New Volunteer Wins Significant Ruling

Ms. West and her family lost their subsidized housing voucher after a disabled son pleaded guilty and accepted probation for possession of a firearm. The Chicago Housing Authority claimed the guilty plea violated their rule against “violent criminal activity.” Ms. West fought the termination and filed an appeal in Chancery court.

Attorney Barbara Andersen of Andersen Law LLC happened to see Ms. West in court and wanted to help. After Judge Sophia Hall appointed CVLS under the Access to Justice Program, Barbara walked with Ms. West across the street to CVLS. There, Barbara signed on as a volunteer and took the case.

CVLS’ crackerjack Access to Justice staff provided Barbara with detailed training materials and worked closely with her to give her everything she needed to represent her first pro bono client.

The result was fabulous! Barbara won the case and got the housing voucher restored. In addition, the judge issued a written ruling limiting the CHA’s authority to define “violent criminal activity.” This decision will be persuasive for subsequent cases. Congratulations on an amazing outcome, Barbara – and welcome to CVLS!

CLE, CLE and More CLE!

We’re proud to be able to provide Continuing Legal Education for our volunteers on a regular basis – but there’s an especially robust slate of CLE seminar series coming up at CVLS right now! Visit cvls.org/cle for more information.

IDA COLLABORATION SERIES

CVLS is partnering with the Illinois Disability Association (IDA), a non-profit association, in offering a series of CLE seminars on guardianships, particularly as they pertain to persons with disabilities.

This series is part of a new collaboration between CVLS and the IDA to expand and enhance pro bono services to low-income persons with disabilities and their guardians. All seminars will be presented by IDA staff and experts in the field.

GAL FOR MINORS SERIES WITH THE CHICAGO SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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.

JUNIOR BOARD “CLE FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS” SERIES

The Junior Board of CVLS proudly presents a new CLE seminar series geared toward the young professional attorney. The series began with a panel hosted at Latham & Watkins, “Pro Bono for Young Professionals” – it was a success! Stay tuned for updates on this exciting project.
Staff Spotlight: Jessica Engle, Office Manager

The answer to most questions at CVLS is “Ask Jessica.”

If you’ve attended an event or a CLE seminar at CVLS, used our mailing address while handling cases, taken on an Adult GAL case, made a donation or used Legal Server, you have our Office Manager, Jessica Engle, to thank for everything running smoothly.

As everyone in our office knows, CVLS would likely grind to a halt without her; Jessica also ensures we never run out of office or kitchen supplies, schedules and manages registration for meetings and events, assists with accounting, handles all the mail and faxes and provides administrative support for everyone.

Perhaps even more impressively, she manages to keep up with the staggering amount of coffee our office collectively drinks.

“I’m a jack-of-all-trades,” Jessica says, in a masterpiece of understatement.

More than five years later, Jessica is still at CVLS because “the staff are all amazing people” and “the volunteers are awesome.” She says she likes feeling like she helps things run smoothly, and making sure the staff doesn’t have to worry about needing anything.

“These people are here because they want to make a difference,” she says. She points out that clients who come to CVLS would often have a difficult time finding an attorney to take on their cases, let alone afford that attorney.

“I feel like I’m working somewhere that really helps people.”

Facilitating nearly every aspect of CVLS helping people, Jessica’s behind-the-scenes work helps not only our organization, but the clients we serve.

In fact, she is such a staple around CVLS that 20-year veteran volunteer Elaine recently asked Jessica how long she’d been working here, and couldn’t believe the answer.

She said, “It feels like you’ve been here as long as I’ve been volunteering!”

Junior Board’s “Pro Bono for Young Professionals” a Success!

A panel of Junior Board members - Nikki Bhargava from Winston & Strawn, Nora Endzel of Endzel Law, LLC and Katie Walton from Goodsmith Gregg & Unruh - were joined by Public Interest Law Initiative’s Katie Pieper for a discussion on the ins and outs of Pro Bono representation as a young attorney, as well as various ways and benefits of incorporating pro bono into your practice.

Together, these ladies provided perspectives from pro bono in solo practice, small- to mid-size firms, large firms and nonprofits.

Nora shared her thoughts on the experience:

“When the Junior Board of CVLS decided to put on a series of CLE Seminars, I saw it as an opportunity to contribute to the organization as well as a way to get to know my fellow board members better. I initially volunteered to help organize the series of seminars and once we settled on a Pro Bono for Young Professionals as our first topic, I volunteered to be on the panel of that seminar as well. I have never organized a CLE seminar or presented so thankfully my fellow board members Nikki Bhargava and Katie Walton really carried the day!

