



From the President

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AARONS WARD



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We will recover

...AND WE WILL RISE AGAIN

I write this column as fires are raging around our Los Angeles community. We are evacuating our homes. Eyes are glued to the news. Our cell phones sit right next to us as we continually update the Watch Duty app. Many of our families, friends, colleagues, and loved ones have endured devastating losses. Our community has been rocked by these fires. And, in the middle of all this chaos and destruction, I have seen our CAALA community rise to the occasion.

CAALA's members have sprung into action. Just like during Covid, when there is a crisis, CAALA and its members respond in the only way they know how – by lending a helping hand. I have seen and heard stories of an outpouring of support and help. Free legal aid to the community at large, offers of homes, rooms, and hotels for people to stay in while evacuated and after their homes have been destroyed. Text messages and phone calls to check in on each other. Visits with friends to sit and listen, to hug and hold, and to provide emotional support. Working alongside our sister charity, LATLC, to find ways to help our community. Our leaders have met with other local bar leaders to figure out all the various ways we can support each other and the community at large. And so much more. If you are able/willing to provide pro-bono legal services for those impacted by these fires, go to www.calprobono.org.

CAALA has been active on social media sharing information of resources related to the evacuation, fire response, and for consumers to learn about how to file claims and

interact with their insurance providers. Gathering information from the various courts to share legal and up-to-date court closures and impacts.

By the time this is in your mailbox CAALA will have had educational webinars teaching our members how to help their families, friends, and clients to navigate the insurance claims process, what pitfalls to avoid, and how the pre-litigation process works. More educational events focusing on the fires and recovery will follow.

Because we could not celebrate during a time when our city and community is reeling from these fires, we moved our CAALA Gala from January 25 to March 8, 2025. We know by then people will still be dealing with the fallout from these fires and still piecing their lives together. However, we hope by then we can all come together as a community to celebrate and honor our award winners, and to bring a sense of normalcy – because we will recover and we will rise again, and CAALA will help our community to do so at every step of the way.

LATLC also has sprung into action. In the first few days of these fires, CAALA members and the LATLC community raised more than \$35,000 for LATLC's first phase of action, helping our local firefighters and first responders. LATLC has used these funds to purchase and distribute goods and supplies to our local firefighters and first responders. LATLC and its army of volunteers have personally visited more than 20 local fire stations that needed supplies and delivered numerous

items that fire personnel identified as those of immediate assistance to our fire personnel battling this disaster.

LATLC even went into the mountains in the Sunland/Tujunga area and delivered goods to male inmates who are fighting the fires there. LATLC delivered more than \$1,000 worth of goods and supplies to the female inmate firefighters who are fighting the fires in Malibu.

Incredible support has been provided by Lissa Zanville and Angela Monique Bely and the Omega Law Group Van, Christine Gallo, Neyleen Beljajev, Gerry Marcus, Jeremy Tissot, Aimee Kirby and so many countless others. OCTLC and Michelle West, too, have been active in contributing and providing support to their local fire stations. Thank you to all of you.

LATLC has a fund to assist them in providing supplies and assistance. If you can, please contribute to this fund, and if you can't give money, please contribute your time. For ways to give, please go to www.latlc.org.

The next phase of LATLC's outreach is connecting with our universe of 152 non-profit partners to find out what their needs are. Because when the fires are fully contained, is when even more help and aid will be needed so people can begin to take stock and find the way forward.

CAALA and LATLC will continue to provide a helping hand to our members and the community. We will continue to be here to help in the weeks, months, and years to come, as our CAALA family and the LA community recover from these fires.