



# Vedder Community

Pro Bono Year In Review 2022

VedderPrice

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## A Message from Our Co-Chairs

Pro bono is short for *pro bono publico*, a Latin phrase that means “for the public good.” Vedder Price is deeply committed to acting in the public interest and fulfilling a professional obligation to deliver legal services to individuals and charities with limited financial resources.

Regardless of the size of one’s bank account, our pro bono clients receive the same level of attention and dedication, backed by the full resources of Vedder Price, as paying clients.

This year’s report emphasizes how our people have voluntarily offered behind-the-scenes support to vital community organizations. For some not-for-profits, our attorneys serve, in effect, as unpaid general counsel, advising charities on finance, human resources and compliance issues.

Pro bono work enriches the heart and soul. Our firm in 2022 represented asylum applicants, veterans denied benefits, and families adopting children in the foster care system. In addition to helping clients who cannot afford legal services, pro bono work enables attorneys to develop skills in new areas, to expand their networks and, most of all, to perform good deeds for those in need.



**Michelle T. Olson**  
*Shareholder and Co-Chair, Pro Bono Committee*



**Patrick W. Spangler**  
*Shareholder and Co-Chair, Pro Bono Committee*

# Pro Bono Sets the Stage for Charities to Excel

Stage actors glow in the applause of grateful audiences, yet considerable behind-the-scenes work is essential before the curtain can rise. Similarly, pro bono legal services are vital for charities to act on behalf of communities and set the stage for growth.

Attorneys and legal support staff, for example, provide pro bono legal services in a wide range of corporate, finance and human resources functions, thereby enabling not-for-profits to comply with laws, hire equitably, fulfill their missions, and expand. This article highlights some of the support Vedder Price has provided to organizations across the United States and in the United Kingdom.

## **Cara Collective / Chicago**

Cara Collective's Cleanslate program began 17 years ago to help low-income participants learn skills, find gainful employment, and build work histories. The organization had leased space for its first 16 years, but rents in its longtime home neighborhood, now gentrifying, were "going through the roof," recalls Joel Pomerenk, Chief Executive Officer of Cara Collective.

Thus, the search began to own, rather than rent. "In addition, we wanted to be more represented on the south side of Chicago, homing in on Englewood, an under-invested and under-served neighborhood," he said.

Andy Torre, a Vedder Price Shareholder who chairs the firm's Real Estate group, volunteered to assist, along with an associate, to negotiate the price and conditions for the purchase of a nearly 11,000 square-foot building in Englewood. Torre has been with the firm for a dozen years. He helps nonprofits buy, sell, and lease, and finds pro bono work "extremely rewarding."

"The deal almost fell apart," Pomerenk recalled, "but Andy jumped in and saved the deal late in the game. We wouldn't have that building if Vedder hadn't helped us buy it."

At its new location, Cara is accessible to more participants. Cleanslate has an important ritual called Morning Motivation. Participants aspire to get up and ring the job bell after they've landed a job. "In the first five weeks we were open, we hired 100 people. These are minimum-wage jobs, but they are helping people get their foot in the work force."



## **Safer Foundation / Chicago**

Vedder Price also provides legal services pro bono to Safer Foundation, which is another organization that is helping down-on-their-luck Chicagoans make their way back into the job market. The agency offers job-readiness training, placement, educational programming, and advocacy interventions for more than 10,000 individuals each year.

Safer administers secured residential transition centers on behalf of the Illinois Department of Corrections. Community and faith-based initiatives provide mentoring and employment reentry services in neighborhoods impacted by returning prisoners.

"Not only does Vedder Price provide case-by-case legal expertise," says Sophia DeLeon, Senior Director for Organizational Development. "They also provide us with development opportunities in our HR practice."

## **With Music in Mind / Wales**

This small, community interest company, based in the Vale of Glamorgan, South Wales, was established in 2015 to alleviate loneliness and isolation in older people. This objective is achieved through singing and gentle exercise in social groups.

"As our organisation has flourished, we expanded our workforce and volunteer base to run five core groups across the Vale of Glamorgan every week," says Dr. Sarah Miles, managing director and founder. "With no other available legal or human resources expertise, Vedder Price's pro bono legal representation, led by Jonathan Edgelow, has been an absolute godsend."

