

What Texas Learned from Hurricanes Rita & Ike

Texas Appleseed has been working on disaster recovery since Hurricane Katrina, on issues including FEMA programs, evacuee issues in Houston, and the administration of long-term federal disaster recovery funds.



Funding for home repair to low-income families **increased by 150%.**

September marks the anniversaries of Hurricanes Ike and Rita, which devastated parts of Texas. These events showed us the vulnerability of our disaster response systems and revealed the systemic inequality that still exists in historically underserved neighborhoods.

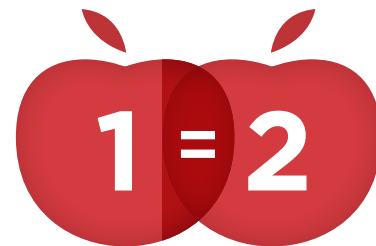
To commemorate the anniversaries, **we've created a short video and infographic**, which can be found on our website on our "Disaster Recovery & Fair Housing" Projects page. We know that where families live matters to their life outcomes, and disaster recovery efforts present an opportunity to rebuild stronger, more resilient communities. In the video, we examine what we've learned from these disasters. We also recognize the importance of the Fair Housing Act, which ensures equity in the distribution of resources and promotes equal opportunity for everyone.

The Meadows Foundation Matches Fall Donations

Fall is growing season at Texas Appleseed! Between now and November 30, The Meadows Foundation will match all unrestricted gifts we receive dollar-for-dollar. That means that if you write a check for \$250, Meadows will contribute the same amount, resulting in a \$500 gift to Texas Appleseed. Our goal is to reach \$100,000 by the end of the challenge.

Cindy Patrick, Senior Program Officer of The Meadows Foundation, says, "The Meadows Foundation is honored to be a long-time supporter of Texas Appleseed's work to research and recommend solutions to issues that affect low-income, vulnerable populations across Texas. We encourage others to support their efforts by leveraging the funds available through our recently-approved challenge grant."

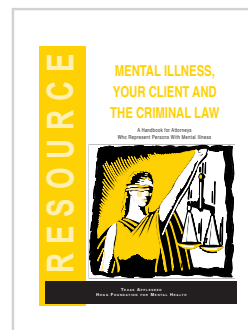
Make your gift using the enclosed envelope or by going to texasappleseed.org/donate and double your impact today!



DOUBLE YOUR DONATION

WITH OUR MEADOWS MATCHING GRANT CAMPAIGN!

Attorneys, Need a Hand(book)?



Texas Appleseed and Texas Tech University School of Law have released the 4th edition of our mental health handbook, *Mental Illness, Your Client and the Criminal Law*. Find it at TexasAppleseed.org under "Publications." The handbook was made possible with the generous support of the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health.

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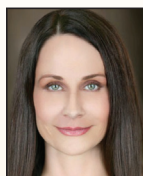
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J. Chrys Dougherty III, Chair Emeritus
(1915-2014)



Guest Column

By Courtney Stewart, DLA Piper LLP (US)

This month marks the end of the 20-year-old practice in Texas of criminalizing children for missing school. DLA Piper had the privilege of providing pro bono support to Texas Appleseed surrounding this crucial truancy reform. The power, and the impact, of Texas Appleseed's work on truancy reform cannot be overstated. In 2013 alone, Texas prosecuted approximately 115,000 truancy cases against Texas schoolchildren.

Texas Appleseed—through its analysis of extensive truancy data, countless interviews with families and stakeholders, and more than two years of court observations—uncovered that children charged with Failure to Attend School (FTAS) were not receiving proper due process and other constitutional safeguards. DLA Piper wanted to help ensure that the rights of children, who were facing life-altering circumstances, were respected during the court process, and began working diligently on truancy reform efforts in 2014.

Texas Appleseed had already collected extensive evidence demonstrating that the Texas FTAS truancy system, which imposed crippling fines and other penalties, up to and including jail time, was harming the very children that it was supposed to help. DLA

Piper researched and briefed the legal issues surrounding prosecuting FTAS in adult criminal courts, served as co-counsel with Texas Appleseed on individual truancy cases, and supported Texas Appleseed's advocacy efforts during the 2015 session of the Texas Legislature.

Bringing about transformative change is not easy, but thanks to Texas Appleseed's unshakable commitment to truancy reform, as well as the dedication of DLA Piper attorneys, we've proved that real change is possible. HB 2398, passed by the Texas Legislature this summer and signed into law by the Governor, decriminalizes truancy and expunges all past criminal convictions for FTAS, alleviating a significant burden on Texas children and families.

DLA Piper recognizes that ensuring meaningful access to justice for everyone is more than a responsibility—it is a privilege, and it is a commitment entrusted to every DLA Piper attorney to help change individual lives for the better. I look forward to where Texas Appleseed will take us from here, and I want to thank Texas Appleseed for its leadership, partnership, and inspiring example.

THE LATEST...

We've Got a New Look

We've launched a new look for our website, and we invite you to take a look at TexasAppleseed.org.

84th Legislative News

In addition to truancy reform (see guest column), here are some of our other legislative victories:

- SB 1630 Passes: Puts Texas on the path to ending the practice of confining many juvenile offenders in far-away state facilities where they have little connection to their families.

