

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Point-to-point relay teams forming for Tallahassee-to-Jacksonville Freed to Run 2.0

Runners seek to raise \$180,000 Dec. 2-7 for Northeast Florida Medical Legal Partnership

[Video footage: Personal story of child who benefited from the Northeast Florida Medical Legal Partnership](#)

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, July 17, 2018 – When Gunster attorney Mike Freed ran six marathons in six days from Tallahassee to Jacksonville in June 2017, raising \$70,000 for Jacksonville Area Legal Aid (JALA), he could hardly have imagined that dozens of people would be signing up to join him on his 2018 repeat, but they are doing just that.

“This is a great example of what happens when you combine a meaningful cause, passionate supporters, and a fun impactful event,” said Freed, a shareholder in the Jacksonville office of Gunster. “I am thrilled by what has been created and the major impact it is having not just in Northeast Florida but in bringing awareness to the justice gap in our society and the important role that legal service organizations play in filling it.”

Teams are assembling now for Freed to Run 2.0, Freed’s second fundraising odyssey from the Florida Supreme Court in Tallahassee to the Duval County Courthouse, a distance of 157 miles that will be covered Dec. 2-7 by Freed and teams of runners accompanying him. Each team will run a single marathon in a point-to-point relay, with most runners covering just two or three miles each. Elite Parking is donating transportation for the relay teams and will drop off and pick up runners at designated points throughout the six days.

Freed to Run 2.0 will benefit the Northeast Florida Medical Legal Partnership (NFMLP), through which health-care professionals and institutions collaborate with attorneys to produce better outcomes for children with medical conditions. Jacksonville Area Legal Aid provides free civil legal aid to pediatric patients and their families and operates the partnership in collaboration with: Baptist Health; Wolfson Children’s Hospital; Nemours Children’s Specialty Care, Jacksonville; UF Health Specialty Pediatric Clinics; and Community PedsCare®, a pediatric program of Community Hospice & Palliative Care.

Poverty often becomes a health complication for children in low-income families, whether because they lack access to insurance, because they live in substandard housing that makes conditions like asthma worse, or because of a host of challenges facing families who struggle to afford daily necessities. Through the NFMLP, they and their families can receive legal services in areas including help accessing health insurance and other public benefits, family law advocacy, consumer protection, immigration and ensuring safe and affordable housing.

Last year, Freed's inaugural trek, with stops at courthouses in Jefferson, Madison, Baker, Suwannee, and Columbia counties, caught the attention of Baptist Health, which has pledged to match all funds raised for the NFMLP at 125 percent. With a five-year fundraising goal of \$1 million, and a \$1.25 million match by Baptist Health, JALA expects to create a \$2.25 million endowment for the NFMLP. With a fundraising goal of \$180,000 to be matched at 125 percent, Freed to Run 2.0 is expected to generate more than \$400,000 for the endowment.

Teams participating in Freed to Run 2.0 to date are from the law firms of: Akerman; Abel Bean Law; Fisher, Tousey, Leas & Ball; Jimerson & Cobb, P.A.; Marks Gray; and Shutts & Bowen, and from: the JALA Board of Directors; JALA staff; Community First Credit Union; Women's Giving Alliance; and F3 Jacksonville. They will start and stop at the same courthouses that were Freed's waypoints in 2017. Runners can also participate in a 5k run from the Jacksonville Farmers Market to the Duval County Courthouse and cross the finish line with Freed to Run on Dec. 7.

For more information about Freed to Run 2.0, to register or support a team, or to become a sponsor, visit: <https://www.jaxlegalaid.org/freedtorunsupport/>

About the Northeast Florida Medical Legal Partnership

The NFMLP is part of a nationwide network of projects in which professionals from the medical and legal communities combine resources to produce outcomes for low-income and vulnerable patients (children and adults) that positively impact their health and ability to thrive.

About Jacksonville Area Legal Aid

The mission of Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Inc. is to obtain and provide high quality legal assistance to low income and other special need groups and to stimulate and empower groups of poor people to accomplish energetic and affirmative advocacy, all to alleviate the circumstances, incidents and causes of poverty. Donate at www.JaxLegalAid.org.

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