

# Executive Director Update: Spring 2024



Dear friends,

I have just returned from our Hazard office where three “new” attorneys have joined us. We are so fortunate to have the talent and expertise of this team serving the Hazard region. Devon Skeens has returned to AppalReD Legal Aid to serve as Directing Attorney, while Monica Rice-Smith and Emma Jones bring a combined 45 years of legal knowledge to the office.

The future is not without challenges. A recently completed Legal Needs Assessment highlighted the lack of affordable housing in the region. This has been greatly exacerbated by the July '22 flooding and is an ever-present challenge for clients and staff. Aging buildings and infrastructure. Dwindling American Rescue Plan funds used to serve victims of domestic violence. The end of FEMA assistance in our region. The list goes on.

Yet we have every reason to hope for a bright future for AppalReD and our region. At a recent expungement clinic, AppalReD Legal Aid helped a student pursue her dream of nursing. Another woman expressed gratitude, saying that an expungement clinic opened up custody options for her.

She told us she got to hug her her children for the first time in three years. Another woman reclaimed her children from an abusive ex and parent. Our Project Renew clients display such grit every day.

This spring, our staff was energized by a meeting of Project Renew attorneys and paralegals from the state's four legal aid programs. The collaboration and innovation of Project Renew is making a real difference for families impacted by the opioid crisis. On page 7 of [The Summit](#), we share one client's story.

As our entire team of sixty gathered in the Red River Gorge this April, I was struck by the many years of experience in the room, the range of skills and talents, and how deeply committed to the mission our staff are. Together we crafted a value statement that will guide us into the future as we embark on strategic planning. I'm excited to share the values statement with you.

Finally, I want to take a moment to thank YOU. Just this month, four attorneys answered the call to take on pro bono cases. We also launched the [Rosenberg Circle](#), a monthly giving society, to honor John and Jean and ensure the sustainability of AppalReD well into the future. So far we have 25 founding members. It is not too late to join!

Best,

Angeleigh Dorsey, Executive Director

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