

SDSBS trial techniques increase settlement offer

On May 31, 2008, 59-year-old Jane Doe (not her real name) was driving down a road in Pinellas County, Florida, when John Jones (not his real name) drove through a red light and slammed into her car. As a result of the accident, Mrs. Doe suffered neck pain and eventually required a cervical discectomy and fusion surgery. She asked an attorney in Hillsborough County to represent her in a lawsuit filed against Mr. Jones, and the attorney conducted discovery and attempted to resolve the case through mediation. The defendant and his insurance company never provided a fair offer that would have compensated Mrs. Doe for her injuries.

Eventually, the case was referred to SDSBS attorney **Brian Denney** who began aggressively preparing for trial. Additional discovery was conducted, including acquiring expert testimony regarding Mrs. Doe's injuries. Mr. Denney added a consortium claim on behalf of Mrs. Doe's husband who is legally blind and must rely upon his wife for support. Mr. Denney also presented testimony from Mrs. Doe's doctors stating that she would likely require additional neck surgery in the future. The defense attorney denied that Mr. Jones had any responsibility for causing the crash. The defense also disputed Mrs. Doe's damages, claiming that her neck pain was caused by a pre-existing condition despite the fact that she had never reported neck pain to a doctor prior to the crash. The defense also attempted to argue that since she was able to continue working, she was, therefore, not hurt. On the eve of trial, the case was settled for \$600,000 – more than double any offer previously made by the defense. ♦

Taking... *Time to Care*

SDSBS Tallahassee staff took part in 'Tails & Trails' Walk/Run, and 'A Full Summer' food program

SDSBS staff participated in the "Tails & Trails 5K Walk/10K Run" in Tallahassee, Florida, May 2013. The event provides support and funding for the Animal Shelter Foundation, a non-profit, volunteer organization supporting adoption programs, spay/neuter programs, supplemental veterinary care, and community education on responsible pet ownership. ASF actively supports the Tallahassee-Animal Service Center.

In June 2013, SDSBS Tallahassee staff volunteered both time and money to help "A Full Summer," an event set up to package meals for people in the community who are hungry. Summer is a critical time for families and individuals who depend upon school lunch programs and other support for reliable sources of food. Meals prepared by "A Full Summer" were distributed by Second Harvest of the Big Bend. The event prepared 40,176 meals, and collected over \$3,000 in monetary contributions. ♦



Members of SDSBS attend first legal fair hosted by Hispanic organization to help community

On July 14, 2013, SDSBS attorney Ed Ricci and summer intern Kelsey Burke attended a legal fair hosted by HACER (Hispanics in Action for Community Education and Rehabilitation) Ministry and the Palm Beach County Hispanic Bar. This was the organizations' first legal fair. Numerous lawyers offered free consultations on various matters including criminal law, personal injury, immigration, worker compensation, wage and hour laws, family law, employment law, bankruptcy, and housing. Mr. Ricci and Ms. Burke spoke about SDSBS and its work. HACER is a non-profit organization providing health education, information, a food pantry, and housing services to residents in central Palm Beach County, Florida. ♦