Edgelow helped with HR compliance, corporate maintenance, and commercial contracts. "He also kept us updated with training webinars, and his volunteer input has made an enormous difference to the professionalism of our organisation. The peace of mind of having the backing of legal representation from Vedder Price is, in fact, priceless."

Edgelow serves as Counsel in the London office of Vedder Price and is a member of the Finance & Transactions practice group. He enjoys offering pro bono services to small not-for-profit organizations that lack the funds to afford high-priced legal help. For all practical purposes, he acts as an unpaid general counsel and works pro bono 20-25 hours each month.

### **Bethlem Gallery / London**

Established in 1997, the gallery is situated on the grounds of The Bethlem Royal Hospital in Beckenham, London. This not-for-profit art space, free and open to all, has a vision of “an equitable society where art and mental health are a valued part of every day.”

Managed by a small, artist-led team, the gallery provides a professional space for high-quality artwork. “As a small charity, working with artists in contact with mental health services and aiming to promote understanding about mental health, the pro bono support from Vedder Price has had a huge impact,” according to gallery director Sophie Leighton.

Vedder Price has worked with the gallery across a range of corporate, commercial, and employment areas, and Leighton says the firm has “proved to be invaluable, giving us support and confidence as our gallery develops.”

### **Urban Gateways / Chicago**

For more than 60 years, Urban Gateways has been engaging young people throughout Chicago in arts experiences, inspiring creativity, personal expression, and social change. The support Vedder Price has provided this not-for-profit organization covers operational areas, including contracts, human resources, rental agreements and more.



Programs at Urban Gateways are led by professional artists in dance, literary arts, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts. “We are deeply grateful for the essential services Vedder Price provides,” says Leslé Honoré, Chief Executive Officer. “Their pro bono support has enabled us to continue our mission of bringing the arts to young people with little to no access to these opportunities.”

### **Westside Food Bank / Los Angeles**

The mission of the Westside Food Bank is to end hunger in its region by providing access to free, nutritious food. Two thirds of the food distributed is fresh produce, protein, and dairy items. The nonprofit has provided nearly four million meals to some 112,000 households in Southern California.



Vedder Price has provided assistance in employment law and counsel on a pro bono basis. “The attorneys we worked with were thoughtful, compassionate, and responsive, providing guidance and support through sensitive matters,” Genevieve Riutort, president and Chief Executive Officer, said. “They were wonderful to work with and ultimately saved our organization a tremendous amount of money through many hours of expert pro bono consultation.”

### **Chinese American Service League / Chicago**

“Vedder Price has been an amazing partner with the Chinese American Service League,” according to Jered Pruitt, chief operating officer of the Chicago-based not-for-profit organization. “They helped us establish the Change InSight project – the first data platform for national social determinants of health for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities across the United States.”

“Vedder Price attorneys drafted and reviewed memoranda of understanding and contracts with many other ethnic organizations to help make this new data hub a reality,” he said. “As a result, Change InSight can shine a light on social and health issues hidden by other data-collection efforts, such as the US Census.” The new data platform aims to reduce and end disparities in funding and action for more than 50 ethnic communities.

# A Long, Tortuous Road: Gaining Asylum

The United States has become an increasingly difficult place to gain asylum. Fewer than 12,000 individuals were admitted as refugees in fiscal year 2020, the lowest number since the refugee admissions program was established, according to the Migration Policy Institute. The 2020 statistic represents a 61 percent decrease from the number of refugees admitted the previous fiscal year, and a tiny fraction of the more than 207,000 refugees admitted in 1980.

Vedder Price attorneys work on many asylum cases pro bono, including the long-running case of a young El Salvadoran woman, along with applications on behalf of Afghan women soldiers who had worked for years clandestinely with US Special Operations before the Taliban took over.

## The Case of ‘Gabriela’ of El Salvador

Gabriela (not her real name) suffered years of vicious persecution in El Salvador. After her natural father disappeared early in her life, her mother remarried but fled to escape physical abuse by her second husband.

With her mother gone, the focus of abuse turned to Gabriela, a child in his care but not of his own blood. As she matured, the verbal insults and physical attacks were exacerbated by sexual abuse by her stepfather and other males. Calls to the police were pointless. Violence against women is entrenched in El Salvador, which notoriously ranks among the world’s top nations in femicides (~13.5 deaths/100,000).

