Chicago Volunteer Legal Services

Because equal access to justice is everyone’s fight.

Upcoming Events

October 24 - GAL for Minors Training; 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

November 1 - New Volunteer Orientation; 12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

November 3 - Vino + Van Gogh; 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Germania Place, 108 W Germania PI
www.cvls.org/vinovangogh

November 9 - Seminar: Asylum Law Demystified; 12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

November 11 - Seminar: DACA and Post-DACA Immigration Issues;
HANA Center, 2300 N California Ave.

November 16 - GAL for Adults Training; 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

November 29 - Seminar: PCAP Training; 12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

COLORING BUREAUCRACY

PILI Fellow Prevents Homelessness

CVLS relies heavily on law students and fellows throughout the year, but often their time at CVLS is short and they can’t see cases through to the end. But once in a while, the stars align and a graduate fellow accomplishes something great. This is the story of Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI) Fellow, Rob Crawford, and his client, Maria.

Maria is a native Spanish speaker and a Lawful Permanent Resident with a housing subsidy through the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). In June 2016, the CHA told Maria they were terminating her subsidy because she “did not supply evidence of her citizenship or eligible immigration status.” The CHA was actually more concerned about missing income information, but because of the way their letter was worded, Maria thought she was being terminated on the basis of her immigration status.

On her own, Maria brought documentation to the CHA and requested a hearing. She was told she did not need a hearing and, in October 2016, the CHA terminated her voucher for failing to request a hearing on time. Maria filed for review and CVLS accepted the case to negotiate a settlement. We assigned the case to Rob Crawford under the supervision of Staff Attorney Martin Cozzola.

Together, Maria’s legal team spoke with her at length about her case. Rob then drafted a settlement letter to CHA demanding full reinstatement. His letter focused on the CHA’s poorly written administrative plan, Maria’s confusion concerning her termination, and the CHA’s failure to give her a hearing. After reviewing Rob’s letter, the CHA agreed to reinstate Maria and pay retroactive payments to her landlord! Maria’s housing situation is now stable thanks to Rob and his PILI Fellowship with CVLS.

“Rob did a fantastic job on this case. Thanks to him, Maria got the result that she both needed and deserved.”

-Martin Cozzola, CVLS Staff Attorney
SIMPLE CASE TURNS COMPLEX
CVLS Volunteer Rises to the Challenge

Lekisha came to CVLS’ Jane Addams Clinic because her landlord refused to return a security deposit. She had signed a standard lease, given a deposit of $1,100, and took meticulous care of her apartment with pictures to prove it. Lekisha had been out of her apartment for 30 days when she asked her landlord to return the security deposit. Her landlord refused and that’s when Lekisha contacted CVLS. Long-time volunteer and Clinic Chair, Jennifer Weed, was assigned to her case.

“Upon hearing her story, I thought this would involve a simple demand letter, the threat of legal action, and all would be resolved. I was so wrong.”

Jennifer thought this case would be resolved through a simple demand letter. In the middle of drafting the demand letter, however, Lekisha’s ex-landlord filed for bankruptcy. This began an almost year-long process to recover her security deposit. Equipped with only a basic understanding of bankruptcy and no experience in the area, Jennifer did her own research and reached out to CVLS for help. Under the supervision of CVLS Supervising Attorney Matthew Hulstein, Jennifer was able to force the Federal Court to recognize Lekisha’s security deposit as a priority claim. This was huge because it meant that her claim could not be dismissed and had to be paid in full.

On August 8, 2017, Lekisha received a check for the full amount of her security deposit. She sent Jennifer a kind note thanking her for all of her hard work. When asked about the case, Jennifer said, “Upon hearing her story, I thought this would involve a simple demand letter, the threat of legal action, and all would be resolved. I was so wrong. Lekisha’s note was an awesome reminder that the work we do really matters.”
CVLS LEADER NAMED FORTY UNDER 40
Board Member Receives Prestigious Honor

Motherway & Napleton injury attorney and CVLS board member Brion Doherty has been honored as one of the “Forty Under 40” attorneys by the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin.

