

Gina DeConcini: 2010-11 Volunteer of the Year

Gina DeConcini –LegalCORPS’s 2010-11 Volunteer of the Year – thrives on the “optimism, dreams, and entrepreneurial spirit” of her pro bono clients. Volunteering at LegalCORPS has proven to be the most enjoyable and rewarding part of her day, giving her a chance to be a part of her clients’ “big and wacky ideas” and really getting involved in the excitement and setup of emerging companies.

In addition to volunteering at the legal clinic through SCORE in St. Louis Park, DeConcini regularly volunteers her vast legal knowledge through walk-in clinics at the Minneapolis Central Library.

Despite her expertise in tax law, she finds herself engaging in “legal gymnastics” during her clinics, knowing that her first client’s needs may be on the complete opposite spectrum as the next client. As a result, she not only helps her clients, but they help her become a more well-rounded lawyer.

“Pro bono sized clients are things I never deal with at work; [while volunteering] I do research in small emerging businesses that I never cross paths with in a larger corporate environment.”

Working with small companies through volunteering contrasts with her typical work with corporate clients. She recalled one instance where she obtained a sales tax exemption that a free dental clinic desperately needed. She noted that, to a corporate client, “this may not seem like a big deal, but this is huge for a free clinic to save money on expensive equipment.”

Gina DeConcini has tremendous respect for her pro bono clients. They allow her to “see what it truly means to be an entrepreneur; it’s very brave to do what they are doing.” She hopes that through LegalCORPS, pro bono lawyers can earn some of that respect back in return by giving people who don’t normally work with lawyers true insight into the profession. “Lawyers are really just your neighbors who happen to have knowledge about specific forms and certain information.”

A tax partner with Oppenheimer Wolff & Donnelly since 2007, she had 14 years of prior tax experience practicing in “big four” public accounting firm. She is a *cum laude* graduate of the University of Minnesota Law School, and has a B.A., with honors, from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



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