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As has been the case in years past, the Connecticut Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section will continue to play a significant role in the bar association's programming of law-related education events. But this year we will have three additional areas of focus: leadership training to help cultivate future bar leaders, team building to encourage our members to improve relationships amongst colleagues by working together in an efficient and professional manner while organizing bar events, and increasing bar membership. It is our belief that all of these need to be areas of focus to ensure the long-term viability of the Connecticut Bar Association.

In serving the almost 2,500 Young Lawyers Section members, as well as the bar at large, the YLS Executive Committee has an obligation to provide creative, interesting, and invaluable programming so that Connecticut attorneys feel that it is imperative for them to join our bar association.

Welcome To the YLS Cup

In the words of the great Cosmo Kramer and Frank Costanza, unquestioned by millions as renowned scholars of the 20th century, we need to make the Connecticut Bar Association "the place to be."

The initial focus of this year's efforts will be our executive committee, who are the leaders of the Young Lawyers Section. But the problem we have always encountered is how do we do all of these things in the model of the traditional executive committee meetings that all of our sections have become accustomed to holding? How do we get those people that organize events for the remainder of our section members not only excited about the events they are individually planning, but excited about bar participation overall?

The answer, or at least my attempt this year to answer those questions, is the inaugural YLS Cup. Inspired by young professional organizations in Connecticut such as Metro Hartford Alliance's Hartford Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs (HYPE) and Greater New Haven Chamber's PULSE, the YLS Cup is a year-long competition amongst our executive committee members that places an emphasis on non-law related events, which will allow our members to compete with each other in a fun manner, while learning leadership and teambuilding skills throughout the process. Some of the events have included a video scavenger hunt and trivia

night, with trampoline dodgeball and other activities to take place later in the bar year. Additionally, to increase overall Young Lawyers Section participation in our law-related education events, our YLS Cup teams will receive bonus points for bringing non-executive committee YLS members to those programs. The hope is to introduce people that do not regularly attend our events to our educational and non-education programming, and to provide networking opportunities with colleagues, which young attorneys should know is invaluable to the development of their careers.

But one of the better parts of this competition is the requirement for each of our YLS Cup teams to participate in a public service project. I have repeatedly told our members that as attorneys we have many more opportunities than those that have not had our level of training. And while all attorneys should be participating in the pro bono programs made available by the bar throughout Connecticut, our teams will be focusing on fundraising and volunteer efforts for nonprofit organizations that are outside the law community. Some of the organizations that we will be working with are the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, the Connecticut Food Bank, Open Hearth, Knox in Hartford, the Connecticut Trees of Honor Memorial, and a local school district. Our involvement

will range from fundraising to donation of time and resources. We have an obligation to not only give back to our communities, but to become active members of our communities and community organizations. The YLS Cup mandate to participate in public service projects is one way to give back to our respective communities while learning to work with others from a variety of backgrounds.

The goal of this year, and of the YLS Cup, is to give our members opportunities to work with one another outside of their law-specific fields, while providing training and chances to network that they

would not have otherwise had if they were not members of our organization. If we want to increase our membership ranks, and ensure that our younger members continue to take part in CBA activities during the time in their careers where work becomes intense and family activities increase, we have to give them the ability to take part in our organization outside of the standard continuing legal education programs we have been accustomed to organizing. There is no question that continuing legal training should be a focus of the Connecticut Bar Association, and will become even more so if CLEs eventually

become mandatory in Connecticut, the fact remains that relationships cannot be built on lectures or cultivated in question and answer sessions. Our members need to have shared experiences, and we need to get creative and find different ways to keep membership throughout the state engaged at all stages of their legal careers. It is my hope that the YLS Cup will energize our executive committee and motivate them to think outside of the box, which I believe will translate to sustained growth of our section and the bar at large.

CL

Lubie Harper

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Mead once said, and I quote:

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

I, therefore, challenge you to never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, commit-

ted members of the legal profession can change our society.

As we attempt to respond to the noted challenges in the "pipeline" and as we attempt to remain relevant as a profession, may we always keep in mind our obligation to make a difference, to help somebody, to touch somebody. May we always keep in mind the importance of public service. For if we do, our lives will not be in vain, for if we do, our lives will be enriched, for if we do, we are destined to make a difference, for if we do, the "Prom-

ise in the Pipeline" will become a reality; a reality that will hopefully cause us all to continue to "Blaze Trails" in an effort to make a difference. For as "trailblazers" may we always keep in mind our obligation to do justice because it's a moral imperative. Love kindness because it's the essence of humanity. And may we always keep in mind that to "give back" to others is a righteous thing to do because we are all servants of God.

Thank you. CL



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