THE MARY BYRON FOUNDATION

Celebrating Solutions Award
Nomination Form

Legal name of organization Greater Boston Legal Services
Year established 1900

Program nominated for award (if different) Relocation Counseling
Year established 1999 Project

Address 197 Friend Street

City/State/ZIP code Boston, MA 02114

Contact person Robert A. Sable

Title Executive Director

Phone number (617)603-1612 Fax number (617) 371-1222

E-mail address rsable@gbls.org

Website address http://www.gbls.org

Brief description of the nominated program: The Relocation Counseling Project of the Family Law Unit at Greater Boston Legal Services is the only one of its kind in Massachusetts and most likely in the country. It is unique in its offering of free, comprehensive legal advice, information and referrals to victims of domestic violence who, because of profound safety concerns, are considering relocation from their current place of residence to another part of the state or country, who have recently relocated to Massachusetts or who for safety's sake want to change their identity. With advice and assistance provided by project staff, victims and survivors of abuse are better able to make informed decisions about the numerous complex legal issues they face when relocating and can thereby take the necessary steps to ensure their own and their children's safety and well-being. Since its inception, the project has served some 900 victims and witnesses to crime. This project is a model that can readily be replicated in any state.

Geographical area served Boston and 31 surrounding cities and towns, including Suffolk, Middlesex, Norfolk and Plymouth counties.

Is organization tax-exempt under IRS 501 (c) (3) guidelines? X Yes__No

If no, is your organization a public agency/unit of government? ___Yes__No

Signature of contact person

Date September 14, 2005
Greater Boston Legal Services

Submission to the Mary Byron Foundation “Celebrating Solutions” Awards Program

1. Describe the overall mission of your organization in five sentences or less.

Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) is the primary provider of free, civil (non-criminal) legal assistance to low-income individuals and families in Boston, Massachusetts and 31 surrounding cities and towns. With a mission of providing high quality legal representation to as many poor people as possible, GBLS provides a full range of legal options for its clients, from brief service and advice to individual representation, impact litigation, administrative and legislative advocacy, and community legal education.

Assisting survivors of domestic violence is one of the highest priorities of GBLS. The Family Law Unit and the Asian Outreach Unit represent victims of domestic violence, helping them to obtain protective orders and to address family law issues, including custody, visitation, and support; the Housing Unit helps battered women in need of housing to receive priority placement; the Immigration Unit helps immigrants obtain relief based on their status as victims of domestic violence; the Welfare Unit assists domestic violence victims in obtaining waivers from welfare requirements to address life issues arising from violence; and the Employment Unit assists victims in obtaining the unemployment benefits to which they are entitled.

2. Describe the most innovative aspects of the program you are nominating for consideration.

The Relocation Counseling Project (RCP) of the Family Law Unit at Greater Boston Legal Services is the only one of its kind in Massachusetts and, to the best of our knowledge, in the country. It is unique in its offering of free, comprehensive legal advice, information, referrals, and representation to domestic violence victims who, because of profound safety concerns, are considering relocation from their current place of residence to another part of the state or country or who have recently relocated to Massachusetts, or who want to change their identity. With assistance provided by project staff, survivors of abuse are better able to make informed decisions about the numerous, complex legal issues they face when relocating and consequently can take the necessary steps to ensure their own and their children’s safety and well-being.

There are myriad challenges facing any victim of domestic violence. When the situation escalates to the point where the victim feels that her safety requires that she relocate to an undisclosed location or change her identity, the complications multiply. Prior to the inception of the RCP, there was no program in Massachusetts to help victims identify the legal issues that they needed to consider when relocating or think through the legal consequences of actions they might take. Advocates working with abuse victims frequently did not have the training or knowledge of complicated legal issues that are impacted by the decision to relocate, nor did they have access to information or lawyers who were knowledgeable in these areas. Individuals in fear for their and their children’s safety frequently felt that they had no choice but to remain in dangerous situations or to attempt relocation based on inadequate information, with often tragic consequences.
RCP Provides Timely, Client-Focused Relocation Advice and Assistance

Established in 1999 in response to a critical unmet need, RCP staff are available daily during work hours to respond to requests for legal advice and services from victims, service providers, and community-based advocates. To ensure easy access to the project’s services, GBLS established an independent toll-free phone line for relocation clients. Confidential voicemail is available, and most calls are returned within 24 hours. Service providers who phone for consultations include shelter advocates, health care or social workers, therapists, law enforcement personnel, victim witness advocates, and attorneys.

