

Volunteer Spotlight: Mark Benevenia & Vance Camisa, Merck & Co. + Creative Heartwork

Pro bono legal work not only can redirect much-needed dollars to programming but can add extensive and immeasurable value to an organization's operations.

The Legal Need and Solution

To expand the reach of its services, **Creative Heartwork (CH)**, an organization to provide art therapy for medically, emotionally, and physically traumatized individuals, envisioned a close, symbiotic relationship with University Hospital in Newark (University Hospital). Ultimately, the arrangement involved CH independently holding space within University Hospital itself to conduct creative art therapy for patients. University Hospital referred patients to CH, and those patients had the opportunity to access CH and its programs right there in the hospital. Additionally, CH and University Hospital coordinated through weekly project meetings and CH provided lectures and training to University Hospital staff.

Mark Benevenia and **Vance Camisa**, respectively Managing and Senior Counsel with **Merck & Co.**, helped make the vision a reality by negotiating a license agreement giving CH exclusive use of more than 1,200 square feet of office space within University Hospital to conduct its operations and run its programs. They also negotiated a service agreement to outline the programs that CH would offer, set forth CH's staffing requirements, establish the mechanisms for coordination between University Hospital and CH, and ensure the appropriate allocation of responsibilities and liabilities between the parties. Because this concept (of an independent therapy organization operating within the confines of a hospital itself) was so new, negotiations were extended, intricate, and often difficult. In addition, since University Hospital was not a private hospital, the team also had to work with the added complexity of government contracting requirements.

The Impact

Karen D. Carbonello, Founder of Creative Heartwork, described it best, "Thanks to Mark and Vance, we were able to bring the creative arts therapies of art, dance, music, and even drama therapy to the bedside of almost two thousand patients over the life of the agreements. We recognized that we not only saved thousands of dollars for programs, but we received the very best professional advice possible and are very grateful to have been matched with them! We received prompt responses and were able to make informed business decisions all along the way."

A True Pro Bono Partnership

The relationship Mark and Vance had with Creative Heartwork didn't end when the matter concluded. Both were invited to become members of the Creative Heartwork Advisory Council, on which they served for a year. Karen has since moved on to become Executive Director at SAFE in Hunterdon, and shortly thereafter she, Mark, and Vance teamed up to work on a new, long-term lease with SAFE's existing landlord that will involve extensive site renovations.

Says Mark of his volunteer experience, "Pro Bono Partnership provides much needed legal assistance to worthy organizations that are in dire need of help. In addition, it allows me an opportunity to partner with Vance, an experienced transactional attorney, on legal matters outside of my direct area of expertise." Adds Vance, "As a Christian, I feel compelled to try to help, and the Partnership gives me the opportunity to provide the most impact."