

Legal Aid
Committee Report
August 17, 1976

Overall this has been a busy summer for the legal aid program. Rosendo Rodriguez joined the program on a class credit basis in July. His help and language skills were valuable contributions to the program.

Bill Taylor completed his participation in the program by appearing in court for his divorce case in June. He is pleased to report that the judge granted all the relief he requested.

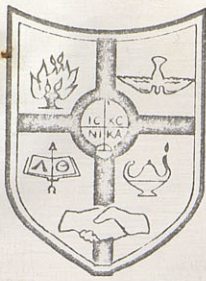
My pending cases include a divorce case previously cleared through Paul which involves special circumstances: the man is sick and needs to marry the woman he is living with so she will be entitled to receive his V.A. and Social Security benefits. This case was filed August 2 and will be heard sometime after Oct. 2. In addition, and adoption case will be heard this fall. I will leave for Matador, Texas, on Wednesday August 18, to investigate a suit filed by the New Mexico Welfare Department seeking reimbursement back and current child support payments paid to the man's divorced wife. Preliminary information indicates this man is now married has 3-4 children who are epileptic, and he can not afford to pay any child support. I appeared in Lamb County District Court with my supervising attorney on July 30 in an adoption case, which was granted.

In addition to the pending cases, I have met with and counseled many clients. Some of these cases have been referred to and accepted by other attorneys. One case, a personal injury case was accepted by a Lubbock attorney who is now in settlement negotiations with the man's employer's insurance company. Another man was referred to small claims court in Levelland over an auto repair bill. Some divorce and adoption cases have also been referred to other attorneys where it appeared the families could afford an attorney. One particularly satisfying case involved unpaid wages for work already performed by 2 migrant families from the Valley. We went to the fields, found the man who had hired these people, and collected the amount owed on the spot. In addition, the man agreed to pay and did pay an additional settlement amount of \$50.00 per family in damages due to wages lost in trying to collect the original the amount owed.

I have found that work in the legal aid program also can and certainly should, include preventative measures.

I have aid several families in contacting creditors on over due bills, explaining their current financial situation, and negotiating deferred and for reduced payment amounts. In addition, initial contact with a client in a civil matter may lead to other involvement. I have spent a considerable amount of time in Levelland, the first week in August trying to help a client reach the appropriate authorities to obtain a criminal peace bond on a relative who has committed and threatens to commit in the future bodily harm to him and to his family. I am sorry to say the J.P. refused the peace bond. At least, the authorities are now aware of the situation and have warned the relative to stay away from the family.

The Committee members might be interested to know of the contacts that the legal aid program has made this summer. Mr. Jose Losano was mentioned at the last Committee meeting and afterward, I attended his meeting in Levelland. Attached is a copy of the letter I sent to Paul and Roger following the meeting. Rev. Thomas Chavez is a Presbyterian minister in San Angelo who is attempting to organize a program similar to this program. Rev. Chavez contacted an attorney in San Angelo who help us obtain signitures on some of our papers. A copy of a letter to him is also attached.



PALO DURO LEGAL AID

ASISTENCIA LEGAL

405 LAWRENCE

P. O. Box 35

ANTON, TEXAS 79303

806 / 997-5711

July 7, 1976

Rev. Tomas Chavez
1119 S. Erving
San Angelo, Texas

Dear Rev. Chavez:

Thank-you for referring the Palo Duro Legal Aid to Mr. Ratliff. Mr. Ratliff has agreed to assist our program by having the Affidavits signed and notarized. I have written a letter to him regarding this.

I was interested to learn that the Confrence of Churches in your area is organizing a legal aid program and a social service program. As I explained on our conversation, the Palo Duro Union Legal Aid is sponsored by the Palo Duro Union Presbytery. Rev. Paul Young of Lubbock who is General Presbyter, and Rev. Roger Sidener of Abilene are on the Mexican-American Relations Committee which directs our program. Rev. Sidener is Chairman of the Committee. Since your program is in the organizational stage, contact with the Committee might be helpful to you. The Committe probably would have ideas or suggestions based upon the their past experience with similar projects. Please fell free to write

to them as they would welcome hearing from you.

Rev. Paul Young, Presbyter
Palo Duro Union Presbytery
7 Briercroft Office Park, Suite 108
Lubbock, Texas 79412

Rev. Roger D. Sidener
First Central Presbyterian Church
1416 North Fourth at Orange
Abilene, Texas 79601

Again, thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Carol Eppich
Clinical Intern.

cc: Rev. Paul Young
Rev. Roger Sidener

Carol
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405 LAWRENCE

P. O. Box 35

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Roger D. Sidener, Chairman
Mexican-American Relations Committee
First Central Presbyterian Church
1416 North Fourth at Orange

Dear Roger,

It was a pleasure to meet you and the other members of the Committee. I am impressed with the accomplishments of the committee and pleased to be a small part of the program through the legal aid work.

After our meeting on June 10, I drove to Leveland to attend the meeting of Centor El Buen Ciudadano, at the request of Jose Lozano, the organizations founder and President. Although the meeting was conducted in Spanish which eliminates a full report from me, I thought you might be interested to hear what I learned about their programs through newspaper clippings and a brief conversation with Senior Lozano:

1. The group organized sometime in February, 1976 with 17 (about 30 were present at this meeting). Mexican-Americans from Leveland and the surrounding area. The group's programs are based on a good neighbor policy and their work is accomplished through their members and volunteers who join together to meet needs of the community.
2. The organization has two stated main purposes:
 - A. To help people in emergencies, regardless of race, color, or religion, with funds as they may have available or that they are able to raise, for such things as prescriptions, food when people are temporarily sick and can not work, etc. This includes referral to state agencies that can help.

- B. To inform people of the community with information they might need, by contacting other administrative offices and by keeping informed about changes in the community as they occur.
3. Some of the organization's past accomplishments are:
- A. Donated services and supplies to dig and install sewer system in a home, previously without running water, for an elderly woman who was about to return home after hospitalization for an illness.
 - B. Obtained a donated wheelchair for an invalid.
 - C. Established a fund to help defray hospital costs and burial expenses for another person by raffling tickets at \$2.00 each for \$150 worth of donated groceries.
 - D. Gave rides to the voting polls to people who were otherwise unable to have a way to get there.
4. The group meets monthly on every second Thursday at 8:00 p.m. in the Davis Building 5th and Avenue H in Leveland. Senior Lozano's address is Route 2, Box 193 Leveland, Texas 79336.

I briefly explained the organization and function of the committee and of our legal aid program. I mentioned to Senior Lozano that the Committee would be interested in establishing contact with his organization and suggested he write a letter to Paul describing his organization and programs. I did not mention the possibility of monetary involvement by the Committee but rather, left open the manner in which the Presbytery through the Committee might work with Centro El Buen Ciudadano in the future.

Sincerely,

Carol Eppich
Clinical Internist

cc: Paul Young

Write report - 2 wks

Next meet Thurs 23.