

Our Child Rep Program is taking off - and we're looking for volunteers!

In 2014, the CVLS Child Representative (Child Rep) Program was created to address the ever-growing need to represent the child's best interests in contested parentage and divorce cases.

Since then, the program has doubled its capacity to take cases.

Thanks to the contributions of Staff Attorney **Rob Zielinski** and Child Rep Program Coordinator **Miriam Araya**, the direction and management of Deputy Director and Director of Family Law **Phil Mohr**, and the invaluable support of Judges Grace Dickler and Pamela Loza, the Child Rep Program is taking off.

"It's going to be a staple for CVLS," Rob says.

Judges appoint CVLS by order in cases where parties are pro se and meet CVLS's income guidelines. Upon receipt of the Court's order, CVLS performs a preliminary investigation of the parties to provide volunteers with an appropriate starting point.

The volunteers then meet with the child/ren, investigate the facts of the case, and encourage settlement and the use of alternative forms of dispute resolution.

To that end, we're seeking volunteers interested in joining the Child Rep Program!

Attorneys who participate in the Child Rep

Program have a unique and rewarding opportunity to represent the best interests of children involved in often contentious litigation.

It's a truly hands-on role involving multifaceted courtroom experience, that provides an interesting perspective within Family Law & Domestic Relations matters.

As an added incentive, CVLS partners with the Court to offer trained volunteers a path to placement on the court's Domestic Relations Division Child Representative List.

If you're interested in becoming a Child Representative, please contact Program Coordinator Miriam Araya at maraya@cvls.org for more information about the program and its upcoming training sessions.

We're encouraging attorneys of all specialties to get involved with the Child Rep Program; given the broad scope of the training, this is a chance to gain significant exposure to a new area of law, while advocating for society's most vulnerable citizens!

"It's going to be a staple for CVLS."

- Child Rep Fellow Rob Zielinski



Our GAL for Minors CLE Series is Back!

CVLS is pleased to bring back our CLE partnership with **The Chicago School of Professional Psychology**, for a series of six seminars.

Held on the third Thursday of each month through July at CVLS, these seminars will feature presentations from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology on a range of issues.

While the series is geared toward GAL for Minors, all volunteers are welcome. The topics are relevant and helpful for many other specialty areas, especially Adult GAL and Child Rep.

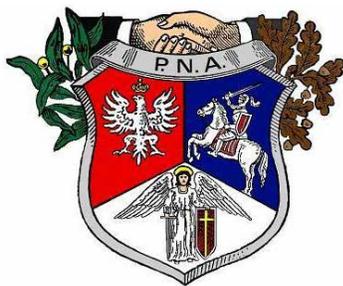
Join us for the April 21st seminar, "Interviewing Children," and stay tuned for four more seminars! Visit cvls.org/livecle for more info.



TheChicagoSchool[®]
of Professional Psychology

"I will never forget what she did for me."

A heartfelt thank-you from an Amicus Poloniae Legal Clinic client



We received an incredible thank you letter from an **Amicus Poloniae** client, praising the great job her volunteer attorney, **Dawn Bode**, did to help her win \$12,000 in restitution after she was swindled. We'll let her tell you about her case:

"I am writing to let you know about, and to thank, one of the attorneys from the Amicus Poloniae Legal Clinic that helped my family and I when we were victims of fraud, Dawn Bode. I came to the clinic in April 2012 to get legal assistance, and to try to understand what had happened to a personal injury lawsuit I thought had been filed on my behalf. Prior to going to Amicus Poloniae, I had gone to other government agencies including the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, the Illinois Attorney General's Office, and the F.B.I. After each meeting, I was told that nothing could be done.

"I met with attorney Bode and explained that I had met another Polish woman, Dorota, who I met through a contractor. Dorota had learned that my family and I had been injured while on vacation, and said that she worked with an attorney who would handle my case. She gave me a contract for attorney services, which already had a signature, so I signed and got a copy. In order to have my case proceed, I had to give a retainer of \$2,000, which I did. After that Dorota would call me asking for more money to pay the attorney's fees, and said it should be paid in cash. I did it, and paid in total about \$14,000. Finally, I got suspicious and in-

sisted that I speak to the attorney, and know where the case was at. Dorota then gave me a court document with a file stamp and judge's signature which said I was awarded a million dollars. Then I could not get ahold of her or the lawyer.

"Dawn Bode looked through all of my documents, and spoke to me for a long time. She then looked into who the lawyer was, but saw on a state website that the lawyer on the contract did not exist. Then she went to the Clerk of the Court's Office, and saw that the case number listed on the court document did not exist. Also, the judge's signature, Clerk of the Court file stamp, and other markings were determined to be fake. Ms. Bode also went to another courthouse to get documents to support my case. After meeting several times, she went with me to the Glenview Police Department to discuss the case with them. After their investigation, Dorota was arrested, and indicted on several felony charges.

"The defendant knew how to use the system to try to wear me down or get me to give up, but I did not. It took several years for the case to finish, but in the end, I was awarded \$12,000 in restitution (which I've been fully paid), and the defendant pled guilty to a felony, and is serving two years' probation. During the time the case was in court, attorney Bode called routinely to check on the status of the case, attended court several times with me, and continued to provide moral support. She did not charge me anything for her work. I learned that I was not the first victim of Dorota Kozlowski. I am glad for my outcome, and it would not have been possible with the help and support of the Amicus Poloniae Clinic, and volunteer Dawn Bode.

