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The traffic stop on March 3, 2006 happened as Charles Warren drove to high school. Police pulled the 16 year old over for not wearing his seatbelt and for operating a vehicle without driving privileges.

"I was getting stopped two or three times a day," Warren said. "It was for everything. Not wearing a seatbelt, speeding, driving while not insured, and running red lights. Pretty soon, the officers on the street knew once they saw me, I would be good for another ticket. It was a cycle."

Over a 12 year period, Warren would amass more than 51 driving related violations and misdemeanor convictions. During the process, he collected \$54,441.53 in fines and fees with Multnomah County Circuit Court.

"I started a payment plan, but it just got insurmountable," Warren said. "I figured these (fines and fees) would never be paid off."

Warren stopped making payments. He kept driving. He kept getting pulled over.

"Cars are my habit," Warren said. "I couldn't keep myself out of the car. Driving was my drug habit and I just relapsed all the time."



On Friday, June 8, 2018, Warren sat in a room at the Rosewood Initiative with approximately 150 other people waiting to address their fines and fees.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office is proud to report a tremendously successful first year of its Legal Services Day program. Since establishment in June 2017, more than \$1.5 million in court fines and fees have been waived in exchange for 20,603 hours of community service.

"Looking at these numbers tells us we're really on to something," said Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney Anna Fuller, who helped develop and implement Legal Services Day. "This program happens

once every two months and brings the courtroom into the community so people who have outstanding issues can get those resolved without having to go to the main courthouse in downtown Portland."

Legal Services Day is free and staffed by volunteers from many organizations. It is designed to help low income individuals among other things, apply for jobs, obtain housing, and secure or re-secure driving privileges. Once a participant get his/her fines and fees resolved, they must contact the Oregon Driver & Motor Vehicle Services (DMV) to get driving privileges reinstated.

"When someone shows up to Legal Services Day, they can bring proof of community service or treatment hours. They will meet with a criminal defense attorney, our office and eventually a judge," Fuller said. "If they can adequately show that they have engaged in non-court ordered community service or treatment hours they will earn a waiver for their fines and fees."

Multnomah County Senior Deputy District Attorney Nathan Vasquez, who is supervises the Neighborhood Unit, said Fuller should be recognized for taking Legal Services Day from a thought into something that has impact in the lives of hundreds of people.

"The time and effort Deputy District Attorney Anna Fuller has put into developing Legal Services Day is both significant and notable," Vasquez said. "She saw the community needed access to these types of critical services. The District Attorney's Office is remarkably proud of her work and the community should be as well. This is a program that didn't

happen overnight. It's taken a year to roll out and Anna continues to make improvements that make Legal Services Day even better for our community I also believe that DDA Fuller is an innovator who looked outside of traditional prosecution models and found a way to directly help people in their daily lives."

In Warren's case, he performed 80 hours of community service. In exchange, all of his fines and fees were forgiven by the court. Warren, now 27, said his volunteering was spent at a nonprofit that works to strengthen local communities through creative reuse of reclaimed materials.

"My driving record is so bad," Warren said. "This is the clean slate I needed. This is like a graduation. I don't know what it's like to drive without looking over my shoulder."

Another unique feature of Legal Services Day is for community members to see if they are eligible for expungement of old cases.

"We can get the expungement process started at Legal Services Day, without the person ever having to step foot inside the main courthouse," Fuller said. "Being able to offer these services to East Multnomah County residents is very important to the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office. We recognize that having a criminal conviction can certainly be detrimental to someone's ability to get – among other things – housing and a job. When appropriate, we want to help remove those barriers, and Legal Services Day provides that opportunity."

Legal Services Day is a collaborative effort between the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office, [Metropolitan Public Defender](#), Multnomah County Circuit Court staff and the [Rosewood Initiative](#), which graciously hosts the event.

"It takes a lot of coordination to make Legal Services Day successful," said Thalia Sady, Chief Attorney for the Community Law Division for Metropolitan Public Defender. "Getting to and from the courthouse in downtown to pay off fines and fees and access other vital services can present a wide variety of hardships for people. Legal Services Day is a safe place for people to come in and resolve those issues without the anxiety of having to be in a courthouse."



"We've learned a lot since our first event one year ago," Fuller said. "We continue to adjust our procedures, outreach and vision to make this program the best it can be for our community. As we do that, we become more proficient each time and our wonderful partners with the public defenders' office continue to volunteer in droves."

"Having unpaid fines and fees can have a cascading effect on someone's life," Fuller added. "We've seen community members come to Legal Services Day with unpaid parking tickets that have collected thousands of dollars in additional unpaid fines and interest. Paying that off could be impossible for someone who is already paying for housing, food, and childcare. That's why Legal Services Day is so important, it gives that person a restart button after completing community service or attending treatment programs."

"There's so much dedication behind Legal Services Day," Sady said. "The community members come in with volunteer hours that far exceed the number of hours they need to cover their fines and fees. When we ask them about it, they tell us that they've enjoyed the community service; they're staying to complete the projects they have started and that really benefits everyone."

Fuller echoed that statement and said, "This is just more evidence that the community as a whole benefits from this type of program, not only by giving the participants an opportunity to remove barriers but by providing thousands of hours of community service for our region's nonprofit organizations."

There is no law enforcement presence at Legal Services Day, and absent an emergency, police will not be called to take an individual into custody on an open warrant. Any non-person misdemeanor warrant will be lifted and a future court date will be set. Any person misdemeanor warrant or felony warrant will be kept in place, but a future court date will be set for a potential bench warrant lift.

Anyone looking for expungements will be referred directly to the attorneys who specialize in this area. The applicant must meet the eligibility requirements of ORS 137.225.

Legal Services Day is also an opportunity for some people, if qualified, to seek a closed felony case to be reduced to a misdemeanor. There are certain requirements: The closed felony case can only be a Class C felony; the individual must

have successfully completed their probation; fines and fees must be paid in full (or exchanged for community service/treatment); and receive approval from the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office. Due to time constraints, these types of services cannot be completed within one day. Additional details can be provided at Legal Services Day.

During Legal Services Day, all participants must verify that they have a financial need and otherwise could not or will not pay off their fines and fees due to financial hardship.

After getting his fines and fees cleared, Warren said his only advice for teens just starting to drive: "If you get a ticket, pay it off right away."

[CLICK HERE FOR A STEP BY STEP PROCESS TO LEGAL SERVICES DAY](#)



By the numbers: Legal Services Day

Total number of cases addressed: 2,308

Total number of community service/treatment required: 11,731

Total number of community service/treatment performed: 20,603

Total amount of fines and fees exchanged through the program: \$1,557,195.48

Approximate value of volunteer attorney time, assuming a rate of \$100/hour: More than \$35,000.

Facts to know about Legal Services Day

Location: Rosewood Initiative, 16126 Southeast Stark, Portland, Oregon

Time: 1-5 p.m.

Dates: June 8, August 10, October 12, December 14

Reservations: No. First come, first serve. Please be patient. We want to serve everyone equally. As such, please understand that due to the overwhelming demand, not everyone may get through Legal Services Day.

[CLICK HERE TO PRINT OUT THE LEGAL SERVICES DAY FLYER](#)

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