



Lawyers Alliance for New York

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Volunteer Attorney Accomplishment for Internal and External News

Date: July 13, 2011
Name of Attorney: E. Joe ('Joey') Berger III
Name of Firm: Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
Client Served: Bronx Lighthouse Charter School ('BLCS')

Accomplishment: Enabled BLCS to complete the necessary contracts and due diligence materials for it to finance and construct its new school building, allowing BLCS to expand from a K-8 program to grades 9-12.

Specific Case Highlights: Opened in August 2004, Bronx Lighthouse Charter School ('BLCS') is a nonprofit organization that provides a high-quality education program to primarily low-income, at-risk students. The school uses the arts to engage students in the core subject areas with a goal of preparing students for college. BLCS is an affiliate of Lighthouse Academies, Inc., a national nonprofit charter school management organization that creates new alternative public school choices for families. BLCS currently serves kindergarten through eighth grades, but intends to develop to also serve grades nine through 12.

In 2009, BLCS renewed its charter for an extra five years, including authorizations for the school to continue its planned growth to serve up through grade 12, thus allowing the school to potentially increase its enrollment from 460 to 640 students. To accommodate this planned expansion, BLCS approached Lawyers Alliance for assistance related to the construction of a new 30,000 square foot College Prep Academy building on newly acquired property adjacent to its existing school facility in the Bronx. Once complete, the new high school will open its doors to nearly 200 students in August 2012.

Joey Berger of Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP volunteered to assist with this immense project. Joey provided extensive pro bono legal counsel to BLCS including negotiating and drafting construction documents with BLCS' identified construction firm, transferring the newly acquired land and rights with respect to the planned College Prep Academy building to the organization's holding company, and reviewing due diligence materials such as title and survey work and environmental and engineering reports.

Priscilla J. Forsyth, Lighthouse Academies' Vice President in New York, was amazed at the volume of work that Joey Berger undertook for BLCS. She commented that he was "very responsive and accessible" and made a major time commitment to the school and the project. She also noted that the services that Akin Gump and Lawyers Alliance provided were extremely valuable, especially given that BLCS relies on state funding, not other fund-raising activities, for its operational needs.

About Lawyers Alliance for New York: Lawyers Alliance for New York is the leading provider of business and transactional legal services for nonprofit organizations that are improving the quality of life in New York City neighborhoods. Our network of pro bono lawyers from law firms and corporations and staff of experienced attorneys work together, delivering expert corporate, tax, real estate, employment, and other legal services to community organizations. By connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities, we help nonprofits to develop affordable housing, stimulate economic development, and operate vital programs for children and young people, the elderly, recent immigrants, and other low-income New Yorkers. Each year, the staff attorneys at Lawyers Alliance and more than 1,400 volunteers serve more than 600 clients.

Inquiries: Please contact Marketing and Communications Coordinator Emily Crossan at 212-219-1800 ext. 233 with questions or requests for additional information.