



Philadelphia VIP proudly recognizes **Suzanne Root** for going above and beyond by *answering the call to serve.*

Thank you Suzanne!
March 2017 Volunteer of the Month

One of Suzanne Root's greatest passions is advocating for children and families. A Philly native, born and raised, she has dedicated her life to volunteering for kids in need. "They are the innocent victims," she says. Suzanne credits her mother, also a lawyer, for inspiring her to give back. "My mother always said, 'We have enough. We have to help people who don't have enough.' I'm just sorry I can't take a thousand cases!"



Currently, Suzanne is advocating for a victim of domestic abuse in a VIP divorce case. Suzanne's client has a U.S. green card since her marriage to her current husband. Now, the couple is separating and her client's husband is threatening to have her deported. The situation is devastating for both mother and children. "My client feels extremely vulnerable, and her husband bullied her until the emotional abuse was so bad that she left." Suzanne is helping her client navigate this tough situation during the uncertainty of the new U.S. administration. "I had to discover if a divorce would change her path to citizenship," she states. According to an Immigration Attorney, Suzanne has found that the husband's threats are indeed, baseless.

Suzanne is one of those people you meet, and right away you can tell, she has a huge heart. For years, she volunteered for the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald house, and served on its board and as President, while attending law school. She also interned in the family violence unit at the DA's Office and clerked for a family law solo practitioner. Searching for an opportunity to gain more experience and work on her own cases, she began volunteering for VIP in the late 90s. Since then, she has taken 53 family law cases, focusing most of her work on adoption and custody. "VIP is a special place," says Suzanne. "Your legal role is far more substantive and I like the variety of opportunities. Not only can you take cases that are open and in court, but you also have advice-only cases by telephone." Suzanne also volunteers legal services for the Support Center for Child Advocates and for HIAS.

When asked about the need for pro bono, Suzanne responds fervently, "Oh my goodness, the need is so great. There are so many people out there who need legal help and don't know how to get it." As a VIP mentor, she has worked with Emmanuel Brown, an Associate at Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP. He describes Suzanne as a tireless advocate for Philly families. "For me, Suzanne has gone from a wonderful family law mentor to a friend, and she is never too busy to offer advice about my VIP case." Through the goodness of her heart and her desire to make a difference, Suzanne has been invaluable. VIP is thankful for her service.

**Suzanne is a dedicated volunteer who is committed to helping her community.
We applaud her partnership in helping VIP achieve access to justice for all.**