At Weil Gotshal, “Our Finest Hours” is not just a slogan for our pro bono practice. It signals the genuine importance our lawyers place on giving back to the communities in which we live and work. The issues our pro bono practice addresses – and the clients on whose behalf we work – are as diverse as our lawyers. In each instance, we demonstrate the same quality of judgment, the same commitment to client goals, and the same passionate advocacy our for-pay matters receive.

This past year witnessed our involvement in many high-profile pro bono cases and transactions around the world. Our lawyers were able to make a difference in the lives of thousands of people, including impoverished families and children in France, disadvantaged victims of natural disasters in the US and internationally, and victims of gang violence in Central America, to name a few. Just as important as the individual matters we take on, our pro bono practice continues to explore and develop innovative ways to deliver pro bono services – including partnering with non-governmental organizations, policymakers, legal services providers, and in-house corporate legal staffs – to maximize the effectiveness of our outreach and to provide models that other firms and organizations can emulate.

Over the past few years, we have engaged in a continuing effort to strengthen our pro bono program. Our current policy – groundbreaking in its scope and scale – calls for each attorney to perform 50 hours of pro bono work each year, and for every partner to work on or supervise a pro bono matter every year. We also require that every new attorney at the firm take on a pro bono matter within his or her first two years at the firm.

Our policy is producing the desired results. Weil Gotshal attorneys performed over 85,000 hours of pro bono service in 2007 – roughly equivalent to 45 full-time lawyers – approximately doubling our output from just four years ago. Our 2007 pro bono performance accounted for nearly $50,000,000 in free legal services.

Our pro bono practice is a source of great pride within Weil Gotshal. The following pages detail some of our accomplishments from the past year, and we think you will agree that these truly are “Our Finest Hours.”

These materials may contain attorney advertising. Prior results do not guarantee a similar outcome.
Defending Educators’ Right to Work
In a matter referred to us by the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Weil Gotshal represented three teachers employed by the public school system of Lowell, Massachusetts. The teachers had been dismissed from their jobs for allegedly lacking English fluency. After a ten-day proceeding, an arbitrator ruled that Lowell had violated the teachers’ constitutional rights and ruled that they be reinstated with full back pay. Lowell then filed an emergency motion in the Massachusetts Appeals Court seeking to stay the reinstatement order during the pendency of Lowell’s appeal of the arbitrator’s decision. After briefing and argument, a single justice of the Appeals Court denied Lowell’s motion, paving the way for our clients to return to work pending a decision on the merits of the case.

Defending Immigrants’ Civil Rights
Acting as co-counsel with the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Texas and the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Weil Gotshal succeeded in having an anti-immigrant ordinance ruled unconstitutional in a federal court in Texas. The ordinance, enacted by the City of Farmers Branch, Texas, was designed to require landlords and property managers of apartment buildings to document the US citizenship or “eligible immigration status” of certain tenants prior to leasing an apartment. The federal court struck down the ordinance, and held that only the federal government has the authority to regulate in the area of immigration.

Upholding Same-Sex Partnership Rights
On behalf of the Vance Center for International Justice, Weil Gotshal assisted in an important case that could have a significant impact on same-sex partnership rights around the globe. The firm drafted an amicus brief for submission to the Constitutional Court of Colombia which demonstrated that, since 1996, courts and human rights bodies throughout the world have struck down measures that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in the provision of economic benefits. Subsequently, the Constitutional Court ruled that same-sex couples are entitled to register their domestic partnerships and receive certain economic benefits on equal terms with opposite-sex couples. The decision overturned a 1990 law establishing domestic partnership benefits, but limiting such benefits to opposite-sex couples by defining a “partnership” as existing only between a man and a woman.

Protecting Women’s Health Professionals
Weil Gotshal continues to collaborate with the Center for Reproductive Rights in the representation of Dr. J. Christopher Carey in a suit alleging First Amendment and due process violations, intentional interference with contract, and defamation. For a medical residency program in the US to secure its accreditation by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), a program must provide residents who wish to obtain training in obstetrics and gynecology the opportunity to receive that training. Allegations include that, following a lengthy battle with Dr. Carey, an outspoken champion of making such training available to resident physicians, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors wrongfully removed Dr. Carey from his positions at the Maricopa Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona, where he had served as Director of the Phoenix Integrated Residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology and as Chair of the OB/GYN Department. The case is expected to go to trial before the end of 2008.

