

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Bet Tzedek promotes Diego Cartagena to head all legal programs**

**November 1, 2017 (Los Angeles)** – Bet Tzedek has named Diego Cartagena as its next Vice President, Legal Programs, making him the most senior attorney in the firm. Mr. Cartagena assumes the position vacated when Gus May ascended to the bench of the Los Angeles Superior Court in August. Mr. Cartagena will report directly to CEO Jessie Kornberg and manage the continued growth of Bet Tzedek’s community services.

Mr. Cartagena has focused his entire legal career on addressing issues of access to justice. As a former Equal Justice Works Fellow and Teen Advocate with The Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice’s Teen LA project, Mr. Cartagena helped give low income teen mothers and fathers a voice in court by providing them with legal advocacy and outreach in the areas of family and immigration law. He then went on to serve as Pro Bono Director for The Alliance for Children’s Rights, while simultaneously serving as the agency’s Probate Legal Guardianship Program Director. Since joining the Bet Tzedek team in 2012, Mr. Cartagena has served as Bet Tzedek’s Pro Bono Director. Under Mr. Cartagena’s direction, over 1,000 volunteers donate more than 60,000 pro bono and volunteer hours to Bet Tzedek annually.

Mr. Cartagena has been the critical force behind Bet Tzedek’s Rapid Response/Family Preparedness Program. Launched in February of 2017 as an immediate response to the Department of Homeland Security’s Deportation Surge, which targets the deportation of millions of undocumented immigrants previously deemed low priorities for removal, the Program aims to provide safety and stability to the estimated 250,000 U.S. citizen children in Los Angeles whose parents are undocumented. Under Mr. Cartagena’s leadership, Bet Tzedek staff and pro bono volunteers have assisted more than 1,500 families through over 60 workshops and know-your-rights trainings, and reached an additional 20,000 through online platforms.

Mr. Cartagena has also played a critical role in launching Bet Tzedek’s Small Business Development Project. For low-income households and communities, entrepreneurship and small businesses offer a rare path out of poverty. Mr. Cartagena’s innovative and collaborative approach to pro bono partnerships helped ensure the success of Los Angeles’ first Small Business Legal Academy, a free one-day event bringing experts from the city’s top law firms, accounting and banking businesses to help guide and counsel minority-owned small businesses.

Mr. Cartagena received his Bachelors of Arts Degree in American Literature and Culture from the University of California at Los Angeles and his J.D. from the University of California at Los Angeles’ School of Law, where he concentrated on Critical Race Studies. He currently serves as a board member of OneJustice.

The organization is hiring a Pro Bono Manager to manage day-to-day pro bono department work. A full job description for that position can be found [here](#).

**QUOTE FROM JESSIE KORNBERG, PRESIDENT & CEO**

This is a good day for Bet Tzedek and a great day for the thousands of clients that depend on us for a fair chance and a better life. Diego exemplifies what is best about our mission: an audacious commitment to push the bounds of what seems possible and deliver on our pledge to deliver equal justice for all. We operate in a world of scarce resources and overwhelming need, but every day Diego finds new ways to stretch the dollars and the hours to deliver more for those who need us most.

**QUOTE FROM DIEGO CARTAGENA, VICE PRESIDENT, LEGAL SERVICES**

Our community members are facing unprecedented need. From immigrant children whose lives hang in the balance of a judges' orders, to seniors increasingly at risk of elder abuse and consumer fraud, meaningful access to justice is paramount. I look forward to working with longstanding and new community partners, pro bono supporters, and sister legal services agencies to continue to build on Bet Tzedek's incredible history of protecting the rights of those most vulnerable by building innovative programs and coalitions that are responsive to the evolving community landscape. Above all else, I am excited to work side-by-side with the incredible staff at Bet Tzedek and to support their hard work, innovation, and dedication.

**ABOUT BET TZEDEK**

Founded in 1974, Bet Tzedek provides free comprehensive legal assistance and representation, volunteer and court-based self-help services and legal education to more than 20,000 people each year regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, immigration status or gender identity. Our areas of practice include: aging with dignity, kids in need, economic justice, Holocaust survivor services, and Rapid Response. More information can be found at [www.bettzedek.org](http://www.bettzedek.org)

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