



***JAMLAC***

***Justice and Mercy  
Legal Aid Clinic***

***Providing a legal aid presence of quality care for  
long-term cases.***

***Information Packet***

# **JAMLAC**

## **JUSTICE AND MERCY LEGAL AID CLINIC (JAMLAC)**

### **BACKGROUND**

Over the past months, a steering committee has been working on a strategic plan for a Christian legal aid “hospital” in the greater Denver area. The Christian Legal Society of Metro Denver has already established volunteer legal aid clinics providing one-hour legal and spiritual consultations at the Denver Rescue Mission (DRM) and the Salvation Army (SA), and hopes to establish more in the future. A shortcoming of these clinics, however, is that they offer a mere bandaid for major legal problems requiring in-depth, long-term care. The clinics’ director has requested members of the steering committee work to establish a “full service” legal aid presence to provide quality care for meritorious long-term cases. We continue in the planning and praying mode. This document is a working “project description.” As we continue this process “[w]e pray that God by his power, will fulfill all [our] good intentions and faithful deeds” (II Thess. 1:11b) regarding a full service legal aid “hospital” in the Denver metro area.

### **JAMLAC STEERING COMMITTEE**

Preston Branaugh, Attorney, Private Practice.  
Jim Helfritch, Attorney, Private Practice  
Candy McCune, Attorney, Private Practice  
Dee McDonald, Director of Teaching Coaches, Clayton Foundation  
Sulma Mendoza, Paralegal, Sturniolo & Associates  
Shontel Wicks, Paralegal, Wick Professional Services  
Steve Thompson, Attorney, Private Practice

### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

To share Christ’s love by teaming with other Christian ministries to provide legal help to the poor and oppressed in the Denver metro area.

### **WHAT IS JAMLAC**

A Christian legal aid staff and full-time office that will be visible and available to individuals served by ministries who focus on aiding the poor in the Denver Metropolitan area.

### **WHO JAMLAC SERVES**

JAMLAC will primarily serve homeless persons who are attempting to get off the street and individuals at risk of becoming homeless. JAMLAC believes that persons it serves must be willing to accept assistance for other obstacles to recovery, such as substance abuse treatment and

job training, in order to benefit from long-term legal care. JAMLAC also believes in helping people before they become homeless—an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

JAMLAC will serve the poor, oppressed, and disenfranchised regardless of belief or religion or ability to pay. JAMLAC clients will come primarily from referral by the Denver Rescue Mission, Joshua Station, the Salvation Army, Samaritan House, local Christian churches, and other Christ-centered organizations helping homeless and low income people.

### **PHYSICAL FACILITY:**

JAMLAC's "home base" will be at Joshua Station, housed with the law offices of project director Steve Thompson. The Denver Rescue Mission and Salvation Army will provide "satellite" offices (dual use with the "triage" clinics). JAMLAC staff and volunteers will also travel to other locations (Champa House and others) since the population we are called to serve often has transportation challenges.

### **STAFFING:**

**COORDINATOR:** Full time paid paralegal (potentially Sulma Mendoza).

**DIRECTOR AND SUPERVISING ATTORNEY:** This position will either be volunteer or paid part-time depending on funding and the steering committee's decision. Steve Thompson will fill this role.

**CONTRACT ATTORNEYS:** JAMLAC will engage contract attorneys who are willing to take cases at a reduced rate. These attorneys would be paid by JAMLAC utilizing funds from Clients who pay based on a sliding scale set up by the board (again from *pro bono* to a maximum set by the board based on income and circumstances) and from the funds raised for JAMLAC. The "contract lawyers" will be compensated at a rate determined by the board. An example is the "Office of a Child's Representative" where appointed attorneys receive \$45/hour out of court and \$55/hour in court. The steering committee will evaluate the funds available for payment of contract attorneys along with the payment able to be contributed by the Client in order to determine whether or not all or a portion of the attorneys will be volunteers. With the recent *pro bono* services encouragement attorneys are receiving from the Colorado Supreme Court, JAMLAC will seek to provide opportunities for Christian attorneys to fulfill their *pro bono* requirements.

**VOLUNTEER ATTORNEYS/LAW STUDENT VOLUNTEERS:** JAMLAC will utilize and co-counsel with volunteer attorneys, paralegals and law students. Law students will be supervised by volunteer attorneys or the attorney Director.

JAMLAC staff and volunteers will be required to agree to the Christian Legal Society statement of faith to insure that we maintain a distinctively Christian orientation to JAMLAC and to make clear that this is **CHRISTIAN** Legal Aid.

## **GOVERNANCE:**

JAMLAC will start out under the 501(c) (3) umbrella of Joshua Station's parent organization, Mile High Ministries, and will report to the MHM board. An initial steering committee has been formed to develop the project to the point of start-up. A supervisory Steering Committee will be set in place to institute policies and guidelines for JAMLAC, to monitor the financial affairs, to provide employer supervision to the Director, and to work with the supervising board of Mile High Ministries.

