

Wyeth Window, a Global Publication for Wyeth Employees, April 2009



From left: Bret I. Parker, Vice President, Chief Trademark & Copyright Counsel and Assistant General Counsel and Larry Stein, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, Wyeth, with Nancy Eberhardt, Director, New Jersey Program, and Christine Michelle Duffy, Senior Staff Attorney, Pro Bono Partnership.

Serving the Agencies that Serve our Communities

For years, Wyeth has supported its nonprofit community partners through corporate contributions and product donations. The Wyeth Law Department has now taken this commitment in New Jersey and elsewhere to another level by dedicating part of its award-winning pro bono legal resources to support [Pro Bono Partnership](#). Pro Bono Partnership is one of the largest providers of free business legal services, educational workshops and other legal resources to nonprofit community-based organizations in the area.

In recognition of the Law Department's dedication, the Partnership has named Wyeth one of its Outstanding Volunteers of 2008. "These attorneys are exemplars of what is best in our profession," said Partnership Executive Director Richard Hobish. "They have dedicated themselves to the business legal needs of nonprofit organizations that would otherwise not have access to professional advice. These agencies, in turn, serve the disadvantaged in communities throughout the region."

Nonprofit Needs

The Partnership solicits and vets applications for assistance submitted by area nonprofits, many of whom do not have legal representation, staff or the financial flexibility to hire an outside attorney. The organizations' needs are diverse: understanding human resources, staffing and labor laws; resolving financial issues, many due to decreasing funding as a result of the faltering U.S. economy; and licensing their unique program content to protect the intellectual property they have created.

Wyeth attorneys have worked on nearly 20 cases with the Partnership so far, including a trademark filing for [The Prostate Net](#), a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping prostate cancer patients and their families make informed treatment decisions. The advocacy group wanted to protect its [Barbershop Initiative](#)[™] brand from infringement. Virgil Simons, Founder and President of The Prostate Net, said, "I cannot begin to place a value on the work done by Wyeth attorney Michele Farber and Senior Trademark Analyst Colleen Adams in connection with our trademark filings. Their diligent research and persistent efforts in fighting through impediments have effectively positioned us as a stronger, more credible organization."

A "Brief" History of Success

Wyeth began its relationship with Pro Bono Partnership in 2008 in an effort to expand the reach of its already successful pro bono programs in Madison, Collegeville and Cambridge. Wyeth's other pro bono partner organizations cater mostly to individuals who need legal representation in civil litigation matters rather than nonprofit organizations that need counseling and assistance in transactions and similar matters.

Bret I. Parker, Vice President, Chief Trademark & Copyright Counsel and Assistant General Counsel, who also serves as director of the pro bono program, explained, "The work we do with the Partnership has allowed us to expand Wyeth's pro bono program to the handling of non-litigation legal matters and allowed us to help nonprofit organizations. With our help, they can focus on doing what they do best while leaving the lawyering to us."

Unexpected Advantages

Wyeth's pro bono program was initiated by Larry Stein, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, in June 2007. Pro bono programs are an important tradition in law firms but less common in corporate law departments and are traditionally staffed more by attorneys than by other staff. While attending a conference on the subject, however, "a light went on," said Larry. "I realized the corporate pro bono model can be achieved on any scale, and can incorporate not just attorneys in the department but also our very capable analysts, paralegals and administrative colleagues working in conjunction with our attorneys."

The program allows Law Department employees to sign up on a volunteer basis for cases that meet their areas of interest and work within the schedules of their busy day jobs. It's an opportunity for employees to work outside of their practice areas, collaborate with members of the Law Department with whom they do not normally work, augment their skill sets, and simultaneously help deserving organizations and individuals.

"Our volunteer attorneys and staff are demonstrating Wyeth's values by helping to serve a vast unmet need for legal services in our area," said Larry. "I am proud of what we have accomplished through our pro bono program and look forward to seeing the program continue to grow."