



## **Apathy towards absentee causes strife with school.**

Taylor was a bright young student near the top of her class at Whitney Young High School. That was, of course, until her flare-ups started. During her sophomore year, she developed a blood disease that caused debilitating pain and led to her missing school. Her mother worked with the school to obtain an Individualized Education Plan or IEP, thanks to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, but her teachers didn't show much interest. As a result, as her attendance suffered so too did her grades.

Her mother quickly realized that she couldn't help her daughter on her own so she turned to CVLS for help. Volunteer GAL attorney **Carolynne Paulson** agreed to represent Taylor and work with the school to ensure that her teachers adhered to the IEP for her senior year. Carolynne met with the school and addressed their concerns. The school agreed to follow Taylor's IEP for her last year and assigned her an administrator to contact if any of her teachers weren't in compliance.

In addition to helping Taylor straighten out her school situation, Carolynne worked with the Chicago Medical-Legal Partnership for Children to obtain a partner doctor as a mentor. This will allow Taylor to volunteer during her final year in school and give her a better chance of getting into college.

"I just want to thank you for your help, this has been a difficult time for me and of course for Taylor," said Carmela, Taylor's mother. "While I have tried to stay on top of things and advocate for my child, I have learned that it truly "takes a village" and am grateful for all of your support, advice and guidance!"

Great work Carolynne!

## **CVLS board member honored by ILAO.**

Illinois Legal Aid Online named CVLS board member **Folarin Dosunmu** of **Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom** as their Pro Bono Attorney of the Month for November. In addition to serving on our board, Folarin has been a volunteer with our Guardian Ad Litem for Minors program since 2008. Alecia Wartowski, the Director of the Guardian Ad Litem for Minors Program, nominated him as Pro Bono Attorney of the Month because of his ability to handle complex situations and make nuanced and thoughtful recommendations about the best interests of the children he serves. Folarin has served as a tireless advocate for children on numerous challenging cases and has worked closely with colleagues at Skadden to secure the best possible outcomes for his young clients. Congratulations Folarin!



Folarin S. Dosunmu, Associate  
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

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**Don't forget to update CVLS with your new contact info. Start the new year off right!**

## The fight for Faith.

Five year old Faith is one of nine children. Seven of her brothers and sisters were adopted by friends and relatives of her mother after extensive DCFS involvement going back over the last 15 years. In March, 2009, her mother completed a 150 day drug treatment program in an attempt to overcome her 20 year addiction. The next month, she filed a petition to discharge guardianship and have Faith return to her. As GAL, CVLS volunteer **Rose Gallagher** of **Chapman and Cutler** faced an investigation where she needed to determine whether the mother had overcome her addiction and whether the challenges that led to past DCFS involvement remained.

Rose spoke with all of the parties in the case, obtained DCFS records, requested hair follicle drug tests, and even spoke with the mother's addiction sponsor. She was concerned about the mother's boyfriend's extensive criminal record, as well as reports that Faith acted up in school after visits. At one point Rose learned that Faith reported that her mother had told her to act up so that Faith could return home sooner. Ultimately, although her mother seemed to be sober and improving, she had violated court orders and was inconsistent with visitation and Rose could not recommend that the child be returned to her yet. Once Rose communicated that to the mother, the mother agreed to withdraw her petition and follow a road map of goals for her to meet that will help her successfully petition in the future. Rose's patience, thorough investigation and rapport with the parties led ultimately to a positive settlement that allowed the child to stay in her guardian's home while Faith's mother continued to work to overcome through her challenges.

## Blind justice.

Most people would agree that Shavon has faced challenges in school. A teenager, she is blind and severely cognitively delayed. Although her parents repeatedly asked her school to increase services or simply help Shavon learn simple tasks like how to find a bathroom or ask for help, the school ignored them. During last year's school assessment, Shavon was asked to place stickers on a page showing what color a turkey is. Remember, she is blind.

Shavon's parents were finally frustrated enough to find an attorney. That is where CVLS came in. CVLS, with help from Health and Disability Law, was able to request an independent evaluation for Shavon to assess how she was doing in school and what she was capable of. The school, which by law had 5 days to respond to the request, ignored it. CVLS requested a due process hearing alleging that Shavon's right to a free and appropriate education had been violated. This finally got the District's attention. An attorney from the District made multiple accusations about Shavon, her parents and their attorney. However, in the end they proposed a settlement that allowed Shavon to go to a private day school that better suited her unique needs and to obtain the evaluations that she needed to determine her next steps. Without a pro bono attorney, this family would have been unable to navigate a special education system determined to provide the minimum.

### **Are you interested in trying a special education case?**

CVLS will be running its pilot special education training this February. This training will allow teams of attorneys to tackle special education cases for children in Chicago. Cases may include special education administrative hearings and even opportunities for federal court litigation. If you are an experienced litigator and are interested in attending the training, please contact Alecia Wartowski at: 312 332-1916 or [arw@cvls.org](mailto:arw@cvls.org) for more information.



*Left-top: Daniel Werly, Amy Palmer and Andrew Groesch, Left-middle: Steve Patton, Margaret Benson, and Patricia Nelson, Bottom: Steve Patton, Margaret Benson, and Bob Glaves, Right-top: Pre ceremony mingling between staff and volutneers, Right-bottom: Phil Mohr and Kevin Fee*



## CVLS Award Ceremony a huge success!

CVLS held our annual award ceremony at Kirkland & Ellis LLP on November 10th. We celebrated the fabulous work of all our volunteers throughout this year and highlighted a few who stood out for going above and beyond the call of duty. Photos of this year's event and award winners can be seen at [www.cvls.org/galleries/annual-award-ceremony-2010](http://www.cvls.org/galleries/annual-award-ceremony-2010)

This year's Court of Honor awards were given to:

Codilis & Associates P.C.  
Fisher and Shapiro LLP  
Pierce & Associates P.C.