After her drug - and alcohol-abusing stepfather started threatening her younger stepsisters, Gabriela decided to flee, taking along her stepsisters, both minors. She knew none of them could be safe remaining at home.

After passing through several South and Central American countries, they arrived by bus in 2018 at the US border. “While waiting for a hearing, we were able to obtain a work permit for her,” said Anthony Pacheco, a Vedder Price Shareholder in Los Angeles, who worked with Associate Marie Christiansen, also out of the LA office, on Gabriela’s case.

While awaiting a merit hearing, Gabriela worked a nearly full-time job, took English classes, attended community college, and took cosmetology courses. She received psychological counseling while staying in Southern California with an aunt, her mother, and Gabriela’s stepsisters.

When her hearing finally approached – delayed for a few years, partly due to Covid-19 – it didn’t look as if it would be easy. “We were in front of a difficult judge,” Pacheco explained. “There were cases on the docket in which the judge deported asylum applicants immediately.”

Given the recent influx of immigrants from Central America, it was essential that legal arguments in Gabriela’s case stand out. Vedder Price submitted a detailed brief that described Gabriela’s persecution by her father and other males. A psychiatrist and a psychologist diagnosed her with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, and discussed the likely brutality, including a psychiatric crisis, if she were sent home.

Returning to El Salvador would have been tantamount to a death sentence. Her stepfather threatened to kill her if she ever returned. Even if she was able to find a remote place to reside in the country without her step father learning of her location, gangs target and violently abuse women. In addition, her stepfather had a cousin in the police force.

The evidence Vedder Price presented in the Merit hearing was overwhelming, and the judge ruled in our client’s favor. “At the conclusion, the ruling was immediate,” Christiansen said. “We were thrilled we received the ruling right away, and heard it while our client was with us. It was exciting for all of us.”

“Marie argued passionately,” Pacheco said. “She came out swinging, and it was some of the finest advocacy I have seen at the firm and outside the firm. It took my breath away to see how highly skilled, professional, compelling, and compassionate our lawyers were.”

The ruling meant everything to Gabriela, especially after years of waiting for a hearing. “She can now obtain a green card and eventually apply for US citizenship,” Christiansen said. “She’s making the most of it. I’m so glad she’s safe.”

## Afghan Women Who Clandestinely Fought the Taliban

The Female Tactical Platoon was a little-known corps of Afghan women who worked secretly with US Special Operations in the war in Afghanistan. After the United States pulled out of the country, the women soldiers – and their families – faced death unless they could get out of the country.

About 40 of these women soldiers and close family

members camped out at the airport in Kabul for days before being airlifted and resettled into communities across the United States. After the chaotic withdrawal from Kabul, two groups – PenFed Foundation and Sisters of Service – helped the refugees find temporary housing, attend English-language classes, and obtain temporary work authorizations.

The refugees, however, did not have permission to remain in the United States legally and obtain citizenship, and that’s when Vedder Price became involved. Amal Rafiq, an Associate in the Washington, DC office, had only recently joined the firm when she expressed an interest in helping the women.

“I thought I would get one client but left with six,” she said. The reason was that the not-for-profit organizations assisting the refugees wanted to simplify processes and preferred to deal with fewer law firms given tight timelines.

“I called Michelle Olson, one of the co-chairs of our firm’s Pro Bono Committee, and she suggested if I could find enough shareholders, associates and staff to help out, then go for it.” Rafiq found a dozen colleagues in the Dallas, Chicago, and Los Angeles offices eager to help.

The team had only two months to collect information on each applicant and submit completed forms in a coordinated batch. Although the asylum applicants and their pro bono attorneys were widely dispersed across the United States, nearly all the arguments in the applications would be closely related.

The first month was spent interviewing each asylum seeker. “We needed them to tell their stories and were fortunate we had one interpreter [provided through PenFed] who handled all of our cases,” Rafiq said.

Many of the interviews were emotional. Speaking in Dari, their native tongue, the women related fears for themselves and their families. One day they had a military mission that they believed in strongly and the next day they were told they must flee their home country as soon as possible, leaving everything behind.