JAMLAC will also have an oversight and case review committee which reports to the Steering Committee. Potential cases will be reviewed, prioritized, and chosen for legal representation based on criteria established by the Director and the committee, including the client's economic circumstances, the merit of the claims, the client's commitment toward overcoming other causes of homelessness, relevance of the legal issue in regard to overcoming homelessness, and the availability of other resources to address the legal issue.

JAMLAC's financial affairs will be ultimately supervised by Mile High Ministries. The steering committee will be responsible for developing a working budget and directing fundraising efforts as well as regularly evaluating the financial needs and procedures of the ministry.

**BUDGET/FUNDING:** We are asking the Lord to provide JAMLAC with seed funding. Our goal is to raise enough money through initial efforts to fund the ministry for a minimum of one year. An attached budget indicates \$4,800 is needed for initial start-up costs and \$79,200 in operating cost for the first year of operation in order to fully staff JAMLAC. The steering committee will continue the search for grants and other funding sources trusting the Lord Jesus to continue to provide for the ongoing needs of the ministry.

## **PLAN OF ACTION:**

- 1) **FIRST THINGS FIRST, CONTINUE TO PRAY!**
- 2) Finalize governing documents, structure of supervisory Steering Committee, organizational chart, policies and procedures.
- 3) Develop funding. The steering committee has prepared this document and gathered other materials to share with those attending the fundraising event of August 2005. This information will be used to contact individual funding sources, group funding sources, ministries being served, the national Christian Legal Society and other sources for grants and funding. Local law firms with Christian Legal Society members will be contacted for specific requests, i.e. legal library, office supplies, office equipment, etc. as well as identification of attorneys and their areas of practice who may be willing to serve as contract or *pro bono* attorneys or co-counsel for JAMLAC cases.
- 4) Develop and follow timeline for implementing the project. Tentatively, the initial steering committee will determine in the late fall, 2005, the level of funding received or identified and set the project budget and staffing accordingly. They will identify and put in place a more permanent supervisory Steering Committee operating under approved By-Laws no later than December, 2005. As the Lord provides, staff will be hired to start as of January, 2006, with a projected Grand Opening in late January, 2006.

**JAMLAC Organizational Scriptures:**

Jeremiah 22:16. Speaking of King Josiah the prophet Jeremiah says:

“He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me? Declares the Lord.”

**Micah 6:8. Speaking against the injustice in Israel and the attempt to buy God’s favor with sacrifice God says through the prophet:**

**He has showed you what is good  
and  
what does the Lord require of you?  
to act justly  
and  
to love mercy  
and  
to walk humbly with your God.**

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.  
Psalm 20:7

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Psalm 9:9

You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more. Psalm 10:17-18

You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor, but the Lord is their refuge. Psalm 14:6

The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love. Psalm 33:5

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Ps. 34:18.

My whole being will exclaim, “Who is like you, O Lord? You rescue the poor from those too strong for them, the poor and needy from those who rob them.” Ps. 35:10

God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Ps. 46:1-3.

For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight. Ps. 72:12-14.

***Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. Ps. 82:3-4.***

The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. Ps. 103:6

The Lord abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight. Prov. 11:1

Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent, the Lord detests them both. Prov. 17:15.

He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done. Prov. 19:17.

If a person shuts their ears to the cry of the poor, they too will cry out and not be answered. Prov. 21:13.

The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the Lord. Prov. 21:31.

Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court, for the Lord will take up their case and will plunder those who plunder them. Prov. 22:22-23.

Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a rich man whose ways are perverse. Prov. 28:6.

He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses. Prov. 28:27.

The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern. Proverbs 29:7.

***Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. Proverbs 31:9.***

*Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:*

*to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke,  
to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?*

*Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter,  
when you see the naked, to cloth him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?*

*Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your  
righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you  
will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.*

*If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you  
spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light  
will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you  
always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You  
will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. You people will rebuild  
ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken  
Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings. . .*

*Then you will find your joy in the Lord. . .*

Isaiah 58:6-12,14.

Amos (Especially chapter 4)

“So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers,  
adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress  
the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me,” says the  
Lord. Malachi 3:5

Galatians 2:10: All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very  
thing I was eager to do.

Galatians 3:28. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you  
are all one in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:14-16: For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has  
destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility . . . his purpose was to create in himself  
one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of  
them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

## **JAMLAC Organizational Principles and Priorities** **(Corporate Values)**

**Humility.** In the legal profession (as well as in society at large) Christian humility is essential and often missing. The essence of humility is servanthood and Christian Legal Aid should start with the understanding that we are following the example of our Lord who took the servants towel and washed the dirty feet of his Disciples, even the one that one betray him, the one that would deny him, and the rest who would forsake him.

**Honesty.** In a world filled with half-truths, deception, and “spinning,” Christian Legal Aid should utilize only such means as are consistent with truth and honor, that will not seek to mislead, and that are in keeping with the God’s word.

**Integrity.** In a world where a person’s professional and personal lives are often separated, Christian Legal Aid workers should be committed to the concept that our personal lives and character matter.

**Respect** for the dignity of all people. In our particular context there continues to be a great deal of discrimination and it is often easier (to use the terminology of other organizations) to offer a hand out rather than a hand up, it is important to help people help themselves for their own dignity as people who are created in the image of God. Galatians 3:28