

Political Refugee Finds New Home Thanks to Legal Team

3M Legal Affairs Releases 2014 Pro Bono Report

Starting a new life in an unfamiliar country takes a lot of courage. For Tsehay Woldeyes, coming to the United States meant hope for a more peaceful life. As a political refugee from Ethiopia, Woldeyes had to flee her country in 2003 and leave her parents and two young kids behind. But thanks to the help of 3M's Legal Affairs team, Woldeyes is now a passport-carrying U.S. citizen with both her kids beside her.

"Things were very hard for me, but when I needed help, they helped me even though they didn't know who I was," said Woldeyes. "3M's legal team set up my interview for citizenship. They drove me to my appointments, helped relieve me from paying filing fees I couldn't afford, and wrote legal letters on my behalf."

"We often underestimate the impact our legal training can have outside our corporate legal department. A little bit of our time can mean a world of difference to those who need legal help like Tsehay," said Ivan Fong, 3M senior vice president, Legal Affairs and general counsel. "I am proud to lead a team that believes strongly in giving back to help strengthen our communities and the justice system."

3M Legal Affairs has a 30-year history of providing pro bono legal service. In 2014, its Pro Bono Committee created six new programs, collaborated with two new community partners and rallied 95 pro bono volunteers to help nearly 150 people. The services these volunteers provide are as varied as the clients themselves, from homeless veterans' assistance, to social security disability help, and immigration issues. For more information on 3M's pro bono work, see the [2014 Pro Bono Report](#).

"Over the last several years, our pro bono efforts have been stronger than ever thanks to the commitment of our entire legal team," said Maureen Harms, associate general counsel and chair of 3M's Pro Bono Committee.

In recognition of 3M's pro bono services, the University of Minnesota will award the company the Hubert H. Humphrey Public Leadership Award on June 30th.

Today, Woldeyes is now able to freely visit Ethiopia with her children. And with her U.S. passport, she has the comfort of knowing she will be able to return to her new home and peaceful life.

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