

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

MATTHEW GIACOBBE

APRIL 2023



“Through interactions with HAP clients, I better understand the complex and interrelated issues contributing to homelessness. Many unhoused persons face barriers to accessing legal services and obtaining vital documents that then limit their ability to secure housing, employment, and other essential services.”

ABOUT MATTHEW

Matthew is a second-year Associate in Troutman Pepper’s Construction practice group. He represents owners and developers and focuses his practice on transactional matters arising from residential, commercial and infrastructure projects. Matthew has volunteered with HAP since he joined Troutman Pepper in 2021.

VOLUNTEERING WITH HAP

Volunteering with HAP allows Matthew to serve individuals who are often overlooked and marginalized by society. Matthew recently handled a challenging HAP pro bono case, and his diligence led to a meaningful outcome for his client, who had tried to resolve the legal issue on his own for over 5 years.

Matthew’s client had been unable to secure employment or access basic services because he did not have state-issued ID, despite his efforts to obtain it since he was 16 years old. This left the client feeling hopeless. Without his knowledge, the client’s family member had changed his name, creating a discrepancy between the client’s birth certificate and Social Security records.

Matthew worked tirelessly for several months, making phone calls, completing forms, and advocating for his client with government agencies before successfully updating the client’s records. Matthew encountered many roadblocks, but remained determined to help his client reclaim his identity and agency. This allowed his client to finally obtain ID and move forward.

For Matthew, the experience offered a powerful reminder of how difficult it can be for people to navigate complex and inefficient systems alone, especially while experiencing homelessness.

HAP Managing Attorney Michele Levy says: Matthew represented his client with a level of urgency and passion that is rare. With a keen understanding of the significance of valid identification documents for HAP’s clients, Matthew did everything he could to ensure that his client was positioned to resolve his homelessness as quickly as possible.



LEGAL SERVICES TO END HOMELESSNESS

