Insurance Insurance: Volunteer Compels Company to Honor Client’s Policy!

Swami was in a car accident while driving to work one day. He filed a police report and a claim with his insurance company. He fronted the money for his car repairs, as weeks passed without word from the insurer despite repeated phone calls. Finally visiting in person, Swami was told that his claim was denied and that the insurance company was suing him to have his policy declared null and void.

Desperate for help, Swami turned to CVLS. Fortunately volunteer Shauna Fleming, experienced in litigating personal injury cases, was willing to take his case.

The company claimed that Swami had misrepresented the number of people living with him when he applied for insurance. In response, Shauna proved that Swami, who is fluent in Nepalese and Hindi, spoke English with great difficulty. As a result, he’d gone through an insurance broker who had completed the application for him. The broker never asked Swami how many people were living with him. Shauna also argued that Swami was the only person who drove the car.

Another difficulty stemmed from the need for a Nepalese translator for the court hearings. However, with CVLS’s help, Shauna was able to make the necessary arrangements. “The support from the staff was clutch,” Shauna said of CVLS.

Thankfully, the efforts were a success! The court found that Swami’s policy was valid. With a win under her belt, Shauna made sure that the insurance company paid Swami $2,271.

For Swami, this whole ordeal was about more than just finances: it was a family matter. Swami could not have been happier with the result. “She helped me greatly ... I’m really happy. God bless CVLS!” Shauna was just as happy that she could help Swami. “He was fantastic. It’s great to see this all behind him,” she said.

Volunteer & Staff Work Together to Return Client’s Car

Theresa spent several years caring for an elderly neighbor. In gratitude, her neighbor gave Theresa her car. However, before Theresa could get to the Secretary of State’s office to transfer the title, the car was booted and impounded for unpaid parking tickets. Theresa tried for months to get the title transferred and retrieve the car, but she was blocked at every bureaucratic turn.

Eventually she ended up before Judge Prendergrast Rooney, who appointed CVLS under the Access to Justice Program. Volunteer Bibek Das agreed to take the case, and although eventually his other work commitments pulled him away, he set the ball in motion for the return of Theresa’s car.

CVLS was able to contact the elderly owner of the defunct dealership who sold the car and convince him to release the decades old lien. Staff then worked directly with the City of Chicago to release the car without any impound or storage fees. Theresa now has a car to get back and forth to her new job, and her elderly neighbor’s wishes have been fulfilled.
Modification Saves Client’s Long-Term Financial Plans

JJ and his wife, Roberta, struggling to get ahead, decided Roberta would return to nursing school, where she could eventually make considerably more income than she did as a Nursing Assistant.

However, without her income while she was in school, they began to fall behind on their mortgage. They cut back and made ends meet for months, but ended up in foreclosure just as Roberta was graduating and they were starting to get back on their feet.

They knew financial stability was now possible for them, but also understood they needed to clear this last hurdle. Upon entering the Circuit Court of Cook County Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program, they were relieved when volunteer attorney extraordinaire Rich Orman agreed to take their case.

Rich helped JJ and Roberta through the complex application process for a loan modification and, for once, everything went smoothly. Upon successful conclusion of a three-month trial plan, they were offered a permanent loan modification.

JJ and Roberta are now both fully employed and making their newly affordable mortgage payment.

CLIENTS SAY...

“It’s been a couple of years’ process and I always felt respected and supported, and I always knew that CVLS had my back.”
**R. Cantrell Jones**
*Access to Justice Program*

**Ann Peters**
*AILA Legal Clinic*

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**R. Cantrell Jones**, after volunteering for CVLS for a couple years, recently joined CVLS’ Board of Directors.

When this Dentons Managing Associate started representing CVLS clients, he dove in head first. He took his first case, an administrative review action against the Secretary of State with no knowledge of that area of law - and won. He immediately jumped into his second case against the Chicago Housing Authority. He lost this one, but believed in his client and his case so much that he has appealed the case and is awaiting a decision.

No matter the result, Cantrell’s clients can be sure they were represented persistently and vehemently by the very best.

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An active member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, CVLS volunteer **Ann Peters** regularly offers her expertise in immigration law for the low-income clients who visit CVLS’ AILA Legal Clinic. Her ongoing commitment to the AILA Legal Clinic often results in a challenging case load of intensive immigration related issues.

In her practice, Ann represents both detained and non-detained clients in the Chicago Immigration Court, as well as before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Asylum Office. CVLS and AILA are lucky to have such a devoted and experienced advocate for clients in this critically important area of law.

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**Patty Featured as Mentor with Commission on Professionalism**

To help new lawyers acclimate to the profession, the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism developed the Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program, a year-long program connecting young lawyers with more seasoned professionals.

Our own **Patty Nelson**, Director of the Access to Justice and Foreclosure Mediation programs, was recently featured with her mentee, Trey Maebry, discussing the tremendous mutual benefits of their experience.

Trey: “Patty met me where I was professionally and even emotionally at times, and she gave me confidence to pursue a long-standing dream of mine. She was patient and supportive; answered all of the questions I could think to ask ... and pointed me in the right direction when I went astray.”
July marks the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed into law on July 26, 1990. The landmark legislation has not only broken down physical and social barriers for persons with disabilities, but also shed light on the progress yet to be made in the struggle for inclusion.

In the past two and a half decades, the ADA, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, has made considerable progress toward equality in critical areas - employment, education, even architecture. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) expanded access for people with disabilities to education and training programs. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that students with disabilities be provided a “free appropriate public education.”

But there is more to be done for the 1 in 5 Americans living with disabilities. The most recent available data put the poverty rate for working-age people with disabilities at 34.5%, compared with 12.2% for those without disabilities. Workers with disabilities are twice as likely to experience material hardships, be it food insecurity or access to medical care or ability to pay rent.

