



Florida Housing Coalition Recognizes Ben Hayes for Outstanding Pro bono Assistance

A partnership between the Florida Housing Coalition and the Pro bono committee of the Real Property, Probate & Trust Law Section of the Florida Bar makes available volunteer lawyers to assist nonprofit affordable housing developers throughout Florida.

This partnership, known as The Volunteer Lawyer Project and headed by Drew O'Malley, would not be a success without the commitment of lawyers throughout Florida. Drew has been working with the Florida Housing Coalition to provide free legal assistance from lawyers to nonprofits in need, including reviews of title searches and mortgage financing documents, environmental issues, help with real estate purchase and sale agreements, zoning and land use issues, nonprofit corporate law issues and predevelopment due diligence.

At this time the Florida Housing Coalition would like to honor one extraordinary lawyer in particular – **Ben J. Hayes**.

Hayes worked diligently to establish the Hibiscus Housing Trust, a community land trust (CLT) in Punta Gorda, by providing assistance with the CLT's nonprofit corporation formation and securing 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service.

The newly formed CLT will separate land from houses built upon the property in order to transfer house titles to the owner without



Ben Hayes

selling the land, making the homes more affordable for owners.

“I offered my assistance because I saw the fireman and teachers in my own community unable to afford homes,” said Hayes. “When I had an opportunity to offer my assistance, to support housing for this workforce in Punta Gorda, it seemed like the right thing to do.”

Hayes offered 70 hours of pro bono assistance to the Hibiscus Housing Trust over the last year, after an initial planning meeting that included the Florida Housing Coalition.

Aside from his pro bono work, Hayes' civic duties include serving on the board for St. Anthony's hospital in St. Petersburg. His practice experience includes serving as Secretary and General Counsel for the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues, Inc. and the Professional Baseball Promotion Corporation (1993-2000). He was named a Florida Super Lawyer (2006) and one of The Best Lawyers in America, Sports Law (2007). He graduated with honors from the University of Florida College of Law in 1992.

The Florida Housing Coalition joins these organizations and many others in recognizing Ben Hayes for his commitment to providing pro bono legal work and in furthering affordable housing in the Punta Gorda community through his assistance to the Volunteer Lawyers Project partnership with the Florida Housing Coalition.



A variety of assistance is available through the Volunteer Lawyer Project, including review of title searches and mortgage financing documents, environmental issues, help with real estate purchase and sale agreements, zoning and land use issues, nonprofit corporate law issues and predevelopment due diligence. Call the Florida Housing Coalition at 850/878/4219 for assistance.