Protecting Victims of Racial Discrimination
In cooperation with the Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, Weil Gotshal continues to win discovery disputes against the City of Baltimore on behalf of a putative class of African American police officers who allege that they were subject to disparate treatment on account of race in the administration of the disciplinary system by the Baltimore Police Department (BPD). Allegations of discrimination against African American officers by BPD have been a prominent public issue in Baltimore for over a decade, and a successful resolution would include the departmental implementation of a new race-blind disciplinary system. Most recently, Weil Gotshal argued and won a motion which resulted in a court order requiring BPD to answer essential statistical interrogatories regarding the disciplinary system. A victory for this class would represent a significant step towards making BPD a workplace of equality for all officers. Weil Gotshal has dedicated more than 14,000 hours to this case since 2005.
Defending Disabled Immigrants

Acting as co-counsel with The Legal Aid Society, New York Legal Assistance Group, and the Empire Justice Center, Weil Gotshal played a pivotal role in achieving a resounding victory for impoverished elderly and disabled immigrant New Yorkers. The Appellate Division, First Department, ruled that New York State may not deny benefits to elderly or disabled legal immigrants on the sole basis of their immigration status, and must provide them public assistance to meet their basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. The decision affects more than 7,000 individuals who lost their federal Social Security benefits because of restrictions adopted in 1996. It also will benefit thousands of other legal immigrants who are elderly or disabled, but who were not previously eligible for Social Security because of their immigration status.

Monitoring Human Rights Worldwide

Weil Gotshal developed a project with Human Rights Watch (HRW), an international non-profit organization dedicated to human rights issues, to assist it in monitoring developments in three active cases before the International Criminal Court (ICC): The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, and Sudan. Weil Gotshal’s assistance is ongoing, as we field a large, inter-office team to provide oral and written updates to HRW’s country representatives, develop digests of significant decisions/orders in pending cases; draft summaries of hearings or trials conducted in pending cases, and prepare thematic memoranda covering the various issues before the ICC.

Protecting the Victims of Natural Disasters

In collaboration with a number of organizations, including the Public Interest Law Project, Weil Gotshal secured class status for lower-income residents of Louisiana displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. These individuals’ assistance had been terminated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) without proper notice and without an opportunity to appeal the decision, violating their Fifth Amendment due process rights. As a result, they faced the prospect of homelessness and increased poverty. Weil Gotshal’s goal in filing suit was to compel FEMA to provide due process protections before terminating rental assistance payments to the victims, including adequate notice of the reasons for termination and a meaningful pre-termination appeal before they lost critical benefits. On Weil Gotshal’s initiative, the team obtained a preliminary injunction (PI) prohibiting FEMA from terminating people from its rental assistance program. FEMA appealed the PI, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit concluded that, while neither the statute nor the applicable regulations created a constitutionally protected property interest, FEMA’s conduct in administering the program might give rise to a property interest triggering due process protections. Accordingly, the case has been remanded for further development of the record on this issue, and our work continues.

Pursuing Justice for the Families of Holocaust Victims

Weil Gotshal represents Bet Tzedek, a Los Angeles-based organization that provides free legal assistance to the victims of political persecution and ethnic cleansing. Our firm assists with obtaining reparations from the Government of Hungary for two categories of victims: those who perished after deportation to Nazi concentration camps and those who were sent to labor camps by any Hungarian government prior to 1989. For both categories of victims, achieving positive results concerning their claims can be a delicate and difficult process, complicated by byzantine bureaucratic rules and regulations, linguistic barriers, and the fact that many key events occurred long ago. Aside from the legal research and lobbying work our representation entails, our lawyers recently secured compensation on behalf of a Bet Tzedek client whose father died a few days after the liberation of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, in which he had been held. The Hungarian government had cited the timing of the victim’s death as justification for withholding compensation to his surviving family, but reversed its earlier decision and approved our client’s claim once our attorneys filed a statement of claim with Hungary’s Compensation Office.

Defending the Rights of Non-Custodial Parents

Weil Gotshal collaborated with the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights in Poland to present research exploring the child-contact rights of non-custodial parents in post-divorce or post-separation scenarios. As the Polish government develops a new draft bill amending the country’s Family Code and the Civil Procedure Code, some of the information gathered and presented by Weil Gotshal will likely be included in the new draft law, particularly those areas addressing the concerns of international human rights organizations.

Defending the Wrongfully Convicted

Weil Gotshal collaborates with The Innocence Project, a non-profit legal clinic devoted to exonerating wrongly convicted people. This past year, Weil Gotshal secured parole for one such man who was convicted of a 1965 rape due to, in part, eyewitness misidentification and the testimony of an informant who later recanted. At the original trial there was reliable testimony that our client was 180 miles from the crime scene when the rape occurred, and no physical evidence associated our client to the crime. Furthermore, DNA that could have led to our client’s exoneration had been apparently destroyed by the state. Despite these circumstances, we were able to gain parole for our client against all odds after he had spent 24 years in prison. The grant of parole is remarkable as we argued our client’s innocence, a strategy rarely used when seeking parole.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Nothing is more fundamental or central to the practice and administration of law than an appreciation for and understanding of human rights. It is the framework in which we coexist and cooperate with one another, and an assault upon one person’s basic human rights is an assault upon those of all people. Weil Gotshal’s lawyers have demonstrated over many years a steadfast devotion to defending human rights when those rights are threatened or violated.
HUMAN RIGHTS