To best assist victims, either directly or through their advocates or providers, RCP staff developed and use protocols to identify issues that victims must consider for safe relocation. For each issue, the protocol includes the relevant laws as well as safety considerations and addresses the client’s legal, physical, and economic circumstances. Using these protocols, staff provide victims with the information necessary to relocate safely and legally. RCP staff and volunteer students developed and yearly update charts of the relevant state law of all 50 states in areas such as divorce, custody, removal, and name change so as to properly advise clients considering relocation. Also, project staff are certified application assistants for Massachusetts’ address confidentiality program. As such, they assist individuals in applying for acceptance into the state’s confidential mail forwarding system for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Victims who must relocate for safety reasons often have a multitude of legal and personal issues to address. Legal matters include family law issues, identity changes, criminal prosecutions, housing, and benefits. Staff frequently provide assistance with family law issues involving interstate or international custody jurisdiction and removal of children from the state or country. Personal issues faced by victims include safety planning, confidentiality, and community support. A victim’s failure to properly address both legal and personal issues while relocating can undermine his or her safety and legal cases. The RCP is designed to address each of these issues in a comprehensive way so that survivors can successfully achieve safety.

RCP Responds to Emerging Issues

The project aims to respond to the issues that its clients raise. Since RCP began, staff identified that a large unmet need was assistance with identity changes. The project received numerous calls from victims who had been stalked and harassed and wished to establish new identities to prevent further re-victimization. As a result, staff developed protocols to address these issues, and now assist many individuals each year who wish to change their and their children’s names and social security numbers. This is the only program in Massachusetts, if not nationally, that currently provides assistance with these issues. Additionally, project staff have developed comprehensive materials on name changes and social security number changes which have been disseminated nationally. In the past year, staff have also helped several survivors who obtained wrong or incomplete advice on identity change procedures and faced unforeseen problems as a result. The RCP also recently identified the dangers posed by technology, such as the ability to find and track a victim through on-line sources, and so the project adopted protocols and procedures to deal with this concern.
RCP Trains Others on Relocation Issues

RCP offers training to local service providers on legal issues related to relocation so that they are better able to identify issues and obtain timely legal assistance for victims. In addition, staff are available to attorneys and advocates to provide training through individual consultation on relocation cases statewide and nationally. As recognition of the project's expertise has spread, RCP staff have been invited to make presentations on relocation issues to victim services groups in Pennsylvania and Florida and to serve as trainers at national conferences and workshops sponsored by the Office for Violence Against Women, the National Network to End Domestic Violence, and the National Crime Victims Law Institute.

3. Describe your program's implementation. What barriers did your organization have to overcome? How did you marshal the necessary resources for implementation?

Greater Boston Legal Services has a lengthy history of working with local and statewide domestic violence organizations, both private and governmental, in addition to annually assisting hundreds of individual survivors of domestic violence. Together with GBLS, these groups identified a need to provide legal assistance to victims who had to relocate for safety reasons. Recognizing GBLS' legal experience involving issues of victims of domestic, the Massachusetts Office of Victims Assistance (MOVA) asked GBLS to take a leadership role and create a project that would respond to this critical unmet need. GBLS, in consultation with this network, developed the RCP so that it would be accessible to individual victims as well as to staff of the wide spectrum of agencies and organizations that assist victims of domestic violence.

The RCP is presently staffed by a very experienced attorney and a senior paralegal. At the project's inception, RCP staff developed the protocols to address the main legal issues that are presented in these cases, set up the phone hotline, wrote and began distributing a brochure describing project services, and did extensive outreach statewide to make the RCP's services known. Over the six years of the project's existence, staff regularly update materials, continue to do outreach, attend trainings, and explore and develop additional areas of expertise as new issues surface in clients' cases.

