Tens of thousands of families in Miami-Dade County living in abject poverty struggle to keep a roof over their head. Thousands more teetering on the brink of poverty are discriminated against daily in the workplace and cannot afford an attorney. Many more are wrongfully denied disability and Medicaid benefits. The number of inequities within our community is staggering; every situation is unique and involves potential dire consequences to real people.

It is ironic that the United States, the country with the world’s highest concentration of lawyers, has one of the least adequate systems of legal assistance. The poor in Miami-Dade County rarely have a safety net, so their legal needs take on a special urgency. This is exacerbated by today’s economic climate. Thankfully, organizations like Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc. (“LSGMI”) exist. LSGMI addresses these injustices by providing the poor in our community with effective advocates to assist them with their legal issues.

As the economy continues to slide, those requiring LSGMI’s services have reached record highs. In the first 4 months of 2010, unemployment compensation cases increased by 19%; consumer cases by 48%; and mortgage foreclosure cases by 160%. Unfortunately, many of LSGMI’s traditional funding sources have declined and, in certain circumstances, been eliminated.

Fortunately, members of the legal and business community and the community at-large have helped make up the deficit by supporting LSGMI’s “Together, We Must” Campaign for Justice. Through the generosity of many, the Campaign has raised over $850,000.00 in gifts and pledges to date enabling LSGMI to increase its attorney staff by 10%. Great strides have been made but there is still work to be done in ensuring that our community’s poor are adequately represented and provided a voice. As the need for free legal services in our community continues to escalate, the money raised through the Campaign allows LSGMI to continue its mission of providing equal justice under the law.

Our heartfelt thanks to each of you who have supported our Campaign. For those of you, who have not yet done so, please join us in making a gift to the Campaign and helping the poor in our community. For more information about Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc. and the “Together, We Must” Campaign, visit our website at www.lsgmi.org.

Sincerely,

Garrett J. Biondo
President, LSGMI Board of Directors

Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc.
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