During interviews, Rafiq recalls one former soldier being pregnant, and another had a one-month-old baby with her. “Each woman was different, with some being emotional and others more self-assured – ‘I’m a fighter and I’m going to get through this.’ ”

The second month was spent filling in a Form I-589 for each woman to apply for asylum. The soldiers were of Hazaran ethnicity, a longtime target for genocide in

Afghanistan. Being educated and women soldiers were additional strikes against them under the new regime. Additional factors weighing against their being sent back were political association, a history of past persecution, and fear of future persecution if returned to Afghanistan.

The Taliban released a statement that if any member of the Female Tactical Platoon were caught, she would be killed, along with her family. “To this day, their families have to move around to avoid detection by the Taliban,” Rafiq explained.

After the applications were submitted in August 2022 to the US Citizen and Immigration Services, each applicant was interviewed. “Each asylum officer is different,” Rafiq noted. She said she had a positive experience with officers she worked with. “They were well educated on Afghan culture and willing to let us clarify as needed throughout the interview.” Others in the group, however, noted their officers were less forthcoming and unwilling to entertain attorneys’ explanations.

Only one of the large group of applicants was granted asylum in October 2022, a puzzling outcome. “We were hoping for a mass grant of asylum for the entire group,” Rafiq said. “As each day passes, we get a little more nervous.”

Despite the Afghan women soldiers’ close collaboration with US Special Operations, the US Congress declined to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act, which would have streamlined immigration, not only for these women but for thousands of others who supported US military operations over two decades in Afghanistan.

As of publication deadline (June 2023), the Afghan women still were awaiting rulings on their cases, demonstrating that gaining asylum is a long, arduous journey even for US allies.

## Transitioning from Foster Care to Adoption

Simone Riley, an Associate in Vedder Price’s Los Angeles office, earned her undergraduate degree in social work before attending law school. While most of her legal work is in aircraft finance, she likes to remain grounded in helping foster families and adoptive parents.

In Southern California, Vedder Price partners with the Alliance for Children’s Rights, a nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles. An estimated 22,000 children

are in foster care in Los Angeles County, with 1,600 awaiting adoptive families. There is a constant need for affordable help for adoptive parents, not only in Southern California but across the United States.

The Alliance – a not-for-profit that offers free legal services – works closely with the Los Angeles Children’s Court, the county’s Department of Children and Family Services, and pro bono partners such as Vedder Price to help families adopt foster children.

Riley trains a handful of colleagues in Vedder Price’s LA office to help with the foster-to-adoption process. “Each year we work with about 10 families, each having from one to three kids.” Each case requires from 10 to 15 hours of pro bono legal effort, a discrete amount of work that eases the process of recruiting colleagues. “It’s a rewarding process,” she says, “and the firm has been very supportive of this work.”

Families caught up in the foster care process tend to develop mistrust of the system, and attorneys inherit some of that baggage while volunteering their time. “Some of them have been through the wringer with bureaucracy, of not feeling heard, of delay after delay,” Riley says. “They’re grateful to have a pro bono attorney who helps them through the bureaucracy.”

In addition, some of the children are teen-aged and nearly aging out of the system. “To help them finalize their family before they go off to college, get a job, or whatever that might be, those cases are especially rewarding to me,” Riley said. “You are talking to someone near adulthood who understands the significance of adoption.”

She adds, “To get to do something like this is heartwarming and a great balance to my daily work.”



## Aiding ‘Less Than Honorable’ Veterans

Soldiers with traumatic brain injuries (TBI) or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) face serious challenges. Receiving a less than honorable discharge, however, adds insult to injury and can mean denial of military benefits and difficulties finding employment.

Tamara Droubi, an Associate in Vedder Price’s Washington, DC, office, typically works in commercial litigation and government contracts. As a result, military-grade bureaucracy was unlikely to discourage her from taking on the cases of two veterans.

“From meeting with them, I realized that self-esteem is often a casualty of a less-than-honorable discharge,” she said. “I could not guarantee them a positive result, but I wanted them to feel heard and respected – to feel empowered by the process.”

Technically, each of the veterans – one who served in the Navy; the other in the Marines – received a general discharge, which is not a dishonorable discharge. However, many civilians assume a soldier denied an honorable discharge is suspect in some way. In addition, a general discharge withholds access to some benefits in the GI Bill.