Protecting the Victims of Unlawful Detention and Abuse

In conjunction with the Urban Justice Center and the law firm Korey Marcus & Green, the firm represented two Muslim men who had no connection to the events of September 11, 2001, but were detained in a maximum security facility and subjected to brutal abuse and mistreatment. After several years of searching for a fair settlement by the government in a 9/11 prisoner abuse case for one of the victims, the firm continues to co-represent the remaining plaintiff in a case against a wide range of US Government officials, including former Attorney General John Ashcroft and former FBI director Robert Mueller. This case has been consolidated for pre-trial purposes with a class action of other post-9/11 detainees, who are being represented jointly by the Center for Constitutional Rights and Covington & Burling. The District Court rejected the Government’s motion to dismiss in which the Government argued that post-9/11 law enforcement needs justified plaintiffs’ detention and mistreatment. Weil Gotshal, along with the other plaintiffs’ representatives, successfully persuaded a federal appeals court to rule that the Government, including high-ranking officials, would have to answer questions under oath in a lawsuit accusing them of law enforcement needs justified plaintiffs’ detention and mistreatment.

Repatrinating Guantánamo Bay Detainees

Weil Gotshal secured the release of the last of the five Guantánamo Bay detainees it has represented since January 2005. The firm pressed for the release of these detainees, each of whom were Saudi Arabian citizens, in a variety of forums, including before US courts, within the US Congress, and with US and international diplomats. Although prisoners have trickled out of Guantánamo Bay and back to their home countries over the past few years, US courts have proven an unsuccessful venue for securing their release. Diplomatic efforts and agreements between the relevant governments, however, have proven to be a more successful method in securing release. Accordingly, our lawyers briefed Saudi Arabia’s ambassador to the US, Adel al-Jubeir, concerning Weil Gotshal’s remaining detainee clients and the delays they faced in gaining a judicial resolution to their cases. Ambassador Al-Jubeir then presented our clients’ cases as prepared by Weil Gotshal to the US Secretary of Defense, and four months later the last of the firm’s clients returned home to Saudi Arabia.

Defending the Rights of Journalists and Dissidents

In a matter referred by the International Senior Lawyers Project, Weil Gotshal is currently assisting the Mental Disability Advocacy Center in Russia in its efforts to defend and protect Larisa Arap, a Russian journalist and supporter of political opponents of the Russian government. Following a story that has become depressingly similar to those of other political outsiders in Russia, Ms. Arap was forcibly and involuntarily committed to a Murmansk psychiatric clinic in retaliation for her exposé, published in a Murmansk newspaper, in which she reported how staff at a mental hospital were systematically violating the human rights of patients, many of whom were committed involuntarily.

As in several other recent cases involving involuntary commitment, Ms. Arap was drugged and then forced to endure a sham commitment process. Her case is currently pending before the European Court of Human Rights. In connection with briefing in that case, Weil Gotshal was requested by trial counsel to prepare a comprehensive summary of procedural rights afforded to persons subject to involuntary commitment proceedings of various members of the European Court of Human Rights.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Helping global organizations achieve their goals is immensely rewarding, but so too is helping those people and organizations dedicated to improving the communities in which we live and work. Weil Gotshal’s pro bono efforts always have a place for those whose work can make a world of difference on a block-by-block basis.

Supporting Those Who Aid Victims of Domestic Abuse

Weil Gotshal provides employment law and general human resources management advice on a range of employment issues to Refuge, a UK charity for women and children experiencing domestic violence. The Weil Gotshal Employment group has developed a close working relationship with the human resources team at Refuge, often advising them on a day-to-day basis. Over the past year we have been working with the organization in connection with a race discrimination claim, which has involved advice on grievance and disciplinary procedures, responding to claims from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and conducting a mediation. We have also provided advice on recruitment, sessional workers, Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations, employment contracts, compromise agreements, redundancies, disciplinary grievances, and responding to various threatened employment claims against Refuge.

Helping Disadvantaged Citizens Keep Their Homes

In June 2007, Weil Gotshal initiated the first partner-led Housing Court Project to represent low-income tenants facing eviction and threatened with homelessness. Working with experienced Legal Aid Society housing attorneys in the Harlem Office, a team of the firm’s partners and associates has proven that large firm attorneys can provide effective representation in New York City Housing Court, a forum from which many firms have shied away. The firm’s team of twenty attorneys has dedicated nearly 1,000 hours to preventing the eviction of thirteen families and individuals, including a 72-year-old woman who has lived in her rent-stabilized Harlem apartment for more than 30 years.

Using Financial Innovation to Benefit the Disadvantaged

After Weil Gotshal successfully developed the first-ever humanitarian-relief derivative product with the United Nations World Food Programme in 2006, Weil Gotshal lawyers were called on to apply their specialized corporate legal skills to develop new approaches for using sophisticated financial products to benefit the citizens of emerging countries. Throughout 2007, Weil Gotshal worked with Oxfam America, a leading humanitarian aid organization, in developing novel approaches to further its relief and development efforts.

