

VALLEY LAWYER

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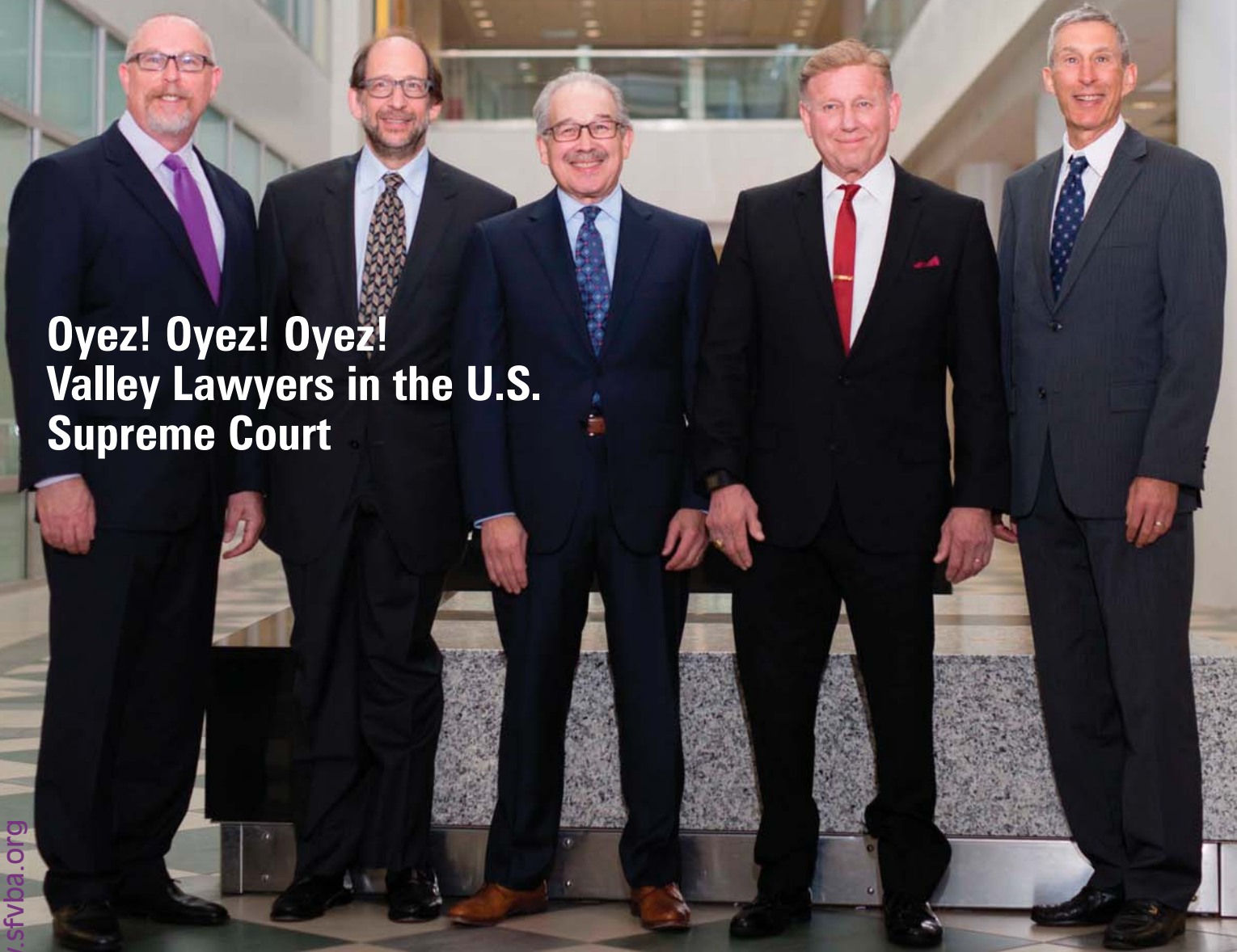
A Publication of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association

**Scalia's Lasting Legacy:
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**Nine Steps for
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**Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!
Valley Lawyers in the U.S.
Supreme Court**



Amanda: A Victim No More

LAURENCE N. KALDOR
President



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THE VCLF IS PROUD TO support Save Passages and their empowerment of victims of domestic abuse.

Breaking free of the chains of domestic abuse is not an easy thing. Long after the source of physical, sexual or emotional abuse is removed, the memories of abuse remain a constant challenge.

And so it was for Amanda Durante, a youth in the San Fernando Valley who lived in the shadow of the abuse she once suffered from. It consumed her, and kept her from living a normal life. Amanda's struggle with past abuse left her feeling worthless and hopeless. She didn't believe she was capable of healing. Safe Passages showed her otherwise.

"I was a depressed, anxious, and very angry resentful person," tells Amanda. "My emotions and my thoughts controlled me, and I would act impulsively on feelings rather than on thoughts. My struggle with past abuse had left me feeling worthless and hopeless. I never believed I was capable of healing."

Amanda was introduced to Safe Passages by a friend. And Amanda was understandably skeptical. Meeting up with strangers asking "How does that feel" just didn't sound like what she

needed. But she gave it a go, and began meeting with Linda, one of the directors.

"It's no longer a chain that I feel is tying me down every day," reflects Amanda. "I feel like I am able to carry on with my life, without any strings attached. For the first time since I was very little, I feel free."

