

# Welcome Letter

from John Millard

*What an exciting first year it has been for Fort Bend Lawyers Care and our dedicated volunteer attorneys!*

A year ago, FBLC was nothing more than an idea by a group of lawyers who genuinely wanted to do something to help the less fortunate in our community with their legal needs. In just one short year, FBLC has evolved from an idea into a reality, with successful community outreach programs including our Legal Line, Will-A-Thon and volunteer lawyer matching program that have had an immediate impact in our community.

Since partnering with The Arc to help low-income families obtain guardianship of incapacitated loved ones, FBLC has trained and certified 40 attorneys to serve as attorney's ad litem in guardianship cases. Our partnership with The Fort Bend County Women's Center provides for the unmet legal needs of victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault. The Women's Center is completing the final intake process on four cases for pro bono help from Fort Bend Lawyers Care. These cases are challenging and difficult, and will require a commitment of extensive time and expertise from our volunteer lawyers.

FBLC has partnered with Child Advocates of Fort Bend to serve the legal needs of children in crisis and to celebrate the joy of providing children with a permanent family through adoption. As part of National Adoption Day in November 2006, two Fort Bend County District Courts finalized the adoptions of 26 children from foster care. Four volunteer attorneys from Fort Bend Lawyers Care assisted with the adoption of six children, spending an average of 15 hours on each case.

Fort Bend Lawyers Care sponsors an annual Will-A-Thon for low-income Fort Bend senior citizens. Last November, five volunteer attorneys donated free legal services to senior citizens. FBLC looks forward to significantly increasing and expanding next year's outreach to the elder population of our community through its partnership with Fort Bend Seniors Meals on Wheels.

I am honored to serve as the first Executive Director of FBLC, and I'm very proud of what we have accomplished in so short a time. It is truly fitting that as we honor our volunteers and supporters today we are joined by Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott, a former Supreme Court Justice and the state's chief law enforcement official. As Texas' top lawyer, General Abbott is dedicated to a Texas that fosters hope and opportunity for all of its citizens. FBLC appreciates General Abbott's presence and inspiring words today.

I sincerely thank all of the dedicated volunteers and generous supporters who have helped FBLC in its mission to serve Fort Bend County. Your investment in FBLC is truly an investment in your community!

John R. Millard