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INFORMATION FOR RELEASE

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Legal Aid Society Partners with Belmont University to Offer Free Legal Help Clinics

Clinics to be held twice monthly at the Belmont Ministry Center

NASHVILLE, Tennessee, March 4, 2019 – Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlandands, Tennessee’s largest nonprofit law firm, today announced a partnership with Belmont University to offer free legal help clinics twice monthly at the Belmont Ministry Center, 2005 12th Avenue South, beginning March 9.

The McHugh Legal Help Clinic at Belmont will take place on the second Saturday of each month, running from 8:30 to noon, while the Legal Aid Clinic at Belmont will be on the fourth Thursday evening of each month through October, running from 4:30 to 7 p.m.

Volunteer lawyers from the Tennessee Attorney General’s office will staff both of the Belmont clinics, assisted on Saturdays by lawyers in private practice across Davidson County. The Belmont Legal Help Clinic will be staffed each month by a different law firm, including Baker Donelson; Bass, Berry & Sims; Butler Snow; and Waller. The lawyers will offer free legal advice on any civil legal issue, including custody, landlord/tenant, employment, debt collection, bankruptcy, auto accident or neighbor disputes.

“These free legal help clinics wouldn’t be possible without the dedication of Belmont University and our volunteer lawyers,” said DarKenya W. Waller, executive director of Legal Aid Society. “Their generous contributions are vital to helping us advance, defend and enforce the legal rights of low-income and vulnerable Middle Tennesseans.”

Legal Aid Society offers other regularly scheduled legal help clinics in Anderson, Davidson, Maury, Sumner and Williamson counties. The Belmont clinics replace two clinics offered from 2003 to 2017 at Legal Aid Society’s former office in downtown Nashville. These clinics, which were suspended when Legal Aid Society moved its offices to 1321 Murfreesboro Road in May 2018, helped more than 700 people annually.

The Belmont Ministry Center, located in the former Bass Street Baptist Church, was dedicated in January 2018 and is used by the university to provide opportunities for ministry and worship, including a site for homeless shelter organization Room in the Inn twice per week. A medical clinic for low-income individuals is also being planned at the center in cooperation with Meharry Medical College. A neighboring Belmont property is the projected future home for [The Store](#) — a free grocery store for low-income families created by country music singer and Belmont alumnus Brad Paisley and his wife, actress Kimberly Williams-Paisley.

The legal help clinics will provide opportunities for Belmont College of Law students to engage with clients and lawyers. Other collaborations may extend social work and and pastoral counseling services to individuals at the clinics, with Belmont students who are studying in these areas guiding individuals in need of housing, SNAP or other benefits, as well as spiritual support.

“Belmont upholds Jesus as the measure for all that we do, and he made clear that he came ‘not to be served, but to serve,’” said Todd Lake, Belmont University’s vice president of spiritual development. “It’s a great honor for Belmont students to be able to apply their classroom-learned skills to real-life situations that benefit our city.”

About Legal Aid Society

Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland advocates for fairness and justice under the law. The non-profit law firm offers free civil legal representation and educational programs to help people in its region receive justice, protect their well-being and support opportunities to overcome poverty. It serves 48 counties from offices in Clarksville, Columbia, Cookeville, Gallatin, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Oak Ridge and Tullahoma. Legal Aid Society is funded in part by United Way. Learn more at www.las.org, or by following the firm on [Facebook](#).

About Belmont University

Ranked No. 6 in the Regional Universities South category and consistently named as a “Most Innovative” university by U.S. News & World Report, Belmont University is home to more than 8,300 students who come from every state and more than 36 countries. Committed to being a leader among teaching universities, Belmont brings together the best of liberal arts and professional education in a Christian community of learning and service. The University’s purpose is to help students explore their passions and develop their talents to meet the world’s needs. With more than 90 areas of undergraduate study, more than 25 master’s programs and five doctoral degrees, there is no limit to the ways Belmont University can expand an individual's horizon. For more information, visit www.belmont.edu.

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