

2006 "Access to Justice" Month Celebration

April 21, 2006

In celebration of Access to Justice Month, The Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education honored community volunteers who help provide "Access to Justice" for all Arizonans at a reception held April 21, 2006 at the home of George and Ronnie Lyons. The reception, at which Governor Janet Napolitano and Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice Ruth McGregor were the honored speakers, was attended by almost 100 attorneys, judges and other volunteers and supporters of legal aid in the private and public sector.

The honorees assist the Foundation in its mission of promoting access to justice for all Arizonans through their work with legal service agencies, as well as providing law-related education to Arizona students. The legal service agencies offer assistance to Arizonans facing domestic violence, housing issues or medical emergencies, who don't have the resources to retain legal representation. In addition, these community volunteers assist with Foundation-sponsored law-related education programs in Arizona schools, which encourage youth involvement in the constitution, legal system, and civic rights & responsibilities.

85% of people seeking direct representation cannot be helped due to lack of resources, and only 25% of the schools in Arizona offer law-related education programs. "If one person does not have access to justice or knowledge of his or her legal rights, then the scales of justice have tipped for all," said Governor Napolitano.

One area of particular interest to the governor is combating domestic violence. She participated in the Walk to End Domestic Violence to raise money for domestic violence programs and shelters. It is vital to raise money to fund programs helping domestic violence victims, but it is equally important to make sure those assisting victims have the best training available.

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, please call 1-800-799-SAFE.

For a statewide calendar of events or to find out how you can get involved and volunteer for access to justice, visit the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education's website at www.azflse.org.