This year's Distinguished Service award winners were:

Marta Almodovar  
Jessica R. Blaemire  
Gerri A. Brauneis  
Tony Cerda  
Miles V. Cohen  
Ross B. Edwards  
Kevin M. Fee  
John Galli  
Gerald A. Granada  
Kelly L. Guzman  
Ashanti M. Henderson  
Matthew S. Krizelman  
Jordan H. Lippman  
Steven Mihajlovic  
Donna L. Otis  
Anna M. Panchenko  
Sharon L. Scott  
Molshree A. Sharma  
Modupe A. Sobo  
Juan Vaglienty  
Kelly M. Warner  
Joseph Wrobel

Julie A. Bland  
Rachel Blake  
Karen L. Carroll  
J. Anthony Clark  
Wan Jade Cooper  
Jeffrey R. Esser  
Patrick C. Gallagher  
Myoka Kim Goodin  
Andrew J. Groesch  
Kathleen G. Hayes  
Christina L. Henk  
Eric D. Ledbetter  
Gilbert Y. Liss  
Anthony L. Nguyen  
Amy E. Palmer  
Elizabeth C. Rzymkowski  
Tejas N. Shah  
Tiffany S. Smith  
William R. Teitelbaum  
Peter J. Walford  
Daniel W. Werly  
Kathy Zambrano

## CVLS Junior Board hosts 2nd annual Vino & Van Gogh

The CVLS Junior Board hosted its 2nd annual VINO & Van Gogh fundraiser on November 12th at KH Gallery. An amazing turnout of almost 200 people spent the night learning about CVLS' work, networking with other young professionals and enjoying a great night out on the town. Attendees enjoyed live music, wine and hors d'oeuvres while they socialized and enjoyed the gallery's display of fine art. Pictures of the event can be found at: [cvls.org/galleries/vino-van-gogh-2010](http://cvls.org/galleries/vino-van-gogh-2010)



# **CVLS Seminar Registration**

## **January - February**

### **January 17 "Witness Preparation for Trial" by Kathryn Kelly, Assistant U.S. Attorney**

Trials: It's all about the prep work. Like a master chef with his *mis en place* and a surgeon with her instruments all lined up just so, a good attorney goes to trial knowing the case inside and out. This includes making sure witnesses are well-prepared and ready for whatever opposing counsel throws at them. Let our panel of trial attorneys get you started.

### **January 27 "Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Training" Cook County Bar Association, 321 S. Plymouth Court, 2-5 P.M**

CVLS staff will train volunteers to represent homeowners in pre-trial mediation. Attendees will learn: Basic information about mortgages and the foreclosure process; why mediation is an important tool for conflict resolution and how the mediation process works; how to effectively represent your client in foreclosure mediation including information about relevant federal foreclosure relief programs, loss mitigation and negotiating a graceful exit. Volunteer attorneys with all levels of experience are welcome to attend. If you have questions or would like to register for the training, please contact Dan Santrella, 312.332.7521 or [dsantrella@cvls.org](mailto:dsantrella@cvls.org).

### **February 22 "Preparing 2010 Income Taxes" by Larry Krupp, C.P.A.**

Larry Krupp will interpret and explain the latest version of the tax code. He will discuss changes and concerns that can affect your business, your personal finances or those of your clients.

Please visit [www.cvls.org/seminars](http://www.cvls.org/seminars) to register.

*All seminars are held from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. at 100 North LaSalle, Suite 900.  
Archived seminars can be found at [www.illinoisprobono.org](http://www.illinoisprobono.org).*

## New additions to the CVLS family.



Simon Edward Reyes was born on October 13th at 7:34 PM to CVLS board member Sasha Reyes and her husband Earl. Simon is also the nephew of CVLS staff member Jessica Engle, who is very happy to have a new member of the family. Congratulations everyone



Landon Maclean Ronaldson was born on September 30, weighing in at 7 lbs 10 oz. CVLS volunteer Glenn Ronaldson and his wife Kristin Achterhof are extremely pleased to about the new addition. Landon's brother Rutger is still undecided about having another child in the household. We're sure he'll come around soon! Congratulations to the family!

## Congratulations your honor.

Andrea M. Schleifer was appointed by the Illinois Supreme Court to fill the 12th Subcircuit vacancy created by the recent resignation of Judge Mary K. Rochford. Andrea has also been a volunteer for CVLS for over 25 years! In addition to her fantastic volunteering work, she served on our board of directors between 2003 and 2009. Congratulations Your Honor!



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## Still time for last minute donations.

As you know, the work that Chicago Volunteer Legal Services does is critical to our community. Without the support of donors and volunteers like you, more than 17,000 families would have faced devastating legal challenges this year without anyone in their corner. We thank you for your continuing financial support this holiday season. All donations to CVLS are tax deductible and qualify under the Illinois Supreme Court's Pro Bono Rule. December 31st is right around the corner so don't delay. To donate, please visit [www.cvls.org/donate](http://www.cvls.org/donate). Thank you!

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