One veteran suffered a TBI, the other has PTSD, and neither condition was addressed adequately during their service in the military. Injuries and disorders such as these can undermine cognitive functioning, cause behavioral problems, and snowball into conflicts with fellow soldiers and commanding officers, resulting in a less than honorable discharge.

Along with communicating regularly with her clients to collect medical records, personal statements, and other documentation, Droubi received guidance from Center for Veterans’ Advancement run through the nonprofit Public Course, and from colleagues who have taken on similar appeals in recent years. Vedder Price received a Pro Bono Award in 2020 from the Center for Veterans’ Advancement for outstanding support of the Center’s discharge-upgrade clinic. “A number of eyes looked over our clients documents to make sure everything was as good as it could be before it was submitted,” Droubi said.



The documentation was sufficiently persuasive that the review board granted upgrades, without in-person hearings, to both veterans in about seven months. Recent appeals have typically taken almost three times as long due to Covid-19 delays.

“I am now in college utilizing the GI Bill due to the discharge upgrade,” the Navy veteran said. “The team sifted through mountains of paperwork, holding regular sessions with me before submitting the final paperwork. I couldn’t have asked for a more compassionate and capable legal team. Ms. Droubi and her associates literally changed my life.”

Droubi worked alongside Theodore M. Gelderman, an Associate in Vedder Price’s Chicago office who focuses his work on intellectual property law, on one of the cases. A US Marine Corps veteran details his experience working with Gelderman: “The process was emotionally draining, reliving the barriers and trigger points during my service. Nevertheless, Theodore provided support and guidance throughout the three-year cycle. Many veterans I encountered would quit because of the long and tedious process. Theodore offered assurance and hope when times were difficult.”

## In Support of Civil Rights and Diversity

California is considered among the most liberal of US states but, in the first half of the 20th century, relatively few African Americans practiced law there. Those who did routinely faced hostility from the bench and the legal community overall.

The Charles Houston Bar Association (CHBA) began in 1955 as a club that encouraged and supported African American attorneys in Northern California. Founding members named the club after renowned constitutional lawyer Charles Hamilton Houston, who helped undermine the US Supreme Court’s rationale for “separate but equal” discrimination.

The law club- incorporated as a bar association in 1976 – has worked steadily to increase diversity in the legal profession, increase African American access to the courts, deliver legal guidance to undeserved communities, and counsel young people in the Bay Area.

CHBA’s new president is Mindy Wong, an Associate with Vedder Price’s San Francisco office and a member of the firm’s Litigation group. She joined CHBA shortly

after graduating from law school. Wong believes it’s time for CHBA to re-emphasize mentoring and networking – activities that had slowed down, understandably, during the Covid-19 pandemic.

She also sees a need to enlighten young people about the possibilities in law. As an example, CHBA’s “Bench to the Bench” program opens young athletes’ eyes to potential careers they might never have considered.

“If you have a father or an uncle who’s a lawyer, they can recommend law schools and guide you on applying for internships,” Wong says. “But many young people simply lack a sense of the possibilities.” Increased mentoring and networking in 2023 can also help established CHBA members exchange knowledge and strategize ways to advance their careers.

Along with Wong’s swearing in as president on December 3, 2022, Vedder Price was honored with a Corporate Recognition Award for pro bono legal services to CHBA. Vedder Price was also a proud sponsor of the organization’s 2022 Annual Gala, where scholarships were announced to deserving law students.



– **Mindy M. Wong, Associate**  
*San Francisco Office*  
*President, Charles Houston*  
*Bar Assoc.*



**Charles Houston**  
**Bar Association**



# What Pro Bono Means to Me

“There are so many amazing charitable organizations doing remarkable work in our communities, yet they lack the resources to afford sophisticated counsel to help them navigate many of the same challenging legal issues faced by for-profit organizations. As an employment lawyer who is deeply committed to pro bono legal service, I find that I am able to give of my time and expertise to organizations with inspiring missions, such as those that uplift the disadvantaged, disabled, and underserved members of our community, and in so doing, both I and the firm are helping to advance these laudable causes. I am so grateful to Vedder Price for the opportunity to serve my community in this meaningful way.”



– **Amy L. Bess, Shareholder**  
*Washington, DC Office*

“As part of my pro bono work, I help charitable organizations with a variety of legal queries. The main charity I worked with in 2022 was focused on empowering girls globally by providing educational opportunities to break the cycle of poverty. Assisting that charity and others like it is an extremely rewarding part of my practice.

