

Haynes Boone Celebrates More Than 15,000 Hours of Volunteer Work for ABA Pro Bono Week

October 23, 2023 David Taubenfeld, Caylee Phillips, Joe Pinto, Lyric Stephenson, Tania Khatibifar, Fernando Mendez, Mary Claire Cranford, Brent Beckert, Bradley Holdbrook, Greg Van Houten, Michael Freyberg

A Honduran mother and her three children faced threats of violence and discrimination in their home country and needed help winning asylum in New York.

A domestic violence shelter in Utah was trying to expand its reach and serve hundreds of additional families.

Throughout 2023, [Haynes Boone](#) attorneys volunteered more than 15,000 hours towards causes like these as part of its robust pro bono practice, serving those most in need but least able to afford legal aid. The combined value of time worked on pro bono cases in the last 12 months is nearly \$12 million.

“I’m truly proud of how everyone here at Haynes Boone jumps on board and volunteers immediately to pick up cases and help those in need,” said [Partner David Taubenfeld](#), who co-chairs Haynes Boone’s Pro Bono and Public Services Committee.

This week, Haynes Boone joins the American Bar Association in celebrating its annual Pro Bono Week and reflecting on its volunteer efforts from the past year.

Genesis Women’s Shelter & Support

Haynes Boone Associates [Caylee Phillips](#), [Joe Pinto](#) and [Lyric Stephenson](#) worked with [Genesis Women’s Shelter](#) in Dallas and assisted a mother and child escaping domestic violence with a divorce filing and child custody case to help them find peace and freedom from their abuser.

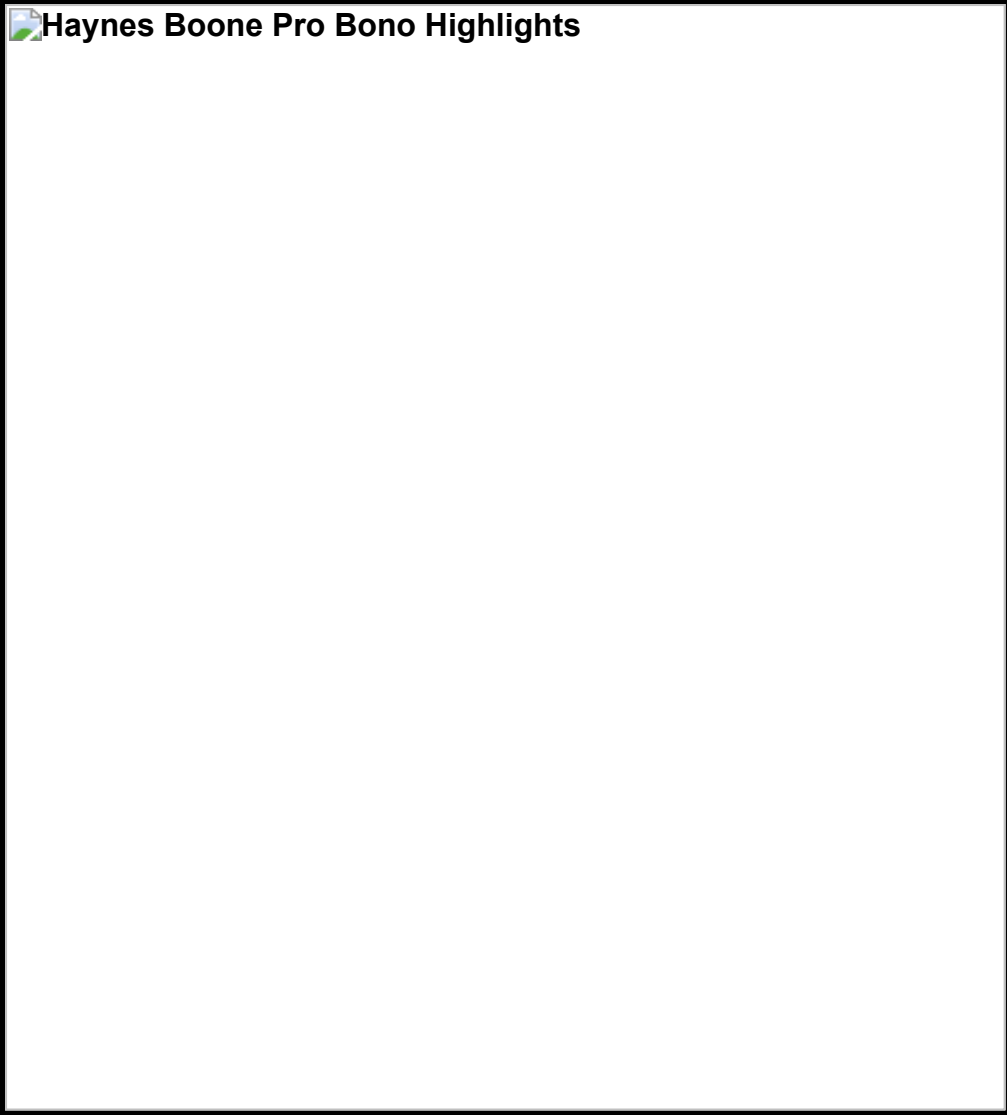
“We are so grateful for the support that Haynes Boone has given to Genesis Women’s Shelter & Support,” Rachel Elkin, Genesis’s director of legal services, said. “Pro bono partners like Haynes Boone allow us to provide invaluable direct legal representation to clients who otherwise could not afford it.”

