

**SUCCESSFUL CLE PROGRAM
SPONSORED BY THE ALTERNATIVE
DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE**

By Leona Beane and Andrea Vacca

On February 3, 2010, the NYWBA presented a Continuing Legal Education Course to a capacity crowd at Blank Rome entitled, "Mediation and Other ADR in the New York Courts." Leona Beane and Andrea Vacca, the co-chairs of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Committee, organized the program with the assistance of Yacine Barry, CLE Coordinator. Yacine Barry began the program by introducing the moderator, Hon. Betty Weinberg Ellerin, former Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, First Department. Judge Ellerin spoke both about her experiences with ADR when she was the Presiding Judge of the New York City Courts and about her current experiences with mediation and arbitration. She introduced the six speakers. The first speaker, Daniel Weitz, ADR Statewide Director of OCA, spoke of the many court-sponsored ADR programs operating throughout the NYC area and the State. Leona Beane spoke about the Mediation Program in the Commercial Division. Michele Silva, a partner at Phillips Nizer, spoke of the Matrimonial Mediation Program and Shelly Rossoff Olsen spoke about the Neutral Evaluation program (known as Mediation I) in New York County. Caroline Antonacci, Special Master, Appellate Division, First Department spoke of the Mediation Program in the Appellate Division. To finish off the evening, Andrea Vacca spoke about the Collaborative Family Law Center and collaborative divorce.

Each of the speakers provided useful information about how each program works and discussed ethical issues they have encountered. The speakers answered numerous questions from the audience, and interest was so great that the audience asked to ignore the scheduled break and continue right through to 8:30 pm. Many in the audience thanked the chairs for presenting this program, and the evaluations were very positive. The program even brought in several new members to the NYWBA.

The NYWBA thanks Blank Rome for generously providing its largest conference room and helping to make the program such a success.

Leona Beane and Andrea Vacca are Co-Chairs of the NYWBA ADR Committee and members of the Board of Directors. Ms. Beane specializes in Wills, Trusts, Estates & Guardianship, and serves as a Mediator and Arbitrator. Ms. Vacca is a certified Family and Divorce Mediator and a Collaborative Law Attorney. She also Co-Chairs the NYWBA Mentoring Circles Program.



Caroline Antonacci, Shelly Rossoff Olsen, Andrea Vacca, Hon. Betty Weinberg Ellerin, Leona Beane, Michelle Silva, Daniel Weitz

**Report from New York Women's Bar
Association Foundation's inMotion Fellow
by Ashley Teele**

During my 2L year, I interned with inMotion, a dynamic organization that provides legal services to low-income women in New York City. This allowed me to obtain hands-on experience and apply my academic knowledge to real life situations. As a New York City native, I have a strong commitment to community-based organizations that provide assistance to underprivileged New Yorkers, particularly those that provide access to legal resources.

I worked with two other legal interns from area law schools in assisting the organization's talented legal staff. During the semester, we sat in on meetings with clients, conducted intakes for prospective clients, and conducted legal research for staff attorneys. It was very satisfying to get experience in matrimonial law, as well as to confront legal concepts in a real-world setting. The environment was nurturing, and we were encouraged to ask questions. I was delighted by the amount of substantive work that I performed that would have a direct effect on inMotion clients, such as interpretation of pertinent legal issues, and drafting memos that would be used in client cases.

Among other projects, I worked with an extern from White & Case on a client case that required the review and organization of medical documentation that was critical to the client's allegations and which was scheduled to be reviewed by the court. In addition, I attended tutorials on how to aid clients in divorce proceedings. Unfortunately, the semester concluded before I was able to file a divorce proceeding for a client, but the information imparted during the tutorials was very interesting and will be quite useful in the future. I also conducted intakes for women who had contacted inMotion to obtain information on retaining counsel. Intake consisted of asking the individuals a series of questions to ascertain eligibility and to define the types of legal issues that they were confronting. These interactions provided a unique opportunity to work one-on-one with prospective clients and have a direct role in identifying legal issues and analyzing potential claims.

Finally, my role at inMotion included transferring information about prospective clients from paper intake forms to the organization's electronic database, thereby enabling inMotion lawyers and staff to keep track of clients' cases. Inputting this data gave me the opportunity to see the types of cases and legal issues inMotion handles and provided a better understanding of the proceedings and documents that may occur in these cases. In addition to formal assignments, much of what I learned at inMotion was through informal conversations with attorneys and staff about the family court system, which one cannot obtain in a law school classroom.

Looking back on my experience at inMotion, my only wish is that I could have devoted more time to the organization, as the 10-12 hours a week that I spent was not enough to become fully immersed in the environment and my cases. The experience reminded me how important it is to remain committed to what interests you, both in and out of the legal field. I hope to work with inMotion in the future. I cannot fully express my appreciation for the opportunities provided by this Fellowship, and I thank the New York Women's Bar Association Foundation for creating and underwriting the inMotion fellowship program.

Ashley Teele is a 2L at New York University School of Law and a graduate of Pomona College.