- HB 2684 Passes: Requires school districts with an enrollment of 30,000 or more students to adopt a youth-focused education and training program for school district police officers.

Remember the LSAT?

We certainly do. We support future attorneys by covering the cost of the LSAT prep course. Our final scholarship opportunity of 2015 ends Sept. 30. Learn more online on our "Diversity Legal Scholars" page.

H-E-B CEO Charles Butt and Major Law Firms to be Honored at Good Apple Dinner

The Good Apple Dinner is right around the corner, on Nov. 19. Each year, Texas Appleseed honors leaders for their contributions to the community at this gala. If you've never been to the dinner or even if you regularly attend, we've planned an exciting event that you'll remember. We hope you'll join us as we help further our mission and honor Charles and two outstanding law firms.

J. Chrys Dougherty Good Apple Award Honoree



Making public schools better for all 5 million Texas students is at the heart of what Charles Butt has stood for as CEO of H-E-B. Charles' impassioned leadership in promoting quality public education, quality schools, and literacy initiatives in Texas inspires us and

aligns with our mission. His personal and tireless commitment to quality public education opportunities—where students are supported and can thrive—is one of the many reasons Texas Appleseed is proud to name him this year's Good Apple.

Pro Bono Leadership Award Honorees

BAKER & MCKENZIE

Baker & McKenzie partnered with Texas Appleseed on a Texas edition of a Homeless Youth Handbook, an innovative guide to help homeless youth—and those who serve that population—understand their legal rights and options. We look forward to the handbook's release, and we are grateful for the opportunity to work alongside Baker & McKenzie in creating this resource.



DLA Piper LLP (US) provided Texas Appleseed with hundreds of hours of pro bono support in preparing the legal case challenging the treatment of truancy in Texas as an adult criminal offense, a practice now ended by the legislature. We celebrate this legislative victory with DLA Piper LLP and look forward to recognizing them for their integral role in the decriminalization of truancy.

SECURE YOUR SPOT:

Table Reservations & Sponsorships Now Available

2015 GOOD APPLE DINNER

Thursday, November 19, 2015

Pacesetter reception: 6 PM / Cocktail hour: 6:30 PM / Dinner: 7 PM

FOUR SEASONS HOTEL IN AUSTIN

For details, contact Susan Harry at sharry@texasappleseed.net or visit: www.texasappleseed.org/good-apple-dinner

Mad About Science

Employee Spotlight: **Yamanda Wright**



Title:

Data Scientist

Education:

B.A. in Psychology from Stanford University;
Ph.D. in Psychology from The University of Texas at Austin

Hometown:

Houston, Texas

What is a data scientist, anyway?

Data science involves extracting patterns from large bodies of information. Data scientists usually have advanced degrees in statistics, psychology, or economics. I am trained as a research psychologist.

What do you do at Texas Appleseed?

I collect, analyze, and summarize the data for Texas Appleseed's reports. Wherever you see numbers, I probably had a hand in it.

Why do you love what you do?

Some people need to hear a personal story to be convinced that an issue is important and worthy of their attention; others need to see figures and statistical tests. I love being able to provide the hard evidence—especially when it draws in audiences who would otherwise disengage from social justice issues.

Why is Texas Appleseed's work meaningful to you?

Texas Appleseed is unique in its ability to engage advocates from all walks of life, from parents and educators on the front lines to legislators in the capitol building.

What advice would you give to someone who wants to go into this field?

I would encourage them to think outside of the box about how their skills may be useful at a nonprofit like Texas Appleseed. I am proof that we recruit and hire non-traditional people to create well-rounded teams.

What would you do if you weren't doing this?

Teaching at the college level is my second love. I would probably be teaching child development to undergraduate students, enlightening them on exactly why their parents were right (most of the time).

What can we find you doing on the weekend—not crunching numbers, we assume?

I am a compulsive crafter. An embarrassing amount of my income goes to sewing and ceramics classes, but they relax me!

A Win for Texas Service Members

It happened. The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) issued the final Military Lending Act (MLA) rule in July, closing loopholes that payday loan businesses exploited to skirt the 36% rate cap protections for loans to the military. Congress passed the MLA in 2006, and the final rule is the result of a three-year study.

Since 2009, Texas Appleseed has provided research documenting the loopholes used in Texas to skirt the MLA protections. We've supported state and federal reform efforts through testimony and by submitting comments during the 2013 and 2014 DoD proposed rule comment periods. Texas Appleseed's comments were cited in the Federal Register as part of the compelling body of evidence for the need for reforms. The new DoD rule will better ensure that only fair credit products will be offered to Texas military members and their dependents.

Military Borrowing Stats:

- "Losing qualified service members due to personal issues, such as financial instability, causes loss of mission capability and drives significant replacement costs. The Department estimates that each separation costs the Department \$57,333." (U.S. DoD, April 2014 report)
- The report pulled out Texas as one of 11 states that allows payday lending outside of the Military Lending Act parameters.
- Texas Appleseed's 2013 survey of payday and auto title stores near Texas military bases found these businesses clustering around the bases and offering loans that averaged between 201% APR and 617% APR.

SEE INSIDE: Hurricanes Ike & Rita / Attorney Handbook / Meadows Matching Gift Campaign: \$1=\$2 / Other News