Success at any age is impressive. But to achieve it at an early age is even more of a feat. Each honoree selected has done exactly that. For the last 17 years, the Forty Under 40 Committee sifts through over 1,300 nomination applications to select forty of the most talented young attorneys practicing in Illinois.

In addition to this award, Brion has been named a “Rising Star” by Super Lawyers every year from 2010 to 2016. He was also named as an “Emerging Lawyer” in 2015 and 2016 by Leading Lawyers Magazine.
Chicago Comes out to Make It a Record Breaking Year

On September 15, Chicago came together to make Race Judicata® 2017 a huge success. Almost 5,400 registered participants, 250 law firms and legal organizations, and hundreds more partygoers showed their support for Chicago Volunteer Legal Services and continued this city’s long history of civic philanthropy through volunteerism. This event perfectly spotlighted the best this city has to offer and we look forward to another 24 years of celebrating pro bono with all of you.

For everyone that showed up to race or volunteer, for everyone who came out to support their fellow coworkers or friends, CVLS thanks you. You made the event more than just a 5K run. You made it the blowout summer closeout for Chicago’s legal community! Over $220,000 was raised to support CVLS’ mission to coordinate, support and promote the voluntary pro bono legal representation of the Chicago area’s poor and working poor. We’d also like to thank all of our sponsors who year after year show their commitment to pro bono and furthering CVLS’ work.

TEAM RESULTS

Largest Team Baker & McKenzie

Men
Division 1 Baker & McKenzie
Division 2 Dykema
Division 3 Bloomberg Law
Division 4 Lawyers’ Assistance Program

Women
Division 1 Perkins Coie
Division 2 Ropes & Gray
Division 3 Bloomberg Law
Division 4 Office of the Attorney General of the State of Illinois

Co-Ed
Division 1 Mayer Brown
Division 2 McAndrews Held & Malloy
Division 3 Bloomberg Law
Division 4 Lawyers’ Assistance Program

RESULTS

Men
FASTEST LAWYER Josh Bashioum 17:39
OVERALL Zach Wawrzyniakowski 16:53
Chris Brunnquell 17:03
Tom Ferguson 17:16
UNDER 20 Ryan Treanor 17:42
Kainoa Lugo Inciong 23:04
Andrew Nelson 24:12
20 THRU 29 Ryan Gooding 17:59
Christopher Dempsey 18:26
Nick Vasdekas 18:29
30 THRU 39 Roger Billhardt 17:44
Patrick Lambe 17:46
Eric Eckerman 17:47
40 THRU 49 Scott Magnum 17:46
Joshua Rich 18:02
Ken Kansa 18:51
50 THRU 59 Dan Marks 19:18
Eric Berlin 19:39
Tony Ketchmark 20:03
60 THRU 69 Richard Stevens 20:39
William Hrabak 23:44
Paul Berghoff 26:01
70 AND OVER Peter Miller 29:09
Dick McGough 31:00
Lyndon Molzahn 31:08

Women
FASTEST LAWYER Sarah David 18:36
OVERALL Fiona Carlon 19:25
Mallory Abel 19:34
Mia Eisenhandler 20:14
UNDER 20 Emma Weissbeck 21:52
Reese Crowley 24:12
Ella Hwang 24:13
20 THRU 29 Beth McGreal 20:42
Stacy Osmond 21:27
Katherine Dennis 21:56
30 THRU 39 Crystal Almaguer 20:41
Annie Monjar 20:48
Jenna Tipsord 20:59
40 THRU 49 Jillian Delsignore 22:56
Anna Juan Bustos 23:30
Stacey Duncan 24:11
50 THRU 59 Cynthia Hendzel 24:04
Colleen Konicek 24:05
Sari Pettinger 25:34
60 THRU 69 Maureen Fitman 21:59
Sandy Wall 25:49
Crystal Bush 28:48
70 AND OVER Sharon Eiseman 44:35
CVLS is lucky to have volunteers from all walks of life and with all levels of experience. One such volunteer is Yudith, a high school freshman who volunteers for us through Cristo Rey Jesuit High School’s Corporate Work Study Program (CWSP). Cristo Rey “provid[es] a Catholic, college preparatory education and professional work experience to students from Spanish speaking families with limited financial means.” Cristo Rey is able to do this because their students, like Yudith, spend five full days a month working at local firms and offices in entry-level positions that fund close to 70% of their education costs. While Yudith is at CVLS’s main office, she is able to aid staff and volunteers with a variety of tasks ranging from administrative errands to Spanish language translation and interpretation.

