Marquette Law School and the Milwaukee Bar Association are partnering to launch the Milwaukee Justice Center Mobile Legal Clinic, a specially outfitted bus designed as a vehicle to provide free, brief legal advice to individuals who find themselves outside of the areas currently served by legal volunteer efforts in metropolitan Milwaukee.

The Mobile Legal Clinic is believed to be the only service of its kind in Wisconsin, and one of only a handful in the nation delivering volunteer legal services in underserved areas.

It will be operated by the Milwaukee Justice Center, a collaborative project among the Milwaukee Bar Association, Marquette Law School, and Milwaukee County.

The Mobile Legal Clinic will have its first outing Sept. 21 at the John C. Cudahy YMCA, 9050 N. Swan Road, in Milwaukee. It will host monthly sessions at that location through the end of the year before setting its full schedule for 2014.

“The Mobile Legal Clinic reflects the service-oriented mission of Marquette University Law School and the larger legal profession,” said Joseph D. Kearney, dean of Marquette Law School. “By helping those who may not otherwise be able to obtain professional legal counsel, and by doing so in their communities, the Mobile Legal Clinic will fill a gap in this region. It will also enable our students, working with attorneys and members of the community, to gain experience and develop an ethic of service.”

The Mobile Legal Clinic was made possible by a gift from Frank Daily, Law ’68, and Julianna Ebert, Law ’81, to honor the pro bono work of Mike Gonring, Law ’82, their friend and longtime partner at Quarles & Brady.

“Mike had a vision of a bus which could reach people unable to get to the courthouse or other locations offering free legal services,” Ebert said. “Frank and I worked with Mike and other dedicated people at the Justice Center, Law School and Milwaukee Bar to make Mike’s vision a reality. Frank and I could not think of a better way to honor Mike’s commitment to pro bono work. The Mobile Legal Clinic will inspire today’s lawyers—and tomorrow’s—to follow Mike’s example of providing pro bono legal help to people in need. As Marquette lawyers, we are excited about the contributions the Mobile Legal Clinic will make to our community.”

“In the access to justice field,” said Gonring, “we have to dream big dreams because the problems are so large. Ninety-nine times out of 100 the dream will not come true because of lack of resources, but sometimes it will. The model of a mobile legal clinic is one of those things that folks involved in access to justice issues dreamed about for years. I am very grateful to Frank and Julie for ensuring that it actually will happen, and I look forward to the work that Marquette Law School and the Milwaukee Bar Association can do through the Milwaukee Justice Center’s Mobile Legal clinic.”

**Commitment to pro bono work**

The Mobile Legal Clinic is an extension of pro bono work already being done in the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic, where at a variety of sites in the Milwaukee area, lawyers and current law students collaborate to assist people with legal problems. More than 200 lawyers and a similar number of law students volunteered at the MVLC’s sites in the 2012-13 academic year and in previous years. Volunteers are available to give brief advice on civil legal issues, including family law, employment and benefits law, probate issues, small claims and landlord-tenant disputes.
Volunteers do not address criminal issues. One of the MVLC’s sites is part of the Milwaukee Justice Center, located in the Milwaukee County Courthouse, and a joint project of the Law School, the Milwaukee Bar Association, and Milwaukee County.

“The Milwaukee Bar Association is thrilled to see the reach of the Milwaukee Justice Center expand to persons who otherwise might not be able to seek out legal advice or referrals for their current legal difficulties,” said Beth Ermatinger Hanan, president of the Milwaukee Bar Association and a partner at Gass Weber Mullins. “Confident of the strong sense of volunteerism among our membership, we expect that a number of MBA members will volunteer once a month with the Mobile Legal Clinic. The enthusiastic contribution by dozens of Marquette law students each semester in working with MJC clients not only helps ease the anxiety of these clients, but reenergizes the practicing lawyers who supervise them. Together with Marquette University Law School, the MBA is eager to ‘hit the road’ with the MJC’s Mobile Legal Clinic.”

Initially, the Mobile Legal Clinic will be staffed primarily by attorneys from the law firm Michael Best & Friedrich, LLP, together with Marquette University law students.

For more information, or to arrange an interview with Joseph Kearney or with Angela Schultz, pro bono director at Marquette Law School, contact Chris Jenkins in the Office of Marketing and Communication at (414) 288-4745 or christopher.t.jenkins@marquette.edu.