Through my pro bono work, I pursue meaningful outcomes for each charity and, in turn, I can see that the work has a real-world impact, allowing the organizations to further develop, progress, and fulfill their missions. In addition, the varied and complex legal queries have allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of my own area of practice in employment matters. Members of my team and I are grateful for the opportunities provided by working on pro bono matters.”



– **Rachel Easton, Associate**  
*London Office*

“Cost and accessibility to legal services are significant obstacles for many individuals and organizations. Pro bono work affords me an opportunity not only to practice in different areas of law but also to help these individuals and organizations. From helping an immigrant threatened by violence seek asylum in the United States to counseling nonprofit organizations on legal issues, the work is rewarding and impactful. Pro bono work is also a great way to work with colleagues from across the firm on significant issues that may normally not be part of our everyday work.”



– **Charlie Wang, Associate**  
*Los Angeles Office*



# Dedicated to Service in the Public Interest

The mission of the Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI), headquartered in Chicago, is to engage, inspire, and empower those advancing equal access to justice. Vedder Price has been a strong and constant supporter of PILI, with our Shareholders serving on the board of directors and sponsoring two graduate fellows in recent years.

Katie Behzad, a first-year Associate in the Finance & Transactions practice group, worked this past summer as a PILI graduate fellow. Vedder Price supported her work with the Bluhm Legal Clinic's Children and Family Justice Center prior to her joining the firm.

The fellowship provides financial support for an incoming first-year associate to work at a public interest legal aid organization in Illinois while studying for the bar. Behzad dedicated 300 hours of service to the Children and Family Justice Center.

This not-for-profit organization represents young people on multiple fronts: delinquency, criminal justice, immigration, and asylum. Behzad's work supported young people who had contact with the law and sought to return to their families and communities.

Behzad is the firm's second PILI fellow since 2020. The program, offered to Vedder Price summer associates following their third year of law school, "is vital for inspiring the next generation of pro bono leaders at the firm," according to Daniel Lange.

Lange, a Shareholder in the firm's Chicago office, was recently elected to serve as President of PILI's board of directors for a two-year term, concluding August 31, 2024. Prior to his election, he was elected a board member in 2009 and served in several positions on PILI's executive board.

"We were delighted when Daniel was elected, and we anticipate an expanded reach from PILI in the Chicago area and throughout Illinois," said Patrick Spangler, co-chair of Vedder Price's Pro Bono Committee and who, like Lange, has served several years on PILI's board of directors.



– **Katie A. Behzad, Associate**  
Chicago Office  
PILI Fellow



– **Daniel B. Lange, Shareholder**  
Chicago Office  
President, PILI Board of Directors

# Pro Bono: By the Numbers

As part of our professional obligation, attorneys at Vedder Price are encouraged to provide pro bono legal services. Here's a quick overview of our firm's commitment by the numbers.

## Calendar Year 2022

Our attorneys donated more than

**8,400 Hours** to those in need



roughly in line with the amount of time our attorneys logged in 2021.

More than half of our lawyers

**53%** 

did pro bono work.

**24.4 Hours**

Average number of pro bono hours donated per attorney.

**23%** 

Of our attorneys donated 30 or more pro bono hours.

**27%** 

Of our associates donated at least 30 pro bono hours.

**\$5+ million** 

Estimated value of pro bono services provided by Vedder Price in 2022.

# Pro Bono Awards: Congratulations!

In each calendar year, Vedder Price allows associates to receive up to 100 hours of chargeable credit, and shareholders up to 75 hours, for pro bono work. Vedder Price tracks the hours our people spend on pro bono service and congratulates the office and individuals devoting the most time to pro bono.

## Individual Winners Firmwide

- Shareholder Anthony Pacheco, Los Angeles
- Associate Rachel Easton, London
- Paralegal Monica Milkint, Chicago

## Individual Winners by Office

- Chicago Shareholder Randall Lending; Associate Sudip Mitra
- Dallas Shareholder Arianna Goodman; Associate Mark Svalina
- London Partner Jonathan Maude; Solicitor Henrietta Worthington
- Los Angeles Shareholder Eric McDonough; Associate Charlie Wang
- New York Shareholder Jonathan Wexler; Associate Francisca Wolfenson Chimenelli
- Washington, DC Shareholder Amy Bess; Associate Amal Rafiq



Pro Bono Spirit Award – All Firm – Amal Rafiq, Associate



Of all Vedder Price offices, the Washington, DC, had the highest percentage of attorneys who completed 30 or more hours of pro bono work in 2022.