One of our major projects involved structuring micro-insurance programs in emerging countries where local economies and livelihoods are severely impacted by weather variability and other environmental stress. Because these regions typically have very low rates of insurance coverage, developing more affordable – and thereby, more accessible – programs can have an especially salutary effect on the lives of the poorest people struggling with climatic shocks.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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For those who face political or cultural persecution in their homelands, asylum often represents the only method by which they can escape life-threatening circumstances. Weil Gotshal has long taken on tough asylum cases that many other firms refuse to handle, and our efforts have recently been bolstered by the formation of an integrated team of lawyers within Weil Gotshal dedicated to safeguarding the rights of those seeking asylum.

Protecting the Rights of Resident Aliens

Weil Gotshal filed suit on behalf of a Honduran national against Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff and three officials of the Citizenship and Immigration Service. Our client had immigrated to the US in 1988 to escape persecution by the Honduran military and was granted asylum by a US immigration judge in 1996 after a full trial based on his well-founded fear of persecution in his home country. Nine years later, he applied for an adjustment in his status from asylee to permanent resident. Despite the 1996 grant of asylum, the Department of Homeland Security not only denied his application to become a permanent resident, but also issued an order which included factual findings contrary to those of the immigration judge, recasting our client as a persecutor, not a victim. Weil Gotshal’s complaint filed in the Eastern District of New York caused the Government to agree to vacate the order denying our client’s status adjustment and to grant him permanent resident status.

Protecting the Victims of Gang Persecution

As the culture of Central American street gangs, or “maras,” becomes more pervasive, life for young Central American men and women who don’t conform to the gangs’ wishes can be difficult and may even result in injury or death. Weil Gotshal’s Political Asylum Team works with several organizations in order to secure asylum for law-abiding young men and women who face grave danger in their home countries due to unrelenting persecution by gang members. Among matters resolved in 2007 are the following:

Guatemala. Weil Gotshal secured an asylum victory for a 17-year-old youth from Guatemala who was the victim of gang violence in his home country after refusing to join a street gang. From the outset, his case was an uphill battle. Among other things, the judge reviewed myriad articles documenting the violence caused by street gangs in Guatemala, statements submitted by the client’s family members, the statement of a board-certified psychologist, country-conditions reports issued by the Department of State, and memoranda of law in support of his claim. The judge also considered the testimony of a country-conditions expert who testified at the Merits Hearing. Ultimately, the judge found our client to be credible and that asylum was warranted due to the reasonable fear of persecution he faced for refusing a street gang’s attempts to recruit him.

El Salvador. Weil Gotshal obtained a significant victory for a 15-year-old refugee from El Salvador who had fled to the United States after witnessing the murder of his best friend by members of the notorious gang Mara 18 (M18). Our client literally dodged bullets and narrowly escaped his own death for refusing to join M18, and if forced to return to El Salvador, he most certainly would have been killed, if not by M18, then by a rival gang or by one of the vigilante “death squads” that routinely kill suspected gang members. In granting our client’s application for asylum, an immigration judge in Harlingen, Texas, commended Weil Gotshal for the nearly 12-month representation of our client, saying that such pro bono representation of an unaccompanied minor in Harlingen was both rare and greatly appreciated.

El Salvador. Weil Gotshal secured asylum for two young girls from El Salvador, ages 8 and 11, who were the victims of gang violence. At the beginning of the hearing, the team knew it would be a tough battle because the judge had never granted a gang-related claim. In fact, the judge expressed his skepticism on whether the firm’s clients had a viable claim under the law, given that US immigration law is notoriously hostile to such claims. However, after listening to the compelling testimony of several expert and opinion witnesses secured by Weil Gotshal, the judge agreed that our clients were entitled to asylum under US law and granted asylum on the basis of gang violence for the first time during his tenure on the bench.
Health & The Environment

As climate change and the effects of greenhouse gases become more widely understood, perhaps no set of concerns weighs as heavily on our collective future as the environment and conservation. Weil Gotshal is significantly involved in these issues on a global basis, in addition to environmental matters of local concern that impact the health and safety of the communities in which we work and live.

Assisting Local Conservation Efforts

Weil Gotshal advised Birdlife Hungary, Hungary’s largest and oldest conservation association, on the reorganization of their internal structure and related matters and employment matters. Our lawyers assisted in the preparation of documentation that would allow Birdlife to maintain its organizational status in Hungary. We also prepared agreements with Birdlife’s third-party contractors and helped the organization in direct negotiations with these contractors, as well as those in Hungarian courts. Our efforts on behalf of Birdlife also included representation in negotiations in connection with a libel proceeding against a Hungarian newspaper that had published untrue statements concerning the organization. Collectively, our representation has enabled the oldest Hungarian nature conservancy to maintain and update its corporate and organizational structure and has positioned Birdlife to continue its mission as a leader within the Hungarian conservation movement.