CVLS provided the guidance and paperwork to secure CLE credit for the attendees and Latham & Watkins, LLP very generously hosted our seminar and provided lunch and drinks for all the attendees. Now that we’ve got one seminar under our belts I’m really excited for the future of this series! We have a strong and diverse group of attorneys on the Junior Board of CVLS and we have a lot to offer our fellow young professional attorneys as they navigate the early years of their legal careers. Hope to see you at the next one!”
CVLS Hosts Filipino Legal Aid Professionals

CVLS, in conjunction with World Chicago, was pleased to host a group of Filipino legal professionals interested in gaining a better understanding of U.S. government agencies, as well as public and private organizations involved in alternative diplomacy and dispute mediation.

These international visitors are doing amazing work starting up law clinics for low-income and vulnerable populations in the Philippines. They visited CVLS Services to learn more about our work serving low-income clients, and to discuss the benefits and challenges of relying on volunteers.

Executive Director Meg Benson talked about CVLS’ beginnings and growth, how we take on and manage cases, volunteer and client management, as well as advice for young legal professionals looking to start their own socially conscious practices.

Joining the session was CVLS volunteer Aurora Abella-Austriaco of Austriaco & Associates. Aurora, the first Asian-American President of the Chicago Bar Association, shared her experiences with CVLS and pro bono, stressing the importance and benefits of incorporating pro bono into legal practice.

The U.S. State Department’s International Visitor Leadership Program is designed for law students and legal professionals representing select institutions based in Mindanao in the Southern Philippines, providing them with political, academic, economic and social perspectives on conflict resolution, peace studies, and legal services in the United States.

Thank you to the State Department, World Chicago, and of course, the program’s participants for your interest in civil legal aid and for this opportunity to share what we do at CVLS!

Famous Friends of CVLS!

NORMA ON UNIVISION

This month on Univision Chicago, the family of our very own Norma Perez was featured on the “Desde Tu Cancha” (From Your Sports Court) segment!

The series highlights the sports traditions of area families. Members of Norma’s large and very close family host viewing parties for the Chicago Bears and Chicago Blackhawks games and take family selfies each time. Watch the segment here!

PAT MCGANN ON LETTERMAN

You saw him emcee our 50th Anniversary Gala in October … now see him perform stand-up on The Late Show with David Letterman! The very funny Pat McGann of Zanies Comedy Club returned to the Late Show this month.

CONGRATULATIONS!

CVLS congratulates all our volunteers who have been named SUPER LAWYERS and RISING STARS in 2015!
Ask CVLS’ Jewish United Fund Clinic chair, Sima Blue, how potential clients find out about the clinic catering to Chicago’s Jewish population, and her answer could be used to describe CVLS in general: clients are referred from social service agencies and the courts, but mostly, she says, “I ask them how they heard about our programs and they’ll all say, ‘oh, everybody knows.’”

Makes sense, given that Sima has worked with the clinic “forever.” With a Masters in Psychology, Sima developed the proposal for the Jewish United Fund’s Jewish Community Legal Services after 25 years at the American Jewish Congress. Under JUF, the program expanded significantly from 25 cases per year to more than 100.

Sima works with a varied group of volunteer attorneys. She’s worked with some for upwards of 20 years, while others are newer – like the JUF’s Jordan Silver, who recently helped an 89-year-old Russian immigrant reduce her monthly Social Security overpayment from $75 to $10. JUF volunteers see all kinds of cases come through the clinic. From a nearly year-long waiting list for divorce cases to a recent uptick in power of attorney cases and everything in between, running a clinic of this size can be challenging, but also very rewarding.

“You really need to have an agency like CVLS that is there to provide all the assistance and resources, that has a reputation in the court and offers malpractice and CLE,” Sima says. “Without CVLS, I don’t know how we could do it.”

So why does she do it? Why does she encourage lawyers to do pro bono? “[Attorneys] are so used to talking to corporate people and doing things that are at a distance from humanity,” she says. “Here, when they get a chance to talk to a person, they can be the make-or-break person in the client’s life. They can have a major effect on whether this person falls through the cracks or is able to continue on. They don’t get that in the corporate realm.”

In one recent JUF Clinic case, volunteer attorney Lisa Green helped Joe challenge the Office of the Public Guardian’s guardianship over him.

Joe, who is mentally ill but high functioning, was in danger of losing his home when he neglected to pay his property taxes.

After hearing testimony that he was a hoarder and had made other poor financial decisions, the court adjudicated him disabled and appointed the Office of Public Guardian as his guardian. Joe wanted to fight that decision.

