



A publication of the Suffolk County Probate and Family Court Registry

Registry joins with Molly Bish Foundation for Child Safety Day Thursday, April 22 courthouse event to offer free child ID kits, family safety information

Four years ago, a devastating tragedy occurred in our Commonwealth with the abduction and murder of young Molly Bish. The details of this heartbreaking event are well known: On June 27, 2000, Magi Bish drove her sixteen-year-old daughter to her lifeguard post at Comins Pond in Warren. When swimmers began to arrive a short while later, Molly was gone. The only traces left behind were Molly's lunch, water bottle, towel and sandals stacked beneath the lifeguard chair.

It quickly became evident that Molly had been abducted. Her family, friends, and a large community of supporters remained ever hopeful and vigilant in their search for Molly. Ultimately, there was sadness and heartbreak for everyone involved as Molly's remains were eventually discovered on a remote hillside several miles from where she was first abducted.

Molly's parents, John and Magi Bish, are determined to prevent such a horrific crime from occurring again. They have become noted and outspoken advocates for child and family safety, and have set up a special foundation in Molly's name. The *Molly Bish 'Lifeguard' Foundation* is devoted to the promotion of child safety through education and prevention efforts, and offers child



So that no other child goes missing: A child identification kit containing clear photographs and clean fingerprints is one of the most important things to have on hand if your child is ever missing. The Molly Bish Foundation and the Suffolk Registry join to make these kits available on April 22nd.

identification kits and other family safety information to parents and children.

From 9:00 am – 3:00 pm on Thursday, April 22nd, 2004, at The Edward Brooke Courthouse, 24 New Chardon Street, Boston, volunteers from *The Molly Bish Foundation* and the Suffolk Registry Community Outreach Program will be on hand to photograph and fingerprint children. Parents and guardians will leave with these items for safekeeping in case they are ever needed later. No appointment is necessary, and the child safety material to be offered at the event is free.

“What better place to make these materials available than at the Suffolk County Probate and Family Court during April school vacation week?” asked Suffolk County Register of Probate Richard Iannella in announcing the event. “We’re right in downtown Boston near the Fleet Center, and the courthouse is just a few steps from a number of MBTA stops. It will be easy for parents to bring their children here for photographs and fingerprinting.”

Iannella also stated that local officials have become key partners in the child safety event. “Everyone’s on board—from school superintendents and day care providers to mayors, police chiefs and other city and town officials who have joined us as partners,” said Iannella. “They’re getting the word out because they know how important it is to do all we can to protect our children and prevent another tragedy like the abduction of Molly Bish from ever happening again.”

For more information about the event including directions to the Edward Brooke Courthouse, you can visit:
www.probatecourtianella.com,
or call (617) 788-8353.

To learn more about the Molly Bish 'Lifeguard' Foundation, visit:
www.mollybish.org.

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Iannella to honor Bish family during Child Safety Day

John and Magi Bish have become two of the nation's most noted advocates for missing children and their families. In recognition of their dedication and commitment to child safety, Register of Probate Richard Iannella will present the couple with a special citation during Child Safety Day on April 22nd. “The Bish family turned their pain and sorrow into hope for the future by dedicating their lives to preventing such a tragedy from occurring again,” stated Iannella. “It is an honor to join with them for Child Safety Day, and I look forward to recognizing John and Magi for all of their efforts on behalf of our children and our families.”

A message from Register Richard Iannella:

“The *I-CARE* network has come to the Suffolk Registry”



The Suffolk Registry of Probate is certainly a far different place than when I first came to the Registry seven years ago. Employees have made customer

service a top priority, typewriters have been replaced by high-tech computers and scanners, and long lines of uninformed and inexperienced litigants have virtually been eliminated.

Because we set the standard for professionalism and quality public service, the Suffolk Registry has been chosen to serve as a ‘proving ground’ for new technology that can make life easier for those who can’t afford a lawyer.

The state’s first “*I-CARE*” *Interactive Children’s Assistance Resource* kiosk recently arrived at the Registry, and is currently being tested by court staff. After being put through the paces, it will soon be available for free to anyone needing help completing guardianship forms.