Aside from the sessions she had with Linda, there were weekly meetings with the other women in the program and a life coach, Madelon. Amanda remembers their first meeting and




listening to the material she had. It was about the three people you need to forgive before you can really move on with your life: your parents, yourself, and anyone and everyone who has ever wronged or hurt you. This truth hit Amanda like a truck.

"Forgiveness is for you," Amanda learned, "so you can move on and not

be tied down emotionally or mentally to situations and circumstances in the past. All the tools and material Madelon worked so hard to prepare for us each week have changed my life, and will continue to change me every time I go back through it. She has shown me that I can accomplish anything I put my mind to through the use of goals, good habits, hard work, dedication, and good time management."

Through this program, Amanda has grown to have a sense of maturity in understanding things she never could before. Meeting with the other woman helped with that as well. Seeing that these women came from all different walks of life, and all dealing with domestic violence or abuse in one form or another, showed her that she was not alone.

"Some of my fellow graduates have shown me much love and support for the time I had with them, and I would like to thank everyone at Safe Passages for that and all the advice and wisdom you have passed down to me." 

Safe Passages is supported by the generous contributions of many individuals, companies, and organizations. The VCLF is proud to support Safe Passages and amazing people like Amanda Durante.

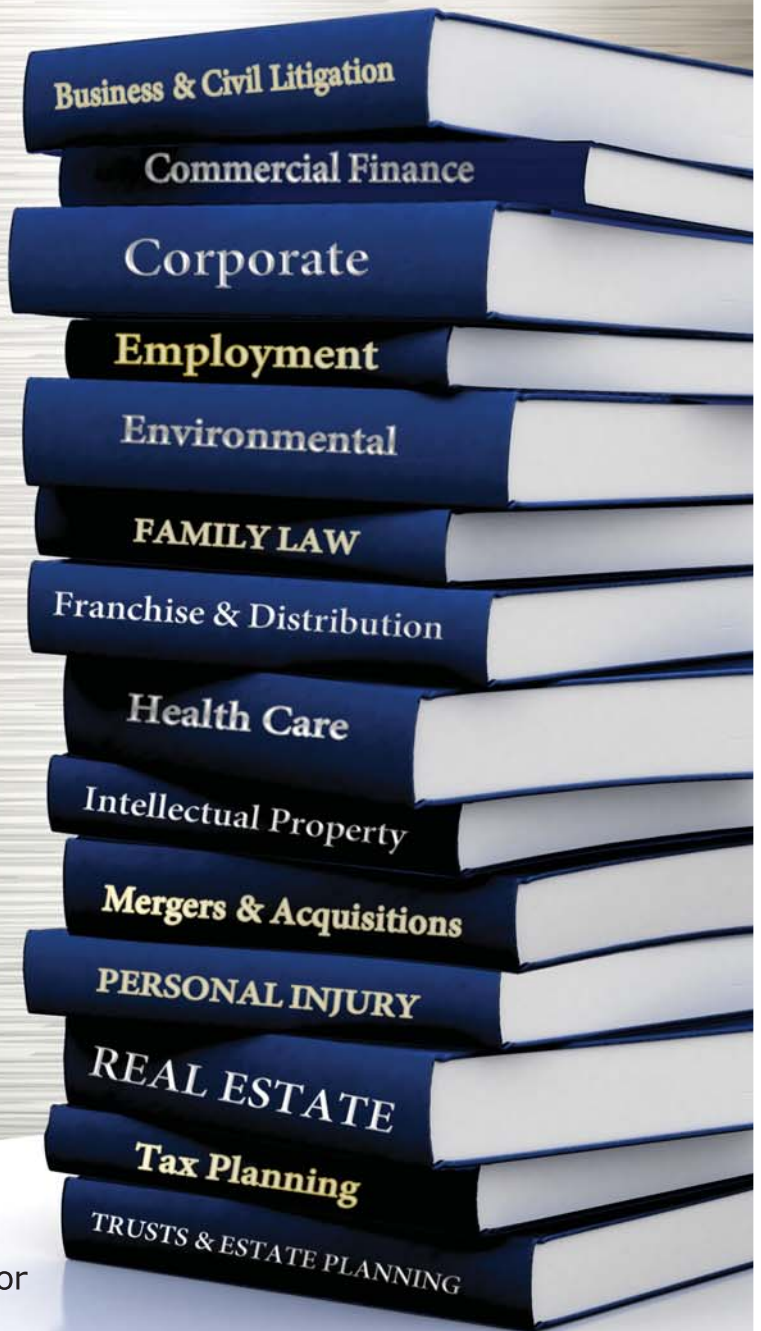
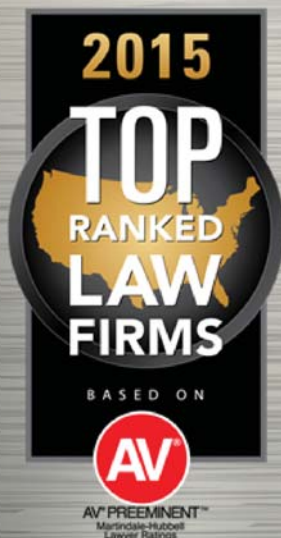
About the VCLF

The Valley Community Legal Foundation is the charitable arm of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association. The Foundation's mission is to support the legal needs of the youth, victims of domestic violence, and veterans of the San Fernando Valley. The Foundation also provides educational grants to qualified students pursuing legal careers. The Foundation relies on donations to fund its work. Please visit thevclf.org to donate.



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