SOAR Justice Project,” which rapidly secures federal disability benefits for disabled individuals who are involved with the criminal justice system and are transitioning back into the community. With access to stable income and accompanying medical insurance, these individuals can achieve greater stability, thereby avoiding a return to homelessness and recidivism.

Since 2007, HAP’s legal representation utilized the SOAR protocol – an expedited application process – to secure Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability (SSD) benefits for more than 2,100 men, women, and youth who were homeless, or at imminent risk of homelessness, and who were too sick to work. HAP has maintained a 98% success rate and a quick processing time of only 52 days from application filing. Many of HAP’s disabled clients had been denied SSI/SSD benefits many times prior to HAP’s representation via SOAR.

HAP created the SOAR Justice Project in collaboration with Philadelphia’s First Judicial District Criminal Specialty (Diversionary) Courts and the Philadelphia Department of Prisons. Financial support for the Project comes from the Oak Foundation, which is well-versed in the areas of poverty and homelessness in Philadelphia and abroad. The Scattergood Foundation, another SOAR Justice Project partner, will evaluate housing and benefit outcomes during the course of the grant and thereafter.

Through its SOAR Justice Project, HAP provides legal representation to participants of four of Philadelphia’s specialty courts:

- Mental Health Court, where defendants serve a county sentence and/or probation for a non-violent felony crime and have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness;
- Veteran’s Court, where defendants have been charged with a non-violent misdemeanor crime and are former or active members of the military, often suffering from PTSD and other service-related conditions;
- Project Dawn Court, where women, many suffering from severe trauma, have been charged with prostitution offenses; and
- Drug Treatment Court, where defendants are non-violent drug or drug-related offenders and have been diagnosed with mental illness.

Patricia Malley, HAP’s Senior Staff Attorney, administers the SOAR Justice Project. To initiate the Project, Pat created procedures to facilitate access to incarcerated clients as well as to their treatment and social service records. Pat also conducted trainings for Specialty Court personnel and social services staff, and developed a specialized court referral process.

HAP’s SOAR Justice Project is an extension of a more limited pilot that HAP developed in late 2013 with seed funding from the Barra Foundation and the Samuel S. Fels Fund. The pilot, called the “SOAR Re-Entry Project,” involved collaborations with the Philadelphia Prison System and Philadelphia’s Re-Entry Mental Health Court and assisted psychiatrically impaired inmates establish SSI/SSD eligibility while incarcerated so that benefits could be activated immediately upon release from prison. SSI is usually the only income source available to ex-offenders whose mental health problems are so severe that they cannot work. Eighty inmates were referred to the Re-Entry Project. After evaluating the merits of each case, HAP secured favorable outcomes for 63 disabled former prisoners during a 2-1/2 year period. HAP staff welcomed the opportunity to expand upon the pilot’s success with the creation of the SOAR Justice Project.

Although only in existence for six months, HAP’s SOAR Justice Project has already secured 14 favorable outcomes, including successful SSI/SSDI claims for participants in each of the four specialty courts. To fully appreciate the Project’s significance, here is a recent success story, a Veterans Court referral involving JD, a 52-year-old Iraqi war veteran who served in the military for 16 years.

JD suffers from very severe PTSD and major depression with psychotic features, related to his military service. When HAP Senior Staff Attorney Pat Malley met JD, he was 70% Service-Connected for PTSD and received roughly $1,300 a month in VA compensation benefits. (This is close to only 125% of the federal poverty level.) The SOAR Justice Project helped JD qualify for an additional SSD award of approximately $1,500 per month – more than doubling his monthly income. In addition, JD was awarded over one year of back disability benefits totaling around $24,000. JD just moved into his own apartment with a VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) Voucher, after experiencing homelessness and living at a veterans’ transitional shelter. With a stable livable income, an apartment, and health care through the VA Medical Center, JD is well on his way to living a life of security and independence. HAP is grateful to all who have supported this initiative.
This year's Annual Benefit took place at the Sofitel Philadelphia on April 5, 2018. Led by Event Co-Chairs Larry Kotler, Sandra Madden, and Jennifer Seme, the Benefit raised $210,000 through sponsorships, ticket sales, private donations, and a silent auction. Many thanks to the Fundraising Committee consisting of HAP Board Members: Laura Grossi-Tyson, Jenney Johnson, Margie Morris, Jeff Palazzese, Carol Nelson Shepherd, Madeline Sherry, Nancy Smith, Blaine Stanley, and Tom Wamser.

Thank You to HAP’s Generous Sponsors

PRESENTING
Lincoln Financial Foundation | Morgan Lewis

GOLD
Exelon | Robert E. Keith, Jr. | Merck

PEARL
Blank Rome | Fox Rothschild | Reed Smith | Ballard Spahr
Comcast | Cozen O’Connor | Dechert | DLA Piper US
Duffy + Partners | Jack Foltz | Hangley Aronchick
Hogan Lovells US | Pepper Hamilton | The Reliable Companies
Saul Ewing | White and Williams

SILVER
Buchanan Ingersoll
Beneficial Bank | Reger Rizzo | Reilly McDevitt | Soloman Law

BRONZE
Jon Katona | Christopher Fallon, Jr.
Feldman Shepherd | Subaru of America, Inc. | Nancy Smith
Dilworth Paxson | Duane Morris | Courtney and Chuck Ercole
Gibbons | Independence Blue Cross | Independence Foundation
Kline & Specter | Rita and Larry Kotler | Michael LiPuma
Marshall Dennehey | Panitch Schwarze | PNC | Louis Podel, Esquire | Nancy and John Rogers
Saltz Mongeluzzi | Carol Nelson Shepherd | Madeline Sherry and Frank Devine | E. Blaine Stanley
USI Affinity | Julie and Tom Wamser | Wapner Newman

Save the Date | HAP Annual Benefit | April 4, 2019

Foundation Grants
Alpin J. and Alpin W. Cameron Memorial Fund
Barra Foundation
BNY Mellon
Breaking the Cycle Foundation
City of Philadelphia DBH Contract
City of Philadelphia DHS Contract
City of Philadelphia OHS Contract
Connelly Foundation
Dolfinger-Mcmahon Foundation
Duffy Fellowship
Gibson Holden Foundation
Henrietta Tower Wurts Memorial Foundation
Independence Foundation
IOLTA
IOLTA Drexel Law
JEVS
Lincoln Financial Foundation
Merck
Oak Foundation
Patricia Kind Family Foundation
PECO/Exelon
Perimeter
Pew Charitable Trusts
Philadelphia Bar Foundation
Philadelphia Foundation
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Scattergood Foundation
The Seybert Foundation
Veterans Service Center/SSVF

Cy Pres Awards
Berger Montague
Francis & Mailman
Thank you for contributing to HAP’s 2017 Annual Appeal, Annual Benefit, and/or United Way Donor Choice
Yes, I’d like to support HAP…

Name: ___________________________________________________________________________________

Firm/Affiliation: _______________________________________________________________________

Address: ______________________________________________________________________________

Phone: __________________________ Email: _________________________________

I would like to support HAP by donating:

☐ $25  ☐ $50  ☐ $100  ☐ $250  ☐ $500  ☐ $1,000  ☐ $_______

I would like to make monthly donations of $__________.

☐ Enclosed is a check payable to “HAP”.

☐ Please charge this contribution to my: ☐ VISA  ☐ MasterCard  ☐ American Express

Card Number: ___________________________ Expiration Date: __________ (MM/YY)

Name as it appears on credit card and mailing address associated with credit card:

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your interest and help.