



MY OPINION

BY ALFONSO CABAÑAS

CHAIR, TEXAS YOUNG LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

Be Your Best with TYLA

I remember the first time I volunteered at a Texas Young Lawyers Association event. A friend of mine encouraged me to volunteer as a judge in the State Moot Court Competition held in San Antonio. At this event, I became friends with many former and current TYLA directors. Their enthusiasm and volunteer efforts for TYLA is what led me to seek a position on the TYLA board.

Once I became a board member, I took a more active role in planning and participating in TYLA events. *Vote America: Honor the Fight! Exercise Your Right!* was the first major project I helped lead. We now showcase this video and distribute pamphlets to high school students, civic organizations, and conduct voter registration drives during election season. We remind citizens that it is a privilege to vote and that so many people in history fought for our right to vote.

Along with several TYLA members, I walked 20 miles in the beautiful city of San Antonio on Nov. 5 to raise awareness about child abuse. This stewardship was in conjunction with TYLA's service project, *The Little Voice: Recognizing Child Abuse and Your Duty to Report It*. We have increased awareness of and educated the public on their responsibilities if they suspect child abuse. This project has been helpful in preventing and reporting suspected abuse.

We will continue to support the public and bar members with our many current and upcoming initiatives. Many of our projects will debut early in the year so that our members have plenty of time to implement them in their local affiliates. Here's just a sampling of what's in store.

TYLA Road Shows

Learn the many functions of the State

Bar while gaining valuable leadership skills by participating in one of several upcoming road shows with Legal Ethics Jeopardy. Road shows provide CLE programs to local affiliates and their members at no cost. TYLA is planning several road shows in the coming year. For more information, contact the TYLA office at (800) 204-2222, ext. 1529.

TYLA Diversity Dinner

Join TYLA and attorneys from the Dallas legal community for dinner and dialogue as we help raise awareness and explore diversity in the legal community. This year's Diversity Dinner will feature Ron Hall, the *New York Times* best-selling author of *Same Kind of Different as Me*. The dinner will be held Jan. 12, 2012, at the City Club. Email tyla@texasbar.com for more information.

National Trial Competition

TYLA and the American College of Trial Lawyers invite your law school to compete in the 37th annual National Trial Competition to be held in Austin on March 21-24, 2012.

The program is designed to expose law students to the nature of trial practice and to serve as a supplement to their education. It is TYLA's intent to provide a meaningful contribution to the development of future trial lawyers.

Tackling Underage Binge Drinking

The Unconscious Truth: Physical and Legal Effects of Underage Binge Drinking will feature the story of Shelby Allen, a teenager who died from alcohol poisoning. TYLA will produce a multimedia production educating teenagers about the dangers of underage drinking, the laws associated with underage drinking,

and the laws that apply to parents who provide alcohol to teens. A mock trial and mock legislative debate program will also be created to help teens learn about these laws through active participation.

Texas Probate Passport

This guide to Texas probate and estate planning will help individuals and families by explaining the legal aspects of Texas probate law and alternatives to probate. TYLA will be partnering with the State Bar Real Estate, Probate and Trust Law Section to implement this project.

Mental Health Initiative

TYLA's mental health initiative — *Breaking the Silence: A Path to Finding Mental Health* — will feature podcasts on various topics in the area of mental health. These podcasts will be available on the TYLA website (tyla.org) and will feature health care workers, counselors, psychologists, and attorneys addressing topics related to all aspects of mental health and will provide resources to the public and our members who need assistance.

Supporting Kids with Special Needs

Peace of Mind: A Guide to Supporting Special Kids with Special Needs will provide information on special needs trusts, special education, health care, and other useful topics to assist parents with their legal needs.

Don't miss out on giving back to your community, leadership opportunities for yourself, and creating long-lasting friendships.

If you are interested in participating in or implementing any of TYLA's projects, visit tyla.org or call the TYLA office at (800) 204-2222, ext. 1529. ★