Lisa spent months getting to know Joe and working with him. She helped him engage a cleaning crew for his home and arrange for a new medical evaluation.

She also helped him clarify what he needed and wanted. In one of the most challenging aspects of the case, Lisa convinced Joe to weigh complete autonomy against his safety and helped him find a supported living facility that provided mental and physical treatment.

“He had spent a lot of time not having the help he needed,” Lisa says. “In trading away some freedom, he gained a world of help.”

Joe is safe and supported now. Lisa says that what was most important to him was the opportunity to tell his story in court.

A medical malpractice attorney, Lisa was not very familiar with guardianship law, so this case let her build on her legal skills while helping someone in need.

“It feels really good to do this kind of work,” she says, “to take what I know and help someone.”

Clinic chair Sima Blue said that Lisa “did an amazing job on a type of case you really don’t see every day.” That’s dedication!
TEAM TENTS
Race Judicata® 2015

Reserve a team tent today for your company or running team and you’ll have the perfect place to meet, hang out, eat, and socialize while enjoying all the race festivities.

Bypass the packet pick-up upon arrival at the race site on Thursday, September 10th, your tent will be set-up and stocked with all your race necessities—including goody bags, t-shirts and race numbers.

**Submit your form by March 27 and receive a $50 discount!**
(Discount applied on invoice) Space is limited. All tent rentals are on a first-come-first-served basis. Tent rental deadline is **August 28**.

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You may fax your form with a credit card number to 312.332.1460. Please make checks payable to **CVLS** and mail to: Chicago Volunteer Legal Services (CVLS), 33 North Dearborn St., Suite 400, Chicago, Illinois 60602

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### Tent Size

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In order to better serve you please let us know how many tables and chairs you will need.
(Small tent limit: 2 tables and 8 chairs; Large tent limit: 3 tables 12 chairs)

### Tables

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### Chairs

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In addition to tables and chairs, please contact me about the following special requests:

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Expiration Date

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SPONSORSHIP FORM

2015
Questions? 312.332.3319 or mnp@cvls.org

My company would like to sponsor Race Judicata® 2015 at the following sponsorship level:

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*Sponsor form must be submitted by March 20 to receive early bird discount.

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*Sponsorship required for discounted tent rental price. *Rental form must be submitted by March 27 to receive $50 discount.

TOTAL:

SPONSORSHIP FORMS DUE BY MAY 29 TO RECEIVE FULL BENEFITS.
TENT RENTAL FORMS DUE BY AUGUST 29.

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SIGNATURE: __________________________ DATE: __________

Make checks payable to CHICAGO VOLUNTEER LEGAL SERVICES. Submit form and payment to CHICAGO VOLUNTEER LEGAL SERVICES, 33 North Dearborn St., Suite 400, Chicago, IL 60602 Fax to 312-332-1460 or mail to mnp@cvls.org.
Upcoming CVLS Events

CVLS is proud to partner with the Illinois Disability Association (IDA) in offering a series of CLE seminars on guardianships, particularly as they pertain to persons with disabilities. This series is part of a new collaboration between CVLS and the IDA to expand and enhance pro bono services to low-income persons with disabilities and their guardians.

IDA | Special Needs Trusts
120 S. LaSalle St. 7th Floor
12:15 PM
Wednesday, March 18
- Presented by Eileen Durkin, Illinois Disability Association

You’ve heard of special needs trusts, but why are they so great? When it is appropriate to create a special needs trust? What types of disbursements can or cannot be made from the trust?

IDA | Power of Attorney
120 S. LaSalle St. 7th Floor
12:15 PM
Wednesday, April 22
- Presented by Kerry Peck, Illinois Disability Association

Powers of attorney began as a simple instrument within a client’s estate plan. However, it has become an extremely powerful tool in late-in-life-estate planning, financial management during disability, and health care decision-making. We’ll discuss how and when to use this tool.

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 | Parties with Bipolar Disorder
CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM
Wednesday, March 25
- Presented by Sunshine Collins, The Chicago School

What you need to know about working with parties with Bipolar Disorder.

GAL for Minors | Psychotropic Medication
CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM
Wednesday, April 22
- Presented by Sunshine Collins, The Chicago School

Use of psychotropic medication for children and the role of the GAL.

New Volunteer Orientations
CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM
- Thursday, March 12
- Thursday, April 9

We’ll cover the skills required to be a successful GAL for a minor as well as the issues that may come up during the case. Training is for new GALs working with CVLS.

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