Ensuring the Safety of Schoolchildren

Weil Gotshal partnered with New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLP) to file a lawsuit in Bronx Supreme Court on behalf of the Bronx Committee for Toxic Free Schools against the School Construction Authority (SCA), alleging an insufficient environmental review for the proposed Mott Haven Schools Site in the South Bronx. The suit alleges that the SCA failed to propose a long-term plan to maintain and monitor prospective environmental controls it will use at the polluted site to prevent exposure of site occupants to the remaining contamination. With the assistance of Weil Gotshal’s pro bono team, petitioners submitted a reply to the City’s opposition papers stating that the project lacks adequate controls to ensure the health and safety of the children and teachers in the community. The suit is currently pending.

Weil Gotshal is also working with NYLP to explore filing a lawsuit against the City for failure to subject leased properties to the same environmental review as those that are purchased. NYLP and Weil Gotshal drafted a letter accusing the SCA of violating the law and requesting that they respond. The letter is expected to be released in conjunction with a report by the New York City Public Advocate’s Office.

Promoting Green Energy Projects

An inter-office Weil Gotshal team represents E&Co., Inc., a not-for-profit organization that assists local entrepreneurs in developing innovative and environmentally sound energy projects in developing countries. E&Co. carries out activities in more than 25 developing countries through nine offices around the world. Our firm has advised and assisted E&Co. in securing grants and raising capital through its “People & Planet Notes” to fund development projects.

Weilgreen

In 2007, Weil Gotshal launched WEILGREEN, a firm-wide initiative to introduce greener business processes and procedures. Our efforts to date have focused on identifying and extending best practices across our firm, including duplex printing, recycling, office equipment procurement and disposal, energy consumption, and facilities management and utilization. Our program is greatly assisted by the formation of green committees resident in each office in the US and London. These committees serve as talking shops for ideas, as well as means by which we can implement the program consistently and monitor its results. Our firm has also joined the Chicago Climate Exchange, a voluntary, legally binding integrated trading system that seeks to reduce emissions of all six major greenhouse gases via offset projects worldwide, as well as by its members’ own conservation efforts.
Harlem community office.

2007 began a transactional externship with Legal Aid's on a variety of business legal matters as well and in development. The firm advises The Legal Aid Society counsel on issues relating to communications and also provided LSNY with extensive strategic advice and matters pertaining to its operations. Weil Gotshal has serves as Legal Services NYC's pro bono General Counsel, the Brooklyn office's Family Law Unit, the firm also rotating LSNY externship – now in its ninth year – with The Legal Aid Society. In addition to the firm's (formerly Legal Services for New York City, or LSNY) pro bono partnerships with both Legal Services NYC and The Legal Aid Society. Our study of PPFA's governance challenges included a detailed presentation of our analysis and rationales for change, as well as comparisons with evolving best practices in other not-for-profit and federated organizations. This then provided the framework for communicating the impetus for change to the board, and upon board approval to the members, allowing reform efforts to proceed.

Legal Services NYC/ The Legal Aid Society

Weil Gotshal has forged strong and long-standing pro bono partnerships with both Legal Services NYC (formerly Legal Services for New York City, or LSNY) and The Legal Aid Society. In addition to the firm’s rotating LSNY externship – now in its ninth year – with the Brooklyn office’s Family Law Unit, the firm also serves as Legal Services NYC’s pro bono General Counsel, advising the organization on policy and governance matters pertaining to its operations. Weil Gotshal has also provided LSNY with extensive strategic advice and counsel on issues relating to communications and development. The firm advises The Legal Aid Society on a variety of business legal matters as well and in 2007 began a transactional externship with Legal Aid’s Harlem community office.

Planned Parenthood

Weil Gotshal was engaged by the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA), a leading women’s health care provider, educator, and advocate, to undertake a comprehensive review of its bylaws and governance structures and practices. In the first half of the two-year project we reviewed and analyzed the fundamental governance structure set forth in PPFA’s bylaws and recommended significant amendments designed to clarify roles, responsibilities, and decision rights, and to streamline, modernize, and rationalize bylaws that had become outdated and overly cumbersome as a result of many years of ad hoc amendments. The support for the bylaw amendments was significant, particularly in light of the complex relationships between PPFA, affiliates, and members. Our recommendations embraced numerous reforms that had long been studied but never implemented. Our study of PPFA’s governance challenges included a detailed presentation of our analysis and rationales for change, as well as comparisons with evolving best practices in other not-for-profit and federated organizations. This then provided the framework for communicating the impetus for change to the board, and upon board approval to the members, allowing reform efforts to proceed.