Garifuna Family Facing Deportation

Associates [Tania Khatibifar](#) and [Fernando Mendez](#) gathered and reviewed nearly 700 pages of evidence, expert reports and witness declarations to help a Honduran mother and her three children [win asylum in New York](#). The family are Garifuna, an Afro-indigenous group that faces severe discrimination, violence and persecution in Honduras. Tania was honored for her work with the Outstanding Young Lawyer Award by the [New York State Bar Association in 2023](#).

(Story continues below image)

 **Haynes Boone Pro Bono Highlights**



Expunction Expo

At Dallas County's Annual Expunction Expo this fall, Haynes Boone attorneys helped dozens of people get their criminal records expunged for free. Getting rid of stigmatized criminal records allows community members to obtain housing, jobs and employment licenses that can change their lives.

South Valley Services

[South Valley Services](#) (SVS) provides shelter and advocacy to men, women and children experiencing both physical and sexual abuse at home. Based in Salt Lake County, Utah, SVS needed to keep a shelter in neighboring Tooele County from closing its doors which would have cut off a crucial resource for 250 people it served yearly. Associate [Mary Claire Cranford](#) and Partners [Beckert Brent](#) and [Brad Holdbrook](#) helped SVS through a property transfer so it could run the other shelter's vital program.

First Transit

Early this year, Haynes Boone [helped transportation leader First Transit Inc.](#) increase its diversity, equity and inclusion objectives by working with the employer to change its background check policy. Associates [Greg Van Houten](#) and [Michael Freyberg](#) helped craft a new hiring policy using recidivism research to tighten First Transit's criminal record screening. Overly broad screening policies can exclude qualified applicants of color. In July, the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs (WLC) [honored Haynes Boone](#) with a 2023 Outstanding Achievement Award for its work on the project.

Gentle Barn

[Gentle Barn](#) is a national nonprofit organization, founded in 1999 as a sanctuary for severely abused farm animals. The Gentle Barn offers a unique philosophy of rehabilitating animals and connecting their stories of survival and healing, to the personal experiences of underserved youth and adults with disabilities who have suffered physical, mental and/or emotional trauma and specializes working with people who are lonely and afraid. They have locations in Tennessee, Missouri and California. This month, Haynes Boone began helping The Gentle Barn further expand its vital mission and services to provide better futures and lives for both animals and people, as well as support The Gentle Barn in opening a new location in New York

Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program

The [Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program \(DVAP\)](#) recognized Haynes Boone with its 2023 Law Firm of the Year award. Attorneys volunteer their time every month for a virtual clinic to provide free legal information on cases for dozens for applicants. Attorney development specialist Belinda Seymour was also honored with the Clinic Coordinator of the Year award for her work growing and promoting the firm's volunteer efforts.

Pro Bono work will continue to remain a priority at Haynes Boone. This past year, attorneys spent an average of nearly 50 hours a year on pro bono cases they worked on. To read about more successes, visit the firm's [pro bono practice page](#).