Since its inception in 1999, the RCP has served 900 victims and witnesses to crime. Included in this figure are approximately 150 providers and advocates who contact GBLS on behalf of victims. Most of the individuals served are female victims of domestic violence, including those who have attempted to extricate themselves from danger through restraining orders and criminal prosecution, yet have been unsuccessful. Other victim populations served include victims of sexual assault and witnesses to community or neighborhood violence. Over 250 individuals have been assisted with name and/or social security number changes.

Initially, resistance to the concept of the project was expressed by several District Attorneys in Massachusetts. They feared that such a program would help crime victims relocate so that they would then be unavailable in criminal trials as prosecution witnesses. Aware of this concern, GBLS worked closely from the beginning with staff from the DAs' offices in establishing the project and particularly in the development of project protocols related to criminal prosecution. Project advocates also made presentations to staff at DA offices, explaining the goals and objectives of the RCP. Not long after the project's implementation, it
became clear to the skeptical District Attorneys that the project offered critical assistance to crime survivors and their resistance ended. Indeed, victim witness advocates and attorneys from a number of DA offices frequently call or refer victims to the project for advice and assistance.

In implementing the RCP, GBLS had to overcome the barrier of securing the necessary financial resources. The Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance provided a portion of the funding to help establish the project. GBLS, out of an awareness of its importance, made the project part of its priority work and used some of its unrestricted funding to supplement the MOVA support. Determined to retain this critical project, GBLS nonetheless continues to struggle to raise the funding that is required for this effort.

4. How do you know your program works? Please cite two examples.

Because relocation often entails taking on a new identity, follow-up of outcomes is difficult. However, a number of clients who relocated have called to say that the help they received from the RCP enabled them to relocate safely while maintaining custody of their children, that it ensured confidential identification change so as to prevent tracking, and, by securing the transfer of their housing subsidies, that it saved them from homelessness or having to go into shelter.

Further evidence that the program works can be seen in the large number of people who continue to seek its services. The RCP has received recognition for its innovative work, both nationally and from local community agencies. In just one example of agency feedback, Casa Myrna Vasquez, the largest Boston area domestic violence shelter, lauded the project for providing a place to which shelter staff can refer women for assistance with complicated issues when they are fleeing to the shelter in Massachusetts or fleeing the state for safety reasons, and for serving as a resource for staff assistance with interstate and international cases. Two examples of individual RCP cases follow:

"Shelley’s” boyfriend, “Steve,” beat and sexually assaulted her many times during their relationship. As the violence grew, Shelley feared for her life and eventually fled her home with her two children and went to a battered women’s shelter for safety. In a few months, she found affordable housing in a nearby city, and took considerable steps to prevent Steve from finding her. Despite this, one evening Steve broke into her apartment and raped and beat her. Shelley called the police and they arrested Steve. However, he was released after his arraignment and immediately returned to Shelley’s apartment. He was arrested again, and, following this arrest, was tried and convicted of assault and battery and violation of her restraining order, and sentenced to a year in jail. Shelley feared that when he was released he would track her down again. She was referred to the RCP who helped her to obtain a confidential name change and a court order that the new name be deleted from court records. Project staff then helped Shelley apply for new social security numbers for herself and her two children, transfer her housing subsidy to a safe location and transfer all of her benefits and documents into her name.

“Maria” was a 21-year-old, Spanish-speaking mother of two children ages five years and six months. Her husband, “Jose,” was ten years her senior, very controlling, and physically abusive. There were periods of separation when Maria left Jose and lived with relatives but it
was economically difficult for her to support herself and their children on her own. After a reconciliation fueled by Jose’s promises to change and of economic betterment, Maria agreed to move to Virginia with him and the children. The domestic violence resumed shortly after the move, and four months later Maria fled with her children back to Massachusetts and moved in with her mother and sister. Jose retaliated by filing an action in Virginia to get custody of the children. By misrepresenting to the court that the family resided in Virginia, Jose was able to get a custody order. He returned to Massachusetts and with the assistance of the local police, took both children from Maria and returned to Virginia. Virginia was referred to the RCP by her local domestic violence program. The day after Jose took the children, Maria met with the Project attorney who assessed the case as needing direct legal representation. GBLS contacted the local legal aid office in Virginia who agreed to challenge the custody decision. While Virginia legal aid was in court getting the case dismissed, the RCP attorney obtained custody and protective orders in Boston, and soon thereafter, the children were happily reunited with their mother.

