Top 10 Organizing Tips for the National Pro Bono Celebration By Jane Taylor, Associate Director for Pro Bono, Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation

- 1. **Don't Reinvent the Wheel** The National Pro Bono Celebration website (www.celebrateprobono.org) has a mountain of ideas and resources for events and other things like press releases, governmental proclamations or board resolutions. These resources are there precisely for your use, and large amounts of time can be saved by borrowing from them generously.
- 2. **Support Support** While the National Pro Bono Celebration supports, recognizes and thanks the pro bono providers with whom you may be working, it is still another activity that must be fit in with client work that never lets up. The more you can support the providers' participation in the event, the more likely it is the provider will be a joyful and robust participant. Let them tell you what kind of event is manageable, and then do what is necessary to help them make it happen.
- 3. **Take Advantage of Existing Networks and Communities** Plug into whatever listservs, message boards, standing meetings, work groups or other communities in which you're already active to spread news, ideas and enthusiasm for the National Pro Bono Celebration. In Ohio, for example, the pro bono professionals working in the legal aid delivery system have a listserv, as do the development and communications professionals, and the metropolitan bar association executive directors and officers also convene regularly. All of these communities (and others) were tapped while organizing for the 2009 National Pro Bono Celebration in Ohio.
- 4. **Encourage Creativity, Remember Flexibility** The National Pro Bono Celebration has articulated themes and purposes, but within each of them is room for all kinds of events and activities. Allow your collaborators to express their individuality with ideas and programs that express their creativity. Almost any idea is a good idea! Be flexible and welcoming to these ideas and it will bring hands to the table to get the work done.
- 5. **Divide and Conquer** Don't leave tasks for the last week, or even the last month. Do a little bit at a time, and keep at it. Dividing up the work into small tasks and keeping at it will get it all done. Make a flow chart or timeline if necessary.
- 6. **Start Early** If you want people to take part in your events, it is essential that you start on the events early. Volunteers need to get them on the calendar, organizers need to book space and handle other logistical details, publicity has to start well in advance; even such a simple thing as a governmental proclamation has to go in well in advance so it gets to the right person and gets on the right agenda.

- 7. **Brand Everything** The ABA has made the NPBC logo user-friendly, so use it pasting the logo all over everywhere serves as a constant, visual reminder of the Celebration. Note the humor in the logo's blithe combination of wine glasses and scales of justice.
- 8. **Have a Communications Plan** The Celebration won't achieve its purpose if no one knows about it or hears about it. Develop a communications plan (and see #6) with clear goals and intended audiences. In Ohio, for example, the organizers identified three goals and two audiences that were the target of those goals. The communications strategies were then designed around those goals and audiences.
- 9. **Collaboration is Good** While you are working with your usual colleagues to put together events, stay open to how those usual collaborations could be stretched to include other partners or opportunities for collaboration. A special celebration might be just the occasion for a new partnership, and a new partnership might bring visibility to pro bono lawyers and pro bono service.
- 10. **Have Fun!** Be prepared, do your work, and when the Celebration week arrives, relax and share it with your colleagues, community partners and friends.