

ABOUT THE CHRISTOPHER SLATTERY YOUNG PROFESSIONAL AWARD:

The award, now in its fifteenth year, honors the son of Linda and James P. Slattery. Christopher Slattery was killed in the terrorist attack at the World Trade Center in September 2001. The award is intended to honor Chris, who was lost just as his career was beginning, and his father, whose ongoing commitment to pro bono assistance sets a professional standard. Each year, the VLP presents the Young Professional Award to a young lawyer who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to community service as a pro bono attorney. By honoring Christopher Slattery, the Young Professional Award seeks to acknowledge the significant contribution of an individual volunteer, and to encourage all new professionals to take an active role in their community.

2020 AWARD RECIPIENT:

Malvina Palloj is on track to graduate from Brooklyn Law School's Evening Program in May 2021. She began volunteering at the VLP's Foreclosure Legal Assistance Group (FLAG) clinic in January of 2020. As a FLAG clinic volunteer, Malvina provided vital information to homeowners who had recently been served with foreclosure documents. While clinic volunteers are only required to volunteer once per month, Malvina often went far above the minimum requirement and staffed the clinic on a weekly basis. She also took on the responsibility of reviewing, collecting, and bringing client documents back to the VLP office.

When New York State went on pause in March 2020 due to COVID-19, all court operations and hearings came to halt. The court closures also meant a temporary halt of foreclosure clinics including FLAG. However, Malvina continued to maintain contact with foreclosure attorneys, checking in periodically to let the attorneys know she was still ready, willing, and able to volunteer on a virtual basis.

Starting in June 2020, Malvina provided critical assistance through VLP's Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) clinic when the Department of Buildings began hearing violations telephonically. The virtual hearings proved to be a challenge for many of the VLP's older and technically challenged clients. Malvina was instrumental in contacting clients to conduct intakes and collecting client documents and pictures, demonstrating both compassion and patience in assisting elderly and vulnerable clients.

During the VLP's busiest months at the OATH clinic, Malvina began to take on her own clients, providing them with representation at their hearings. She often won the hearings she attended, saving her clients thousands of dollars in Department of Buildings fees and penalties. Thus, Malvina's assistance not only resulted in help to the VLP, but it resulted in tangible benefits to vulnerable Brooklyn homeowners.