"I will never forget what she did for me."

Clients Say ...

"You all are caring. It is more than all of the legal things. It's more than just the legal aspect it's about the mental aspect of caring."

"Everyone from reception desk, my attorney and her support staff was always accessible, thorough in helping me understand my case and proceedings, taking initiative in keeping me informed. Always with a caring tone, generous with their time. I am very thankful for CVLS."

Crazy Credit Card Case Closed!

Charlie thought nothing of it when he permitted his son to use his credit card for minor business expenses. But before he knew it, Charlie was being sued by his credit card company for more than \$17,000 because of the charges his son had made without Charlie's knowledge.

While Charlie was visiting his native Taiwan, a collector called and spoke to Charlie's wife, demanding payment and threatening to file a suit.

At first, Charlie tried to pay down the debt in small installments, but the credit card company wanted large lump sums. Charlie, who is retired, simply could not afford such a huge payment on his small monthly income.

When an assignee of the credit card company filed suit, Charlie understood he had a serious legal issue, but didn't know how to handle it.

So Charlie turned to CVLS, with the intention of negotiating a more reasonable payment plan. Volunteer **Leo Feldman** did him one better - he settled the case!

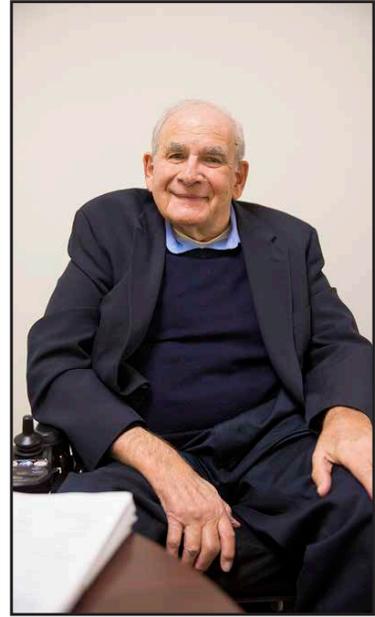
When the credit card company alleged that Charlie was responsible for the debt because he was the owner of the card, Leo showed they couldn't prove how or when Charlie became the owner.

He moved to strike the plaintiff's complaint, and offered to settle for significantly less than the amount of the debt Charlie's son had accrued.

The credit card company wasn't happy; they asked for a reason behind the lower number, and Leo proved Charlie's issue of standing and poor cash flow with a tax return.

Leo's tenacity led to a huge win for Charlie. Not only was the case disposed of, but the credit card company is prevented from ever suing Charlie again for the debt.

When the case was closed, Charlie was so grateful for Leo's help, he made a donation to CVLS!



New Seminar (and Free Pizza!) Alert: Debt Issues Facing Legal Aid Clients, June 28

Tuesday, June 28 at 12:15pm, CVLS Offices

While representing low-income clients, pro bono and legal aid attorneys often discover that debt issues impact other areas of their lives and cases. "Debt Issues Facing Legal Aid Clients" will provide a foundation for consumer law attorneys or for any attorney interested in taking on a consumer law matter.

Attorneys **David J. Philipps**, **Mary E. Philipps**, and **Angie K. Robertson** of consumer law firm Philipps & Philipps, LTD will discuss debt

issues in the context of legal aid.

They will also provide lunch, so come hungry for both pizza and knowledge about debt collection and credit reporting!

This seminar will cover the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, as well as litigating on behalf of consumers who have been defrauded, subject to illegal collection activity, or improper credit reporting.

**To register for this seminar, visit
CVLS.ORG/LIVECLE**

Upcoming CVLS Events

Eviction Series | Part Two: Eviction Practice

Wednesday, May 11
CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM

We will cover the mechanics: The requirements for a valid termination notice, filing an eviction case, discovery and motion practice issues, conducting a trial, and how to enforce an order of possession.

Eviction Series | Part Three: Issues in Subsidized Housing

Wednesday, June 8
CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM

We will cover the three main types of HUD subsidies: Public Housing, Section 8 Voucher, and Section 8 Project-Based Programs. We will also briefly cover contesting a voucher termination through an administrative hearing/ judicial review action.

GAL for Minors | Interviewing Children

Thursday, April 20
CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM
- Presented by The Chicago School of Professional Psychology

CVLS is pleased to bring back our CLE partnership with The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, for a series of six seminars held on the third Thursday of each month through July at CVLS.

GAL for Minors | Working with Mental Health Professionals

Thursday, May 19
CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM
- Presented by The Chicago School of Professional Psychology

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Debt Issues Facing Legal Aid Clients

Tuesday, June 28
CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM
- Presented by Philipps & Philipps, LTD

While representing low-income clients, pro bono and legal aid attorneys often discover that debt issues impact other areas of their lives and cases. "Debt Issues Facing Legal Aid Clients" will provide a foundation for consumer law attorneys or for any attorney interested in taking on a consumer law matter.

New Volunteer Orientations

CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM
- Thursday, May 12
- Thursday, June 9

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!

**CHICAGO
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33 North Dearborn Street, Suite 400
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