

Recruiting Announcement: Executive Director

Overview. The tax-exempt public interest law firm, Law Project for Psychiatric Rights (PsychRights) was founded in late 2002. Its mission is to mount a serious, strategic litigation campaign in the United States against forced psychiatric drugging (and electroshock) as part of an overall campaign to eliminate the pervasive abuses of forced psychiatric interventions. In late June 2006, PsychRights won *Myers v Alaska Psychiatric Institute*, which held Alaska's forced drugging procedures unconstitutional for not requiring a finding that such drugging is in the person's best interest and that there is no less intrusive alternative. In connection with this victory the Alaska Supreme Court awarded PsychRights over \$80,000 in full, reasonable attorneys fees. In previous years, PsychRights has raised between \$20,000 and \$30,000 per year and views the attorney fee award as an opportunity to substantially advance its mission by hiring an Executive Director with the requisite skills and motivation.

Overall Objectives for the Position. Up until now, most of PsychRights' work has been accomplished by attorney Jim Gottstein, its President and CEO, who has done so on a *pro bono* (volunteer) basis.¹ PsychRights has grown to the point that Mr. Gottstein can no longer handle both legal and administrative responsibilities. The Executive Director will assume much of the organizing and administrative functions under the direction and supervision of Mr. Gottstein.

The organizing functions consist primarily of (1) working with individuals and groups across the country to mount strategic litigation in their communities, (2) grass roots support and grass roots fundraising, and (3) collaborating with national organizations having complementary missions. With respect to (1), a "State Coordinator" system, currently numbering approximately ten, has been established.² With respect to (3), PsychRights has established strong relationships with three important organizations, MindFreedom, the International Center for the Study of Psychiatry and Psychology (ICSPP), and the National Association for Rights Protection and Advocacy (NARPA).

Continuation of the position is dependent upon sufficient funds being raised, whether through fundraising activities or additional court ordered attorney's fees. The position can be performed from any location, but a broadband Internet connection is necessary.

Specific Job Duties.

- Coordinate and assist with local efforts around the country
 - Keep track of and help recruit potential attorneys and expert witnesses
 - Expand the number of State Coordinators and associated efforts
- Coordinate acquisition and posting of relevant scientific research

¹ A fairly detailed explication of PsychRights' overall approach is contained in *How the Legal System Can Help Create a Recovery Culture in Mental Health Systems*, presented at Alternatives 2005: Leading the Transformation to Recovery, Phoenix, Arizona, October 28, 2005, which can be found at <http://psychrights.org/Education/Alternatives05/RoleofLitigation.pdf>.

² PsychRights is working closely with MindFreedom on this.

- Marketing (increase awareness of PsychRights and its Mission).
- Coordinate volunteers.
- Work with national organization partners, such as MindFreedom, ICSPP and NARPA.
- Establish and maintain relationships with other organizations who have similar or compatible missions.
- Participate in Public information efforts.
- Prepare and disseminate other communications, such as to coordinators, volunteers, partners, supporters and allies.
- Establish and coordinate efforts to recruit attorneys and expert witnesses for participation in the strategic litigation effort, including preparation of written materials.
- Fundraising, including grantwriting.³
- Help develop/refine PsychRights' budget.
- Monitor expenses and arrange for the preparation of regular financial statements.
- Respond to requests for information.
- Fulfill own clerical needs.
- Maintain appropriate records/documentation of all correspondence & materials produced and forward to main office, as appropriate.

Requirements.

- Knowledge of forced psychiatry and the psychiatric rights movement.
- Personal agreement/alignment with PsychRights' Mission.
- Ability to fulfill job responsibilities.
- Strong organizational skills.
- Self-starter.
- Organized.
- Fundraising and grantwriting ability.
- Strong communication skills, both written and verbal.
- Reasonable computer skills, including Microsoft Word and Excel.

Pluses.

- Financial accounting or bookkeeping knowledge.
- Budgeting skills.
- Knowledge of FrontPage or otherwise able to update PsychRights' website.
- Ability to create and query databases in Access.
- Very rich, generous and supportive relatives.

Salary. Initial salary depends on experience. Long term, the salary depends on the success of fundraising efforts (as well as attorney fee awards).

If interested, please send your resume/qualifications, with five references and their contact information, to jim@psychrights.org. The application period will remain open until at least December 1, 2006, but will remain open until the position is filled.

³ Ultimately, the ability to continue the position will depend on the ability to raise enough money. In addition, PsychRights desires to be able to hire additional personnel, including a staff attorney, with its budget goal being \$250,000 annually.