5. Who are your key partners? What are their roles?

The RCP works closely with a network of service providers throughout Massachusetts. Project staff coordinate services with a broad range of agencies including law enforcement, domestic violence shelters, local hospitals, local health centers, community based organizations, and others who provide victim services. Many cases are referred to the RCP by battered women’s and sexual assault service agencies, as well as District Attorney offices and health service providers. Reciprocally, RCP staff maintain data regarding service agencies - including shelters, counseling services, and financial resources - that enable them to make appropriate referrals to supportive services, thus increasing the likelihood of successful relocation.

In addition to reciprocal referrals, the RCP collaborates with other agencies who are working with individual clients to ensure the clients’ confidentiality and safety. Also, the RCP works with law enforcement officials to augment a client’s safety during the criminal process, especially when the victim’s fear of repercussions and unwillingness to testify in a criminal prosecution may unwittingly play into the hands of the perpetrator. Additionally, project staff work with legal service providers nationwide to coordinate services to abuse victims who move between states.

6. Could/should your program be replicated in other areas of the country? How and why?

The Relocation Counseling Project is a model that can readily be replicated in any state. For survivors seeking to relocate, having reliable and accurate legal advice and assistance is a critical element in the success of their efforts to break the cycle of violence and speaks to why the RCP should be replicated throughout the country. GBLS would be happy to assist programs seeking to establish similar projects through the sharing of our written materials, experience, and expertise. The essential elements of an RCP are simple: an attorney who becomes expert in the legal issues involved in relocation; development of the project in collaboration with provider agencies that assist victims of domestic violence to ensure that the project is responsive to the existing need; a dedicated access phone line; and extensive publicity about the availability of the assistance and how to make contact.
GREATER BOSTON LEGAL SERVICES

I. QUESTIONS FOR ALL APPLICANTS

a) Number of Individuals Served

Greater Boston Legal Services serves approximately 15,300 clients a year, almost 75% of whom are women. Since the Relocation Counseling Project began in 1999, this project has served over 1300 clients, and the rate has increased each year.

b) Past Awards, Accolades, and Grants Related to Domestic Violence Work:

GBLS is considered a leader both in Massachusetts and nationally for its leadership role in advocacy efforts on behalf of victims of domestic violence, for the legal protections it has been able to secure for victims and their families, and for various innovative model projects it has developed to enhance assistance for victims. In recognition of this work, GBLS’ domestic violence advocates has received a number of accolades and awards.

GBLS’ expertise in the area of domestic violence has been acknowledged by the number of times staff are called upon to train others. For example, GBLS attorneys were invited to conduct an educational sessions at a recent conferences for the Kentucky Coalitions Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault as well as at a national training for state domestic and sexual violence coalition attorneys. The evaluations at both were 100% favorable. Participants at the national event, mostly lawyers, reported that GBLS’ domestic violence staff presented the most useful workshop of the entire three-day conference. In addition, GBLS domestic violence advocates have been invited as faculty for the National Crime Victims Law Institute’s annual conference for the past two years. The Department of Justice (DOJ) recognized GBLS’ Legal Assistance to Victims Project as one of the most innovative programs funded by the DOJ’s Office for Violence Against Women (OVW) (November 2003).

GBLS and its staff have also received a number of awards and accolades for this work which go back several years. Over the past decade alone, recognition includes the following:

- Certificate of achievement (2003) from the Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence to two GBLS staff members for outstanding work in assisting battered Asian women and children;
- Voice for Justice Award (2000) of The Support Committee for Battered Women for work with victims and leadership on domestic violence issues;
- The Women’s Bar Association (WBA) Pro Bono Award (1999) for being one of the primary founders of the WBA Family Law Project for Battered Women and long-time volunteer (doing trainings, etc.);
- The Cambridge Annual Peace & Justice Award (1997) for work promoting community of “peaceable” homes and an end to domestic violence and access to justice;
- The Boston Bar Association John G. Brooks Award for outstanding contributions as a legal services attorney (1997); and
• Two GBLS paralegals working in domestic violence were recipients of the Harry Dow Memorial Service Award for Devoted Service to the Poor;
• Two of GBLS’ domestic violence attorneys were picked as “Rising Stars” by Boston Magazine in 2005; and
• Another domestic violence attorney was picked a “Super Lawyer” by Boston Magazine.