Homeless International

Continuing our long history of helping Homeless International (HI), a UK charity that supports community-led housing and infrastructure development in the emerging world, Weil Gotshal has most recently focused its efforts on aiding the organization in the provision of its Guarantee Fund. The Guarantee Fund is designed to provide bank guarantees in order to encourage banks in local jurisdictions to lend to HI’s local partners, in their local currency, for the purpose of funding housing and infrastructure projects. Weil Gotshal has helped HI to structure, document, and put in place two guarantees in relation to loans made to two of HI’s regular partners in India over the past year. These projects require our firm to coordinate with both the local banks and the local project partners and often involve elements of both English and local law.

Museum of the History of Polish Jews

Weil Gotshal has been deeply involved since the inception of the project to build a museum in Warsaw documenting the thousand-year existence of Jews in Poland. The result, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, is a joint cultural institution of the City of Warsaw, the Polish Ministry of Culture, and the Jewish Historical Institute Association of Poland (JHIAP). In the past year, our firm has drafted the agreements between the Museum and its co-founder, JHIAP; drafted agreements relating to the creation of the main exhibition; advised on copyright law related to the Museum’s intellectual property; and provided all day-to-day legal advice as the Museum’s only legal counsel. Our pro bono team’s IP advice is particularly relevant to the Museum’s operation as the Museum is being designed to showcase modern multimedia techniques including reconstruction, projection, and reproduction.
Advancing Children’s Health and Medical Research

Weil Gotshal represented The Progeria Research Foundation in connection with the negotiation and finalization of the necessary documents and arrangements for the first-ever clinical drug trial concerning Hutchinson-Gilford Progeria Syndrome (HGPS, or Progeria). HGPS is a rare, fatal genetic condition characterized by an appearance of accelerated aging in children. For instance, children with progeria die of atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries, at an average age of 13 (with a range of about eight to 21 years). The clinical drug trial is a collaborative effort involving The Progeria Research Foundation, Children’s Hospital Boston, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, and Brigham and Women’s Hospital. In addition, physicians and scientists from The Warren Alpert Medical School at Brown University, UCLA, and the National Institutes of Health are helping in this endeavor. Twenty-eight children from 16 countries have enrolled in the trial.

Raising Public Awareness of Child Poverty

When more than 300 families organized a camp site in Paris, France, as a means to protest the substandard, dangerous hotel housing provided for them by the French state, Voix de l’Enfant (VE) called on Weil Gotshal to assist the families in need. VE, an umbrella organization comprising nearly 80 groups in approximately 100 countries dedicated to the protection of endangered children, required assistance in developing a public relations campaign on behalf of the aggrieved families, as well as help in proposing emergency and long-term solutions in order to remedy the problem of ill-housed workers and their families. After being granted an audience before French president Nicolas Sarkozy, Weil Gotshal lawyers, working in concert with VE, collaborated with the president and his advisors to convene a roundtable discussion concerning the housing problem, leading ultimately to an agreement to re-house the families (1,500 people in sum, 900 of whom were children).

Protecting the Rights of Surviving Spouses

Weil Gotshal prevailed, as amici, on behalf of a pair of non-profit organizations – Disabled American Veterans and the National Veterans Legal Services Program – in an appellate case that sought to overturn the unfavorable state of the law in two key areas of interest for US veterans. First, disabled veterans seeking to assert their rights under the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act are now entitled to have their case heard by the Board of Veterans Appeals if they miss the filing deadline due to severe disability or other reasonable cause. Second, disabled veterans who have suffered from discrimination are now entitled to a hearing before the Merit Systems Protection Board if they appeal a denial of benefits under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. Despite a sharply divided court that generated six different opinions, the firm’s clients prevailed on every issue, earning a complete victory and broadening the access to support for US veterans.

Advocating Fair Treatment of Disabled Veterans

Weil Gotshal prevailed, on behalf of a pair of non-profit organizations – Disabled American Veterans and the National Veterans Legal Services Program – in an appellate case that sought to overturn the unfavorable state of the law in two key areas of interest for US veterans. First, disabled veterans seeking to assert their rights under the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act are now entitled to have their case heard by the Board of Veterans Appeals if they miss the filing deadline due to severe disability or other reasonable cause. Second, disabled veterans who have suffered from discrimination are now entitled to a hearing before the Merit Systems Protection Board if they appeal a denial of benefits under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. Despite a sharply divided court that generated six different opinions, the firm’s clients prevailed on every issue, earning a complete victory and broadening the access to support for US veterans.

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Coordinating Legal Guidance for Humanitarian Aid

Weil Gotshal and Oxfam America established the Oxfam Law Firm Consortium in 2007. The goal of the Consortium, which includes premier international law firms, is to harness the creativity, intellectual resources, and perspective that lawyers and their firms can offer in the fight against global poverty. The Consortium’s new model formalizes collective brainstorming about the strategic direction of Oxfam’s work. More specifically, the Consortium supports Oxfam’s programs on climate change, extractive industries, trade and agriculture, humanitarian response, private sector engagement, and US Gulf Coast reconstruction. Participating lawyers not only respond to specific legal requests and take on traditional pro bono projects for Oxfam, but also help Oxfam design new collaborations.