# Thanks to Our Partner Organizations

Vedder Price pro bono efforts are strengthened through partnership with not-for-profit organizations responding to a diverse range of needs. Our pro bono partners provide critical services to communities with diverse ethnic roots and levels of income.

Our Pro Bono Committee selects pro bono service partners based on attorney interest and community need.

In the United Kingdom, Vedder Price frequently works with LawWorks, a charity in England and Wales that connects people in need with volunteer lawyers and not-for-profit organizations. In the United States, Public Counsel is the nation’s largest pro bono firm

and is another organization with which Vedder Price collaborates.

Vedder Price uses the Paladin online platform to connect attorneys with pro bono opportunities. Paladin enables law firms, companies, and law schools to source projects, manage pro bono work, and streamline tracking and outcome reporting.

In addition to the organizations mentioned above, Vedder Price provides pro bono services to many other organizations, including but not limited to those below:



In addition, Vedder Price provides pro bono services directly to the following organizations:



*“Vedder Price partners with charities offering strong programming, support, and training for improved outcomes. As a result, our attorneys and paralegals have a broader range of opportunities to serve in the public interest.”*

Mike Mulcahy  
Vedder Price General Counsel

# VedderCares

## Charitable Donations / 2022

### Charitable Competitions

Blending lighthearted sporting activities with charitable causes is a great way to have fun while raising money for nonprofit organizations. A few examples from 2022:

**Ping-Pong for a Purpose** – The annual contest in Chicago was won by Information Security Analyst Brad Tuszyński after a hard-fought game against Shareholder Tony Ashley. The firm donated to [PAWS Chicago](#) on the winner's behalf.

Following the Chicago office's example, New York hosted its first ping-pong tournament, won by Elise Rippe. The firm donated to [Coffee, Hip Hop, and Mental Health](#) on her behalf.

**Chicago Cornhole Tournament** – Risk Advisor Stefanos Karavolos won the VedderCares Cornhole Tournament, resulting in a donation to [Aspire Chicago](#).

**Tournament of Associates** – This annual contest was won by Associates Josh Grant and Teddy Gelderman and summer associate Alicia Xue. Donations were made to [American Cancer Society](#), [Healthy Community Initiative](#) and [Bronx Defenders](#).

**Cutest Pet Competition** – Our 2022 competition had two brackets: The dog category was won by Ryder (Ramona Heneks), with a donation made to [Home of the Sparrow](#); and the Cats & Critters category was won by Siggie (Karen Kornichuk), with a donation made to [Disabled American Veterans](#).

### Additional donations in 2022

**Rise Against Hunger** – Vedder Price hosted [Rise Against Hunger](#) in our Chicago, Los Angeles, Dallas, New York, and Washington, DC, offices. Together we packaged 35,000 meals. In addition, donations were made to the [San Francisco-Marin Food Bank](#), [The Food Bank Singapore](#) and [Hackney Foodbank](#) in London.

**School Supply Drives** – US offices participated to benefit local schools and organizations: Chicago (Cradles to Crayons), Dallas (Community Partners of Dallas), Los Angeles (Para Los Niños), New York (PS 310 Marble Hill Complex), San Francisco (Bayside Elementary School), and Washington, DC (Thomson Elementary).

**Soldier's Angels** – US offices made and collected blankets for Veterans Administration hospitals and to deployed service members. Additionally, the firm donated to the [Gary Sinise Foundation](#), which supports veterans, first responders, their families, and others in need.

**Spreading Holiday Cheer** – Vedder Price offices participated in gift drives benefitting charities. Additionally, the Chicago office welcomed [Uniting Voices Chicago](#), a group of third and fourth graders who sang holiday carols.



# Members of Our Pro Bono Committee

The Vedder Price Pro Bono Committee, which meets bimonthly, oversees the firm's activities, and works to develop relationships with pro bono agencies throughout the world. Michelle Olson and Patrick Spangler co-chair our committee, which includes the following:



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