In the area of funding, GBLS’ Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant for the Relocation Counseling Project has been consistently renewed and is a sign of national recognition for this innovative project. In addition, the following grantors have provided ongoing funding to support various aspects of GBLS’ efforts to combat domestic violence:

• Massachusetts Bar Foundation;
• Boston Department of Neighborhood Development - McKinney Emergency Shelter Grant;
• Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety - VAWA grant;
• City of Cambridge Department of Human Services Program - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG);
• Stratford Foundation;
• Department of Justice - VAWA grant;
• Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance (MOVA) - VOCA grant; and
• Department of Public Health.

c) Use of Celebrating Solutions Award

GBLS would use the Celebration Solutions funding to train additional coalitions and other service providers on the complexity of relocation and the need to access expert advice and referral before assisting survivors to undertake an identity change. We would also use this funding to subscribe to services that allow us to better explore what public information is available on the survivor (public records like drivers license, court records, deeds, criminal records etc.) and plan to avoid the public domain after relocation. Some funds would be used to hire law students to work on updating the numerous charts of state laws concerning relocation and also create new charts. Finally, we are in the very beginning stages of creating a curriculum for legal advocates and law enforcement on the use of internet technology in safety planning and we would use some funds to staff that effort.

II. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RELOCATION COUNSELING PROJECT

1. Please describe in more detail the basic protocols for legal concerns you have developed for individuals contemplating relocation for changing their identities. If you have initial intake questions, written protocols for new clients or handouts for people seeking services please provide us with copies.

Relocation cases are highly individualized and often very complex. As a result, there is not a rigid set of intake questions or protocols that can be applied to every case. A typical, though not exhaustive, approach to a relocation case might entail the following:

A.) Are there minor children?
If yes, Are there any Custodial arrangement?
   Is there visitation?
   Is there child support?

B.) Are there civil or criminal cases pending?
   If yes, Are there collection or credit problems?
   Are you subject to subpoena or summons?

C.) What are sources of income and assets?
   - Home ownership, means to physically relocate

D.) What is the victim’s family support network and is it safe?
   - Need and willingness to cut off contact

E.) Assess what information is in the public domain and how to remove or avoid it in the future.

In every case, we take whatever time is needed to carefully and thoroughly explore the victim’s individual situation and address her safety needs. Since so many of these cases involve stalking, we like to “look backward” and assess how visible she is publicly and then “look forward” to plan for future privacy and safety. We have recently received training and have begun to employ the use of internet technology in our safety planning with relocation clients.

2. What if any, counseling or mental health services are available, or would you like to make available, to those who relocates or change their identity?

We utilize many local mental health resources and make appropriate referrals within a very large collaboration with local health care facilities. In other states, we may access sister legal aid programs to seek referral sources in their service areas. Clients who have undergone an identity change face unique issues with trust, inability to disclose personal details or difficulty in establishing new friendships and relationships in addition to extreme and prolonged fear. Children especially can be burdened with the need to keep a secret about what they and a parent have experienced. It would be ideal if we had therapists and mental health workers who could specialize in these areas and utilize a treatment modality specifically tailored to victims who have changed their identity.

3. You indicate that you have helped survivors who obtained wrong or incomplete information about the legal aspects of relocation or changing their identities. What are the most common problems facing these survivors and how have you been able to help them resolve these problems?

We continue to see an increase in cases where victims have unsuccessfully attempted to change their identities and remain private. We attribute this to the widespread misinformation and advice given by untrained, lay advocates, usually in domestic violence shelters or sexual assault programs. By far the most common problem is the cross referencing of old and new identities. In these cases the damage often cannot be undone so we work with the victim to keep her
information out of the public domain in the future and, when necessary, plan for a subsequent physical relocation. Another problem is the inability to obtain a new social security number after a name change because of legal obstacles in state laws concerning custody of minor children. In these cases we gave accurate legal advice and made an interstate referral to the appropriate legal aid office to secure the proper custody orders before the social security administration could deny the new numbers (as a result of the defect in custody). In some cases the identity change was untimely, for example during the pendency of a criminal prosecution, resulting in the old and new identity being revealed to the perpetrator. In this instance, we were successful in intercepting the assignment of a new social security number and quash a subpoena for her phone records issued in the criminal prosecution. It is important to point out that we are aggressively trying to resolve the problem of dissemination of misinformation and bad legal advice. We have approached domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions in numerous states to train and educate their member programs on the complexity of relocation cases and the need to seek expert advice before undertaking ID changes. In addition, we collaborate closely with National offices such as The National Network to End Domestic Violence to promote this message.

