



May 2018 Volunteer of the Month: Andrea Anastasi, Esquire

Like many prospective attorneys, as a child VIP volunteer Andrea Anastasi was tagged as someone who enjoyed a good argument. “Everyone thought I was going to be a lawyer,” Anastasi says. “I would get into a bit of trouble for asking too many questions and stirring the pot.”

After receiving her undergraduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania, she earned her law degree at Temple University and practiced in Delaware before returning to Philadelphia and throwing herself into pro bono work for a variety of organizations. For Anastasi, whose VIP clients have included a non-profit specializing in supporting nursing mothers, an association of community development groups, and a West Oak Lane resident who needed title to her home, the work pays dividends that are rarely seen in a pay stub.



“By helping others, we help ourselves, and, in turn, we are better able to help others, and so on,” she says. “The line between helper and the one being helped is illusory. Volunteering adds value to your own life; and it feels good to use your skills and strengths with purpose. By taking on a VIP client, you are acknowledging that the life of that client and the client’s situation matter. This recognition and the according care taken in pursuing the case is an attribution of value to the life of another human which, in turn, adds value to your own life.”

Anastasi takes this ethos to heart. Her most recent VIP client, Ms. K, inherited her mother’s house. Ms. K ran into challenges with obtaining title to the home because her former stepfather improperly executed a deed giving her mother the house following a divorce settlement. The family history made for an emotionally charged case, and Anastasi was happy to strategize with Ms. K as she navigated the complex relationships.

Before taking on Ms. K’s case, Anastasi had limited exposure to property law. “Even if you’ve never worked in a particular area of law or on a particular type of case, Philly VIP offers the support and resources to help you navigate the situation. It’s a safe place to step outside of your comfort zone, to step beyond what you know and that with which you’re familiar.” With support from VIP staff and a mentor, Anastasi dove into the matter, and identified innovative legal strategies for Ms. K to obtain title to her home.

Anastasi is now a frequent visitor to VIP’s offices – most recently stopping by so her dog, Mr. Bean, could meet the VIP team. As an avid *Harry Potter* fan, Anastasi is quick to quote its author, J.K. Rowling who said, “We do not need magic to transform our world. We carry all the power we need inside ourselves already.” And she is eager and able to live by those words. “J.K. Rowling is right. We have everything we need to be the change right inside of us,” Anastasi says. “All we need to do is to choose to use it. Philly VIP makes that choice very easy. VIP offers the opportunity to be the change, to use what’s in us to transform the world.”