The new kiosk features an interactive computer system that asks you all of the right questions, lets you give the answers, and then prints out completed forms for you. Best of all, no special computer training is needed to use the kiosk. An on-screen helper reads all of the questions printed on the screen, and you simply use the touch screen or keyboard to submit your answers.

Once the new kiosk is available to the public, you will be able to receive the very same help in your own home or office by simply accessing the *I-CARE* network through the Internet.

Currently, the court is pursuing grant funding to translate all of the material and information on the *I-CARE* system into Spanish. It is my hope that if the new kiosk proves successful, court forms for other types of cases can also be added to the system.

I wish to thank Probate and Family Court Chief Justice Sean M. Dunphy for selecting the Suffolk Registry as the test site for this exciting pilot project. I am confident that this new technology will prove to be a great help to those most in need.

Several other programs are still available to those who need help with court forms. Simply ask any member of the Registry staff for assistance, visit with the volunteer *Lawyer for the Day* or stop by *The Addington Resource Center*.

Suffolk Registry, court justices join to recoup waived fees

New system helps the court to recover waived fees whenever possible

Facing tough fiscal times and increasing numbers of litigants who have their court fees waived, Register of Probate Richard Iannella recently proposed a new plan to recoup those funds whenever possible.

Under Trial Court regulations, income-eligible litigants can ask the court to waive court filing fees and related costs. (The related costs can include fees charged by a constable or Deputy Sheriff to serve legal papers, and the rates newspapers charge to publish legal notices.) Until the new program was developed, there was no system in place to re-examine eligibility and recoup those funds once waived.

“The court should certainly look to recoup these funds on behalf of the taxpayers whenever possible,” said Iannella.

Using divorce as an example, he explained that a husband or wife may suddenly face financial difficulty after leaving the home or assuming full responsibility for the care and custody of their children. If fees are waived in these instances, there’s no reason not to take a second look at their situation later on.

“Once all matters have been settled and the divorce is final, the court should examine the financial situation of both parties. If one of the parties has the means to pay, the court should certainly make sure the taxpayers get their money back,” Iannella said.



Keeping taxpayers in mind: The Suffolk Probate Court looks to return waived fees and costs to state coffers.

Nearly one year ago, the Registry began strict monitoring of all fees waived by the court. This information is available with review of each case file. Based on specific circumstances, the judge can then study the information and order repayment whenever appropriate.

“This effort will, in no way, hinder access to the court for those truly in need,” commented First Justice John M. Smoot.

“This is simply a very positive effort on the part of the Registry to recoup court fees from parties who receive a fee waiver, but eventually turn out not to be indigent.”

National Adoption Day: A cause for celebration

Roseanne Lagorio honored for dedicated service to adopted children and their families

Judges, administrators and staff of Suffolk County Probate and Family Court recently joined with the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange, Department of Social Services and Suffolk Juvenile Court to celebrate National Adoption Day.

As the focus of the day's celebration was on adoptive families and children, judges finalized the adoptions of fifty-eight children over the course of the day.

The day's events began with a formal program of guest speakers including Lt. Governor Kerry Healy, Executive Office of Health and Human Services Secretary Ronald Preston, Department of Social Services Commissioner Harry Spence, Probate and Family Court Chief Justice Sean M. Dunphy, and Juvenile Court Chief Justice Martha P. Grace.

During the noon hour, Suffolk Probate First Justice John M. Smoot presided over a large gathering of colleagues, associates, family and friends of Roseanne Lagorio—a longtime Deputy Assistant Register and Adoption Clerk who had recently retired from the Suffolk Probate Court.

"Throughout her thirty-eight year career, Roseanne made countless contributions to the court, legal community and public at large—particularly with regard to the care and protection of children through adoption" said Judge Smoot. "As an adoptive parent herself, Roseanne has been a sympathetic and understanding advocate for parents finalizing adoptions in our court. She stands as a shining example of exemplary commitment to public service, and we are grateful for all that she has accomplished here," added Judge Smoot.



Recognized and honored for thirty-eight years of dedicated service to the Commonwealth: Roseanne Lagorio shares a laugh with her husband, Fred, and daughter, Kristen, as colleagues and friends share their remembrances and pay tribute to the recent retiree.