4. How do you deal with custody/visitation/child support issues if the survivor has children in common with a person who is not the abuser? Is visitation of the other parent a barrier to relocation or a potential safety concern in the case of a new identity?

If a survivor has children in common with a person who is not the abuser this may make an identity change ill advised. It is important to emphasize that identity change is only one of many elements in a safe and effective relocation. If it is ill advised and likely to be unsuccessful, we will work with the survivor to get and maintain her privacy and work within the custody/visitation arrangement with the other parent. It may be possible for the survivor to change her name and social security number but not the child’s. In this instance, we would very carefully examine the probability of cross referencing and what details she may need to reveal about her name, such as with schools and medical facilities and if she can live with this. Visitation with another parent can certainly be a barrier to relocation, we would advise the survivor on the relevant case law and statutes regarding removal of minor children in the jurisdiction she is in. It could also be a safety concern if she is for example, involved in the exchange of a child for visitation. We would explore alternatives that would preserve her safety and where appropriate, make referrals to legal aid or other resource to modify existing court orders if necessary.

5. What are the biggest state law obstacles faced by RPC and what state law issues might present the biggest hurdles in replicating this program in other states?

State laws heavily impact the decision and ability to relocate, especially with minor children. We have compiled charts of the laws in every state concerning anything that relates to relocation including but not limited to: Domestic violence as a factor in awarding custody; Removal statutes relating to minor children; Name change statutes for parent and minor children; Grounds for divorce; Residency requirements; States that have adopted the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Enforcement Act; and more. Common state laws that cause obstacles are: Whether a state has adopted the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act and has continuing exclusive jurisdiction over minor children; Registry or department of motor vehicle rules concerning cross referencing of old and new drivers licenses; Name change statutes with vigorous notice
requirements; and Voter registration laws and birth certificate laws that require cross referencing of old and new names. It is not the case that a state law may prevent the replication of this project but the most important factor in overcoming hurdles is to have access to and expertise in the laws relevant to the individual case for the state the survivor is fleeing as well as the state she may be fleeing to. It is important to recognize that relocation requires expert legal advice in a wide variety of areas.
April 28, 2006

Marcia Roth, Executive Director
Mary Byron Foundation
10401 Linn Station Road
Suite 200
Louisville, KY 40223

Dear Ms Roth:

The Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance Domestic Violence Unit (DTA DV Unit) is pleased to have the opportunity to write a letter of support for Greater Boston Legal Services’ Relocation Counseling Project’s application for the Celebrating Solutions Award. In our role at the Department of Transitional Assistance, we work with victims of domestic violence who are often homeless and have few resources to deal with a crisis. Many of the women we help need to be moved for their safety and need support from many systems to make this happen.

Each year our unit works with a startlingly large number of families affected by domestic violence who need to relocate. Since it’s inception in 1999, we have worked in close collaboration with the Relocation Project to ensure that all of the legal needs of the families we meet have been addressed prior to moving out of state. As Director of the Domestic Violence Unit at the Department of Transitional Assistance, I am particularly aware of the gaps in services that are created for victims of domestic violence in poverty as a result of a lack of a coordinated systemic response. These gaps are often a direct result of a lack of collaboration between the domestic violence systems and the legal system. The consequences for victims and their children when legal issues are not addressed can be life long. Our DTA unit can offer women financial benefits, sheltering and often relocation funds but no legal expertise. When we combine with The Relocation Project we are providing a much safer and comprehensive set of services. Together we have helped women who were in a great deal of danger relocate in a safe and respectful way.