Civil legal aid is just one of the many ways to combat these inequalities. According to the Center for Disability and Elder Law, more than eighty percent (80%) of all low-income individuals are unable to obtain legal representation. Their Adult Guardianship Help Desk saw 736 people in 2014, assisting 353 pro se litigants with the Adult Guardianship legal process.

The 334 Adult GAL and Adult Guardianship cases CVLS closed in 2014 provided free legal services to alleviate those material hardships, services our clients at or just above the poverty line could not have otherwise afforded. Our collaboration with the Illinois Disability Association (IDA) expands our ability to provide pro bono services to even more low-income persons with disabilities and their guardians through financial and staff support.

If you’re interested in volunteering with CVLS as a Guardian ad Litem for disabled adults, visit [http://www.cvls.org/volunteer](http://www.cvls.org/volunteer)

Learn more about our IDA Collaboration and donate at [http://ilpooledtrust.com/CVLS_Collaboration.html](http://ilpooledtrust.com/CVLS_Collaboration.html)

We’re looking for Race Judicata® 2015 Volunteers!

We’re looking for volunteers to help make Race Judicata® 2015 a success!

Our goal is to have a record number of participants at the race this year— more than 5,000 runners! This event would not be successful without our many volunteers helping to make sure everything goes well on race day. Pass along this information to any friends and colleagues who may be interested in volunteering!

NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED!

We will train you on Race Day. All volunteers will receive a goody bag, t-shirt, and wrist band for ages 21 and over. You’ll be able to pick up your swag at the race site at the volunteer tent.

START TIMES & SHIFT INFORMATION

We have four different volunteer start times. Time commitments range from as little as 1.5 hours, to as many as 3.5 hours.
Registration for Race Judicata® 2015 is OPEN!

Registration for Race Judicata® 2015 is now open! Join more than 5,000 runners and the rest of Chicago’s legal community for free food, drinks and live music!

In the process, you’ll be supporting CVLS’ mission to ensure that the law works for everyone, not just those who can afford it!

Join us in Grant Park on September 10 to make this year’s race the biggest and best yet.

IMPORTANT DATES:
- August 21: Last day of early bird registration
- August 28: Online Registration Closed
- August 29-30: Individual Packet Pickup
- September 9: Individual & Team Packet Pickup
- September 10: Race Day!!!

Take advantage of early registration!
Early Bird: $34 until 8/21
Regular: $39 from 8/22-9/4

Register online at cvls.org/judicata!

Purchase Your Tickets for Vino & Van Gogh!

Join the Junior Board of Chicago Volunteer Legal Services as they host the 6th Annual Vino & Van Gogh!

Vino & Van Gogh is a wonderful opportunity for all professionals to enjoy art, food, music and drinks while mingling with old friends and making new connections.

Every year local Chicago artists and students display their artwork for guests to enjoy and add to the alluring atmosphere customary for this event. A variety of media will be represented, including print art, paintings and sculpture.

Art will be available to purchase through the artists at reasonable prices with a percentage donated to CVLS, and all proceeds of Vino & Van Gogh go toward CVLS.

INTERESTED IN SPONSORING VINO & VAN GOGH?

This event is a great opportunity to gain exposure among key audiences in Chicago’s legal community, while supporting a worthy cause. For sponsorship information, visit cvls.org/vinovangogh and download the sponsorship form.

Friday, October 16, 6-10PM
National Hellenic Museum, 333 S. Halsted
Tickets $60 in advance, $75 at the door

Purchase tickets online at cvls.org/vinovangogh!
5K Run/Walk Benefiting Chicago Volunteer Legal Services

RACE JUDICATA®
CVLS.ORG/JUDICATA

Thursday 09.10.2015
Arvey Field
Grant Park
6:30 PM
Race Start

Register Online!
$34 Early
$39 After 8/21
Free Food & Drinks!

*Valid photo ID required for wristband

Chicago Volunteer Legal Services is a 501(c)(3) Charity

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Mayer • Brown

Bloomberg Law
Drinker Biddle
Dykema
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Sidley

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Bryce Downey & Lenkov

Baker & McKenzie

Bryan Cave LLP

Brinks Gilson & Lione

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Bryan Cave LLP
Upcoming CVLS Events

NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE:

Administration of Small, Uncontested, Decedent Estates In Cook County
CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM
Wednesday, July 22
- Presented by Steve Raminiak

CVLS volunteer and Board of Directors member Steve Raminiak, Esq. presents an introduction to decedents’ estate administration in the Circuit Court of Cook County. This seminar is meant to provide a solid foundation in the administration of small, uncontested, decedent estates. Steve will cover:
- Introduction and preliminary considerations
- Filing a will and opening a probate estate
- Designation of a personal fiduciary and the affidavit of heirship

CVLS is proud to present a GAL for Minors seminar series in conjunction with the Chicago School of Professional Psychology! Masters and doctoral students from the Chicago School will present on a variety of mental health topics as they relate to Guardian ad Litem cases.

GAL for Minors | GALs & School-Related Issues
CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM
Wednesday, October 7
- Presented by Brianne Dotts

Most GALs for Minors are not experts in education or school law, but virtually all GALs work with children who are in school (or may be entitled to school services or early intervention). Therefore, it is critical to know the basics of education law, how it can impact your representation as a GAL, and how to advocate for your child in common school-related issues.

New Volunteer Orientations
CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM
- Thursday, August 13
- Thursday, September 17

We’ll cover the skills required to be a successful volunteer attorney, as well as the issues that may come up during cases. Training is for new volunteers working with CVLS.

Please visit www.cvls.org/cle to register for a seminar!