

## President's Message

*By Lisa D. Harbour-Weibel*

Have you heard about the upcoming event called Project Connect?

I'm sure many of you have read the previous bar call announcements as well as received emails requesting volunteers for Project Connect, but do you know what Project Connect is about? This year represents the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Weld Project Connect held at Island Grove in Greeley, Colorado. This is a one-day event (held on October 17, 2014) providing **FREE** on site services (with approximately 50 providers) to those in need due to housing instability, job loss, age, health problems and other issues that can interrupt a life. Services provided at Project Connect range from various fields including Health assistance, Jobs, Legal, Credit Counseling, Documentation, Human Services, Veterans and Flood Recovery.

Since the commencement of this event in 2011, Weld County Project Connect has hosted and helped more than 1000 residents of all ages each year with the assistance of approximately 800 volunteers. It is anticipated that this number of residents receiving services continue to increase each year as the event has been overwhelmingly receptive as well as positive.

Although there are many benefits for the event to those in need and the community, I will briefly name a few: (1) improves quality of life for the entire community; (2) re-engages the underserved and those in need with the community and available services; (3) brings agencies and organizations together for a unified purpose; and (4) brings individuals from various segments of the community together for a beneficial purpose- neighbors helping neighbors.

It is apparent that benefit number 3 and 4 are closely related. "Bringing agencies and organizations together for a unified purpose.... neighbors helping neighbors." Similarly, Merriam-Webster defines "Pro Bono" as "being, involving, or doing professional and especially legal work for the public good."

I know many of you already volunteer and take on pro bono cases, but as of last week, Ms. Jodi Pic was still seeking volunteers (and in fact was emailing and calling individual attorneys) as the response to our requests in the bar call and emails for volunteers have been relatively low. Last year was the first year that I participated and volunteered at Project Connect. Although I was only able to volunteer for about an hour and half, it still gave me the ability to give back to the community and assist those in need with their legal questions. Each meeting with the individual takes no more than fifteen minutes (and it is often less), however, I found that knowing how much the individuals seeking your service is appreciative that you took the time to listen to them, is more gratifying than sitting at my desk billing an hourly rate. Now don't get me wrong, I enjoy having the ability to bill my clients and make money, but I had no idea until I volunteered last year, how many individuals in Weld County needed the assistance and/or services that are provided at Project Connect. It was definitely an eye-opener that at times, I live in my "personal little bubble."

In closing, I ask each of you, “What have you done for your community lately?” Can you spare an hour or two to volunteer and make a difference to those individuals whose lives have been interrupted for reasons unknown to us?

I hope to see many of you next Friday. If you would like to volunteer at Project Connect (Friday, October 17, 2014 from 12:00- 4:00pm), please contact Jodi Pic at [zpic1@netzero.net](mailto:zpic1@netzero.net) or by phone (970) 356-9770.

“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.”

— [Ralph Waldo Emerson](#)