Rehabilitation International

Weil Gotshal assisted Rehabilitation International (RI), a global organization that promotes the rights of people with disabilities, in its effort to lend aid and guidance to signatories of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The signatory countries of the convention, 127 in sum (21 of which have ratified the convention), are located worldwide. During the past year, Weil Gotshal has worked in conjunction with RI and local law firms, disability organizations, and governments in Mexico, Costa Rica, and Ecuador to analyze the extent to which local laws require change in order to comply with the UN convention. The firm worked extensively on proposed amendments to disability law in Mexico, and our efforts there will likely contribute significantly to disability law around the world.

Charting New Directions in Pro Bono

Weil Gotshal helped to plan and moderate portions of the Public Interest Law Institute (PILI) conference in Budapest in order to share experiences, ideas, and strategies concerning pro bono work in the European Union, which has seen explosive growth in recent years. There were 140 attendees from firms, non-governmental organizations, and corporations located throughout Europe and the US. The conference’s workshops addressed multiple issues of European and international importance, including the difficulties of international project planning and implementation posed by jurisdictional differences.

Truly international law firms are expected to deliver high-quality legal services anywhere in the world that they are needed, and the same could be said for delivering high-quality pro bono services. In keeping with Weil Gotshal’s steady expansion into new markets and financial centers, our lawyers have also been keen exponents of bringing with them a culture that values pro bono service. During the past year, we seized many opportunities to broaden our delivery of pro bono services to clients operating on a global basis.

Promoting Access to Justice Internationally

Weil Gotshal provides assistance to the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice, a New-York based organization dedicated to expanding access to justice, ensuring fair and equitable judicial systems, and developing public policies that address social needs on a worldwide basis. During the past year our lawyers have been instrumental in helping the Center promote pro bono work throughout North and South America, including education efforts aimed at regional bar associations, law firms, law schools, and non-governmental organizations in South America. We are also deeply involved in the Center’s program that brings South African lawyers to New York for one-year stints at law firms and corporate legal departments.

The Vance Center operates as an international pro bono clearinghouse, through which our firm has engaged in many projects, including work on behalf of same-sex couples in Colombia (please see page 3 for more detail). In 2008, the Center also launched the Global Network for Justice Initiatives, an online, worldwide community of lawyers and other concerned individuals dedicated to the Center’s mission of expanding access to justice and making legal systems more responsive to the needs of their constituents. Weil Gotshal is proud to have assisted the Center in this endeavor and prouder still to participate in its ongoing programs.
**EXTERNSHIPS**

**Weil Gotshal Externship Program**

Weil Gotshal's externship programs allow full-time associates the opportunity to work exclusively on pro bono for a period of several months for leading public service and charitable organizations. Because of the expanded time frame of our externship assignments, associates are able to witness and appreciate the difference their efforts make, and the knowledge and skills they acquire on these assignments enhance not only their sense of social responsibility but their legal acumen as well.

The following items detail some of the externships recently offered at Weil Gotshal:

- **Weil Gotshal Corporate associates work at Lawyers Alliance for New York** with a wide variety of clients, advising on matters ranging from economic and community development projects and contract and lease negotiations to mergers of not-for-profits and financial reorganizations.
- **Weil Gotshal's externship program at the New York City Department of Law** provides litigation associates the opportunity to assist the Corporation Counsel's office with depositions, motions, and trials.
- **At Legal Services for New York City**, litigation associates get hands-on litigation experience in areas such as housing, bankruptcy, social security disability, and parental and children's rights, gaining valuable experience while helping disadvantaged New Yorkers.
- **Weil Gotshal and the Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program (DVAP)**, a joint program of the Dallas Bar Association and Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, work together on the Lend-A-Lawyer Program assisting low-income Dallas residents with their legal problems. While working on site at the DVAP offices, our attorneys help the Lend-A-Lawyer Program handle civil cases, participate in weekly legal clinics, and work closely with DVAP’s mentoring lawyers to assist clients. Weil Gotshal's Dallas summer associates are also able to spend a week of their clerkship at DVAP's offices assisting staff in providing legal services to the poor.
- **Junior associates from Weil Gotshal’s London office participate in secondments to Oxfam International headquarters**. The associates work under the direction of Oxfam’s general counsel on a variety of matters ranging from legal and policy aspects of debt and trade issues that affect the world’s poorest countries to contract negotiations with Oxfam counterparts in the aid area. Another London junior associate is seconded on a rotation program to the Bar Pro Bono Unit, a UK-based pro bono charity organization, one day a week.
- **New York summer associates are given the opportunity to participate in the firm’s pro bono summer externship program** by spending one or two weeks at a public interest organization. These externships afford summer associates the opportunity to attend pro bono training programs, work alongside staff attorneys, conduct administrative hearings, assist on appeals, and interview clients. Apart from externships, summer associates are also assigned pro bono cases under the supervision of attorneys in the various practice groups through which they rotate.