Retired First Justice Mary C. Fitzpatrick and State Representative Robert DeLeo were among those on hand for National Adoption Day events. Representative DeLeo — a former Assistant Register of Probate in Suffolk County — presented Lagorio with a House of Representatives citation in recognition of her outstanding record of dedicated public service.

Lending a hand to Middlesex County: More than 10,000 cases docketed

During the last six months, the Suffolk Registry has been assisting the Middlesex County Probate and Family Court with a backlog of case docketing. Staff shortages left the Middlesex Registry unable to contend with the buildup of paperwork, and Suffolk Register Richard Iannella was quick to lend a hand.

From September 15, 2003—March 15, 2004, 10,284 Middlesex cases were processed by Suffolk staff, totaling 102,911 entries in all.

"On behalf of Middlesex County, I send sincere thanks and appreciation to Register Iannella and his staff for helping us through a difficult time," said Middlesex Register of Probate John Buonomo.

Registry seeks summer interns

Once again this year, Register Richard Iannella is inviting area college students to participate in a summer internship program at the Suffolk County Probate and Family Court Registry.

"This is a good place to learn about probate and family law from the people who deal with these issues daily," said Iannella. "From seasoned attorneys to staff with administrative, public policy, and human service backgrounds, our employees put a variety of disciplines to use every day."

Although financial compensation is not available, schedules are flexible, and Register Iannella will provide progress reports or other verification to schools requiring

such information. Students applying for consideration must currently be enrolled in good standing in an accredited college or university.

Those students wishing to apply for participation in the program are encouraged to send a cover letter and résumé to Register Richard Iannella, Suffolk County Probate and Family Court Registry, 24 New Chardon Street, Boston, MA 02114.

"For students pursuing an education in related fields, this is a great opportunity to apply what they've read about in textbooks to real-life situations and events," remarked Register Iannella. "To volunteer some time here is truly an eye-opening experience."

For up-to-the-minute information about upcoming Registry events, programs and services, court forms and brochures, self-help kits, fee schedules, a virtual tour and more, log onto our Web site at: www.probatecourtianella.com

News and Notes from the Suffolk Registry

Best wishes for continued success go out to Lauren Blake, Kellie Moore and Erica Catanese. The three recently concluded service as student interns, and were noted for their positive attitudes and efforts on behalf of *pro se* litigants. The Registry welcomes New England School of Law student Julie Rougeau, and thanks Volunteer Lawyers Project intern Noreen Mullen for her ongoing service to the Registry. *Summer internship opportunities are currently available. See story on page 2.*

The Suffolk Registry recently updated its listing of area constables appointed by local communities and available to serve legal papers in Suffolk County. Contact information for each constable was confirmed by the Registry prior to being published, making for the most complete and up-to-date listing available anywhere. To obtain a copy, visit the Registry or call (617) 788-8300.

Many other helpful brochures are now available at area churches and community centers as part of the Registry's Community Outreach Program. *Services for Seniors, Legal Resources In and Around Suffolk County, You Can Protect Your Family's Home, Should I Have a Will? A Mothers and Fathers Guides to Legal Resources, and Is Adoption an Option?* are among available titles. If your group or organization would like to make these brochures available to your members, call Register Iannella at (617) 788-8304.

Visitors to the Suffolk Registry continue to give high marks in customer satisfaction surveys. Results for early 2004 show that nearly all respondents find Registry employees to be friendly, helpful, knowledgeable and informed as they assist the public. *"The gentleman at the Front Desk was extremely helpful,"* wrote one visitor in their survey response. *"The Lawyer for the Day was awesome! Very nice, patient and helpful. I was extremely appreciative!"* wrote another. As always, Register Iannella invites anyone with issues or concerns regarding service provided at the Registry to contact his office directly at (617) 788-8304.

The Registry is always looking for area attorneys to join the volunteer "Lawyer for the Day" program. With ever-increasing numbers of litigants coming to court without an attorney, your donation of time and legal expertise is invaluable to those in need. In addition, it fulfills *pro bono* service requirements and provides new insight and experience in the Probate and Family Court system. If you would like to join us or have questions about the program, contact Denis Martin at (617) 788-8382.

Register of Probate Richard Iannella recently facilitated the donation of several computers to the Chelsea Public Library. The computers were provided by a private donor, and will be used within the library or loaned to students needing a computer to help with school work or other projects.



**Suffolk County
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