The overarching lesson was that while the Nation is an overwhelmingly impoverished place, the Navajo are a proud people that seek to do whatever they can in order for their lands and people to become more prosperous. I am glad that through collaborations such as this spring break partnership, BC Law students can help contribute to this goal.

Participants of the 2014 Navajo Nation Spring Break Trip from left to right: Rita Couto (LL.M. student), Peter Skeffington (1L), Billy Clark (1L), Julia Koch (1L), Lauran Schaal (1L), Caroline Thibeault (1L), Victoria Chu (1L), John Kalogriopoulos (1L), Alena Chaps (1L), and Stephen Sobey (1L). (Photo submitted by John Kalogriopoulos.)
NEW ORLEANS
Spring Break Trip

Where: New Orleans, LA
By: Kyle Litfin , 1L

This year’s Gulf Coast Recovery Trip split into three groups, providing legal aid for The Innocence Project, The Fair Housing Clinic, and the Honorable Judge Eldon E. Fallon. I was part of the group that worked under Judge Fallon and the experience was one-of-a-kind. The effects of Katrina, Isaac, and the BP Oil Spill are numerous, complex, and far-reaching. In addition to assisting Judge Fallon in drafting memoranda, I was fortunate enough to participate in meetings discussing a wide array of legal issues. These meetings touched on everything from defective drywall in post-Katrina home construction, to the dilapidated FEMA trailers that many families have called their home for far too long.

Although I valued my experience working for Judge Fallon, I think the best part of the trip was the communal experience. Each night the group would get together to share stories from the day. A particularly memorable story came from The Innocence Project. As we sat down for dinner, Britney explained how a man had been sent to jail for 20 years for being an accomplice to the shooting of his best friend. The bail restrictions placed upon him were so severe he could not get a job, and because of his incarceration, he had only seen his son once in his entire life. These stories and experiences were a reminder of why we all went to law school in the first place. This trip was a chance to take a step away from the casebooks and see the law in practice. It reminded us that, at the end of the day, the practice of law has a real effect on the lives of people. The Gulf Coast Recovery Trip has been the highlight of my Law School experience, and will be something I cherish for years to come.

SPRING BREAK IN BOSTON
Pro Bono Program

Where: Boston, MA
By: Justin Woolf-Sullivan , 1L

For the Spring Break in Boston Pro Bono Program I worked in the legal services department at AIDS Action Committee. Founded in 1983, AIDS Action is a leader in fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic and is New England’s largest AIDS services organization. The legal services department handles legal issues pertaining to housing, discrimination, and Social Security and other benefits.

On the first day I got a chance to research whether a client, bringing a discrimination suit against an employer, would meet the “Americans with Disabilities Act’s” definition of disability. The rest of the week I researched MassHealth regulations. MassHealth is a public insurance program for low to middle-income residents. In order to serve their clients more efficiently, AIDS Action’s attorneys wanted a chart explaining how life events, such as marriage or increase in household size, might change access to MassHealth’s programs. I found myself enjoying the challenge of learning regulatory structure, and then transforming that knowledge into something easily accessible.

Perhaps the most rewarding experience involved helping with client intakes. I learned a lot from watching the AIDS Action attorneys interact with clients. Even when the attorneys didn’t have answers readily available, they still put their clients at ease through their compassionate, yet determined demeanor. Aside from the attorneys, I met a number of other staff members, including client advocates, program managers and development staff. The diversity among the staff, as well as the positive attitude they collectively exuded, was truly inspiring. For those interested in seeing an example of an exceptionally well-run non-profit organization, I highly recommend reaching out to the BC Law alumni at AIDS Action Committee.

For more information, contact: Kate Devlin Joyce, Director of Public Interest and Pro Bono Programs, at kathleen.devlin@bc.edu or (617) 552-4345

For internship, job, and pro bono postings, visit: https://law-bc-csm.symphlicity.com/students
**IMMIGRATION SPRING BREAK TRIP**

Where: Students participating in the Immigration Spring Break Trip travel across the US to work in several different cities at non-profit organizations that do immigration law work. The piece below is from a BCLS student at a placement in Berkeley, CA, and the picture is from a BCLS student at a placement in Los Angeles, CA.

By: Aileen Kim, 1L

The Immigration Spring Break trip team to the SF Bay Area had the pleasure of living in beautiful Berkeley and working with East Bay Sanctuary Covenant (EBSC), a non-profit organization that primarily works with affirmative asylum seekers in the Bay Area helping them apply for and gain asylum status. EBSC walks their clients through the process of researching and filing out all the forms and documents necessary to apply for asylum, preparing clients for their interviews, and speaks on behalf of clients in Immigration Court, should cases go to court. Our team is a non-profit organization that works with the people of Haiti in their non-violent struggle for the consolidation of constitutional democracy, justice and human rights. IJDH’s work encompasses a range of critical issues including the right to adequate housing, women’s rights, immigration advocacy and prisoner’s rights. BCLS students spent the first portion of the spring break trip at Camp Grace, an Internally Displaced Peoples (IDP) camp, outside of Port-au-Prince. Camp Grace consists of the victims of the 2010 Earthquake in Haiti. Residents of Camp Grace have been subject to incidents of violence, arson, forced evictions and terrorism. BCLS students documented these instances and interviewed residents in order to write a formal report to the international community on behalf of Le Bureau Des Avocats Internationaux (BAI). This report will expose that Camp Grace residents do not receive adequate rights to housing and initiate the steps to ameliorate their predicament.

While the first part of the trip gave students more intimate experiences with human rights work, students next looked at major human rights violations across Haiti. In collaboration with students from the University of the Aristide Foundation, BCLS students analyzed critical problems that plague the country. These problems include prisoners’ rights, gender-based violence, human trafficking and slavery and voting rights, among others. Each student will explore a specific issue and use testimony from UNIFA students to uncover these problems that are consistently obscured from the international community. Students will then work together to submit a single report to the United Nations declaring the current status of these issues in Haiti.

**HAITI SPRING BREAK TRIP**

The Haiti Spring Break Trip was supported by the Clough Center for the Study of Constitutional Democracy at Boston College.

Where: Port-au-Prince, Haiti

By: Chris Pinto, 1L

The purpose of the BC Law spring break service trip to Haiti is to assist the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) with their current endeavors. IJDH is a non-profit organization that works with the people of Haiti in their non-violent struggle for the consolidation of constitutional democracy, justice and human rights. IJDH’s work encompasses a range of critical issues including the right to adequate housing, women’s rights, immigration advocacy and prisoner’s rights. BCLS students spent the first portion of the spring break trip at Camp Grace, an Internally Displaced Peoples (IDP) camp, outside of Port-au-Prince.

Participants of the 2014 Haiti Spring Break Trip with Nicole Phillips of the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti and students from the Law School at the University of the Aristide Foundation. BC Law students from left to right: Daniel Chin (1L), Tahirah Dean (1L), Hannah Marie Farhan (1L), Graham Markiewicz (1L), and Kevin Bergin (1L). (Photo submitted by Chris Pinto (1L) (not pictured), also a participant on the Haiti Spring Break Trip.)