

Bethamy Beam

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Before she became a lawyer, Bethamy N. Beam couldn't imagine herself as a volunteer. "I never really thought I would be one of these people out there volunteering," she says. "It was a surprise to me. It's just so incredibly rewarding to feel like I'm helping people."

Beam had always been interested in being a lawyer but, after paying for her bachelor's and master's degrees, she knew she didn't have the funds to go to law school. At the same time, she wasn't happy with her career as an environmental consultant for the U.S. Department of Energy—it just didn't challenge her anymore. "I also wanted something that allowed me to give back to the community . . . working for the federal government, I never felt like I was making a difference at the end of the day," she says.

With the support of her husband and family members, Beam fulfilled her dream of attending law school. She earned her law degree and began practicing law in 1999.

Beam's volunteerism started through the Bar Association of Frederick County, when she served as co-chair of the Bar's entertainment committee. She describes it as one of the most active committees, as

they organize all of the Bar's monthly social activities and other events, she says. Beam continued in that role for two years and, during her tenure, helped to create an annual dinner with area judges and Bar Association members in an effort to encourage camaraderie and to promote civility and professionalism.

After serving on the entertainment committee for two years, Beam was asked to serve as the chairperson of the association's annual Charity Art Auction, held at Dutch's Daughter each March. Beam, who had previously served on the auction's committee, relinquished her responsibility on the entertainment committee to head up the art auction for the past two years. Last year, the auction raised more than \$7,000 for the Boys & Girls Club of Frederick and, this year, more than \$11,000 for Interfaith Housing Alliance.

While Beam's volunteer work started with Bar Association activities, she branched out on her own and started volunteering through the United Way of Frederick after last year's charity auction. She continues to serve on the United Way Citizen's Advisory Panel and its Campaign Cabinet and plans on contact-

ing her colleagues to raise money for the organization.

"I really like working with the United Way, because when I was in my 20s and going through a really difficult time in my life, I went to an organization funded by the United Way and got public assistance," she says. "They really helped me a lot and I feel it's my time to give back now, and I'm in a position to give back."

As with the other aspects of her life, Beam gives her all when it comes to volunteering.

"If I commit to something, I throw myself into it," she says. "If I'm going to do it, I'm going to do it right, I'm going to do it well, because my reputation's on the line and I don't want things to slip through the cracks."

Beam says knowing she's helping people makes it all worthwhile.

"Sometimes you don't feel like you're as much help as you'd like to be, but every now and then you have those one or two cases where people are in situations—they really just can't get out from under a major problem. And you're able to help them, and they're so grateful, and to see that gratitude. It's not about making money. Making money is great, but what really makes it great is to see people who are happy because you've been able to really help them," she says. "You don't get that feeling very often, and it's such a wonderful feeling."