

Hunton & Williams Attorneys and Staff Work to Bring Community Gardens to East Dallas

By Rocío Cristina García, associate at Hunton & Williams – (July 21, 2016) – As Dallas reeled from a vicious sniper attack on our police officers, a group of attorneys and staff from Hunton & Williams LLP gave back to the community by volunteering in the gardens of Promise of Peace. With every shovel full of soil, we worked under the hot July sun to push forth the mission of our pro bono client. Like so many others, we had been trying to understand the week's events and absorb the messages from city leaders and President Obama. Days earlier, President Obama urged us at the memorial service for the Dallas police officers to pray for a new heart. "Because with an open heart, we can learn to stand in each other's shoes and look at the world through each other's eyes." Ten attorneys, three summer associates, three staff members and five family members worked together to carry out that message.

Promise of Peace works to educate the communities where its gardens are located about urban farming and the importance of nutrition, while providing that same much-needed food to families in need, directly from their gardens. Their founder, Elizabeth Dry, works long hours under the sun with little remuneration other than knowing that she is creating a bridge to a healthy diet that starts with proper nutrition in early childhood. Many of her classes are aimed at young children from families with few resources who often have to turn to fast food and processed food to save pennies. Our legal work focused on helping Promise of Peace expand its

mission by establishing new gardens: three new gardens are being established in East Dallas to reach communities unfamiliar with community gardening and its benefits.

But sometimes pro bono legal work is not enough. When we learned of Promise of Peace's need to help transplant some of its resources



to new areas, H&W lawyers answered the call. We quickly drafted a group of volunteers to help with the labor intensive operation of distributing Promise of Peace's resources throughout its new locations. We were tasked with hauling soil and planting vegetables and fruits. Although our attorneys are used to heavy lifting on contracts, legal research, and negotiations, our will to help kept us going and continue the heavy lifting of hope for three East Dallas community gardens through the day. >



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It is a pleasure practicing law with a firm in which helping people and charitable organizations who can't afford a lawyer is part of the job description.

For the past seven years, 100 percent of our full-time U.S. lawyers have done pro bono work and more than 50,000 hours were dedicated to low-income and charitable clients in each of the last four years. While statistics help us measure how we are doing as a firm that values pro bono service, our mission — helping those without means — is best achieved when lawyers are matched with clients whose needs and causes fit their talents and passions. Those connections result in real engagement. And, as in the example above, sometimes lead to volunteer community service.

With an office full of great lawyers, interests and skills are wide and varied. When those lawyers are also great people, it's just a matter of helping them connect their skills, interests and passions with needs that lead them to serve. That's the job — connecting lawyers with needs.

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