Summer associates from Weil Gotshal's Washington, DC office participate in the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless. With training and attorney supervision, each summer associate provides advice and assistance to potential clients on issues of homelessness, the shelter appeals process, income assistance, medical needs, and public benefits issues.

**Legal Aid Society’s Economic Development Office Externship**

Weil Gotshal began a pilot externship program with the Legal Aid Society's Economic Development Office in New York's Harlem neighborhood, which provides transactional law services to low-income businesses, nonprofit organizations, low-income housing cooperatives and unincorporated community groups. Externs draft and negotiate contracts on a variety of topics, ranging from mergers, acquisitions, dissolutions, restructurings, financings, and leasing, to matters involving regulatory compliance, real estate closings, corporate governance, tax exemption filings, and housing development issues. This volunteer assistance significantly benefits New York City’s poorest communities by increasing jobs, expanding the supply of affordable housing, and strengthening neighborhood infrastructure.

**Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund Externship**

The firm developed a pilot externship program with the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLEDF) that promotes and defends the rights of Pan-Latinos and Pan-Latino communities. PRLEDF has primarily been involved in the areas of language rights, bilingual education, housing and employment discrimination, voting rights, and ballot reform, as well as immigrant rights.

During the past year our extern worked with PRLEDF attorneys on several cases, including representing a group of Latino residents, landlords, and organizations in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, to enjoin the city from enforcing anti-immigration ordinances that would subject landlords who rent to – and businesses that hire – undocumented immigrants to severe fines. The case was tried in the Middle District of Pennsylvania in March 2007. The court declared the ordinances unconstitutional, in part, on federal preemption and due process grounds and enjoined the ordinances, recognizing that all immigrants, even those who entered this country unlawfully, have rights guaranteed to them by the United States Constitution. This decision will have strong implications throughout the country because other cities have passed or would like to pass similar ordinances. Hazleton is appealing the decision.

**ACCOLADES**

Throughout 2007, our pro bono practice was recognized by many organizations and entities around the world for the work we performed on behalf of our pro bono clients.

**American Bar Association Pro Bono Publico Award**

Weil Gotshal was nominated for the second consecutive year for the prestigious Pro Bono Publico Award in recognition of Weil Gotshal's lengthy and productive relationships with leading legal service organizations, including Lawyers Alliance for New York, New York Lawyers in the Public Interest, Legal Services for New York, The Legal Aid Society, and the Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program, all of which jointly nominated our firm for the award.

**American Bar Association – Business Law Section National Public Service Award**

TheABA’s Business Law Section selected a Weil Gotshal partner to receive its National Public Service Award for his demonstrated dedication to the innovative development and delivery of pro bono legal services in a business context to the poor. The ABA cited Weil Gotshal’s work with the UN World Food Programme to develop the world’s first weather derivative transaction for humanitarian emergencies, which was hailed by The New York Times as a project “that could someday transform the world’s approach to disaster emergencies.”

**State Bar of Texas W. Frank Newton Award**

The State Bar of Texas’ Legal Services to the Poor in Civil Matters Committee awarded Weil Gotshal with its 2007 Newton Award, recognizing the firm’s pro bono contribution to improving access and providing legal services to the poor.

**Disabled American Veterans Pro Bono Award**

Weil Gotshal received the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Pro Bono Award, which will be presented at the group’s 2008 meeting. DAV, a preeminent support organization for wounded US veterans and their dependents, cited our work in litigations that reversed the anti-veteran state of the law in key areas.

**Other Notable Awards and Recognitions**

- **Publications**
  - Financial Times, joint second-place finish in Corporate Social Responsibility category
  - The Lawyer (UK) Pro Bono Award
  - Rzeczpospolita, leading Polish daily newspaper, runner-up, Pro Bono Award of the Year

- **Organizations**
  - Center for Family Representation
  - Government of Argentina, Argentine Order of Merit
  - Houston Bar Association Auxiliary Leon Jaworski Award
  - Humane Society of the United States
  - The Legal Aid Society
  - Legal Services for New York City
  - National Legal Aid & Defender Association
  - Beacon of Justice Award
  - National Wildlife Federation
  - New Heights Youth
  - New York Lawyers in the Public Interest
  - Puerto Rican Legal Defense & Education Fund
  - Pro Bono Award
  - Southern Center for Human Rights
  - Frederick Douglass Human Rights Award
  - Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights
  - Vincent E. Reed Award

**PUBLICATIONS**

- **The New York Times**
- **Frederick Douglass Human Rights Award**
- **Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights**
Weil Gotshal's staff members are equally important to our pro bono work. From the Marketing Department's creative insight for our publications, the events and technical staff who assist with firm's trainings, to our paralegals and administrative colleagues who provide critical support to the attorneys, every member is a valuable contributor to our pro bono success.