The DTA DV Unit has cross-trained with the Relocation Project. We have developed policies and procedures for working together. The DTA DV Unit staff strategizes with Relocation staff on the best ways to meet the needs of our families. The MA Department of Transitional Assistance is committed to helping to provide battered women the safety and resources they deserve and working with the Relocation Project is one of the best ways we do that. The collaboration greatly enhances the support for victims of domestic violence in this state and provides a potentially life saving resource for our clients.

Sincerely,

Janet D. Fender
Director DTA Domestic Violence Unit
April 28, 2006

Marcia Roth, Executive Director
Mary Byron Foundation
10401 Linn Station Road, Suite 200
Louisville, KY 40223

Dear Ms. Roth:

I am writing this letter in support of Greater Boston Legal Services’ application for the Celebrating Solutions Award for its Relocation Counseling Project. Jane Doe, Inc. is the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence. Currently, more than 60 community-based sexual assault and domestic violence service programs across Massachusetts comprise the membership of Jane Doe Inc. Our member programs deliver comprehensive services to over 100,000 women, men and children every year, in every community in Massachusetts.

Jane Doe, Inc. frequently has the opportunity to directly refer cases to the Relocation Counseling Project. Additionally, our member programs throughout the state, including the South Shore Women’s Center in Plymouth, Transition House in Cambridge, Alternative House in Lowell, Daybreak in Worcester, the Elizabeth Freeman Center in Pittsfield, and the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center have referred cases to the Project. In fact, our member programs are the primary source of referrals to the Relocation Counseling Project. We can attest to the significant needs that this unique service provides to victims of violence. We also can attest to the difference this Project has made in increasing the safety of battered women and children in the Commonwealth.

Prior to the development of this Project, our member programs were left to their own inadequate resources to try to address issues concerning relocation when safety planning with battered women. All too often, staff members were at a loss as to where to refer women for comprehensive legal assistance and counseling in these complicated cases. We consistently receive positive feedback regarding the invaluable assistance that the Relocation Counseling Project provides to staff and clients.

For these reasons, we believe that the Relocation Counseling Project is an excellent choice for the Celebrating Solutions Award. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Mary R. Lauby
Executive Director
April 27, 2006

Marcia Roth, Executive Director
Mary Byron Foundation
10401 Linn Station Road
Suite 200
Louisville, KY 40223-3842

Dear Ms. Roth:

The Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA) is pleased to offer this letter of support for Greater Boston Legal Services’ Relocation Counseling Project’s application for the Celebrating Solutions Award. MOVA has funded the Relocation Counseling Project, the first of its kind in the nation, since its inception in 1999.

More than five years ago, MOVA recognized a gap in services to crime victims in Massachusetts for families that were attempting to achieve safety from their perpetrators, only to be located and re-victimized. In response, our office circulated a request for proposals to create and implement a project that would assist crime victims to relocate safely. Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) was awarded that grant with funding through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) of 1984 from the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. GBLS has successfully implemented this innovative project over the last six years.

MOVA believes that the Relocation Counseling Project is deserving of the Celebration Solutions Award because it has made a significant difference in breaking the cycle of family violence. The complexities surrounding relocation efforts by victims, in particular those of domestic violence, and the ramifications of failed relocation attempts are extreme. The trained legal staff of GBLS’ Relocation Counseling Project provide victims and their families with accurate legal advice and counseling so that they can permanently escape the dynamic of violence.

The Project Staff also has gained a national reputation as experts in relocation because they act as a clearinghouse for information regarding identity changes and child custody and visitation as it relates to relocation. Over the past several years, domestic violence coalitions across the country have utilized their materials and protocols to assist victims within their own states. The Celebrating Solutions Award represents another unique opportunity for a viable, replicable program through curriculum development and trainings.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions in this regard.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Janet E. Fine
Executive Director
Relocation Project  
2005-2006
Agency Name: Greater Boston Legal Services  
Program Name: Relocation Project

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TOTAL PERSONNEL: 96,585.10

NON-PERSONNEL

Audit/Prof Fees: 1,992  
Insurance: 518  
Equipment: 2,340  
Supplies: 1,337  
Printing and Copying: 394  
Telephone and Fax: 1,056  
Postage and Delivery: 509  
Training: 472  
Other: Space: 6,001  
Miscellaneous Costs: 7,652  
indirect: 19,073  
Total Non-Personnel: $22,270

TOTAL EXPENSES: $118,855