Recently, Yudith was of great assistance to our Adult GAL Program. One of the families in the program is caring for a loved one with severe disabilities, and during the site visit, our volunteer GAL found that the family is having a bug issue in their home. Yudith was tasked with calling around to various extermination services, explaining the situation, and asking whether or not the exterminators would provide free or low-cost services to this family. After diligent effort and follow-up, Yudith was successful in obtaining free services for the family! We are proud of Yudith for accomplishing an important task for one of our families!

On occasion, CVLS is called upon to assist a family who has worked with the organization previously. This provides an opportunity to see the impact of CVLS’ work over a long period of time while helping a family face their current challenge. Candace is a 19 year-old young woman who has been diagnosed with autism and epilepsy. Candace relies heavily on the attention and assistance of her mother, Ronda, to meet her day-to-day needs. Ronda also cares for Candace’s older brother DeShawn. Several years ago CVLS was appointed GAL when Ronda filed and successfully obtained guardianship of DeShawn. CVLS was again appointed as GAL when Ronda asked to become Candace’s guardian, and Seyfarth Shaw Attorney, Kimberly Schwegel, took the case.

Through her investigation, Kimberly found Ronda to be an excellent caretaker. “Ronda might be the most amazing and loving person I’ve ever met.” Ronda ensures that Candace attends school during the week, enabling Candace to learn important academic, social, and daily living skills. Kimberly was able to observe the special relationship shared by Candace and Ronda, and she was able to visit Ronda’s home and observe the strong family support system surrounding mother and daughter. With the help of Kimberly’s thorough investigation and positive recommendation, the court appointed Ronda as Candace’s guardian at the end of June. Kimberly and CVLS were able to help this mother care for not only one but two of her children!
On October 14, CVLS Junior Board member Janice Dantes will be inducted into the Chicago Filipino Asian American Hall of Fame!

The annual Chicago Filipino Asian American Hall of Fame is a very prestigious award in the Filipino American community of Chicago and the Midwest. It recognizes outstanding individuals for demonstrating uncommon, innovative, and civic responsibility, and who have excelled and achieved so much for the encouragement and betterment of the Filipino American community.

In addition to being a very active member of Chicago's Filipino Asian American legal aid world, Janice is a member of CVLS' Junior Board of Directors and organizes periodic CLE seminars for the legal aid community. Janice volunteered with CVLS through the Justice Entrepreneurs Project and has been a familiar face ever since. Starting in 2014, Janice has helped our low-income clients in the areas of Family Law and Adult Guardianship. Without a doubt, she has earned this honor.

We're proud of you, Janice!

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**PUNISHING POVERTY**

**PILI Fellow Setstle a Debt**

John was able to pay his debts, until he was in a car accident in 2012. He was found at fault and ended up owing $21,000 to the other driver’s insurance company. When he couldn’t pay the judgment, his license was suspended, which seriously limited his employment options.

John recently got an offer for a new job as a security guard, but without his license, he couldn’t drive to work. He also couldn’t afford to pay an attorney to represent him. So CVLS did. Heidi Hockberger, a PILI Fellow from Kirkland & Ellis, handled John’s Chapter 7 bankruptcy. Once the crippling debt was discharged, she sent proof to the Secretary of State, and John’s license was immediately reinstated.

Thanks to Heidi’s hard work, John now has a good paying job and is out of debt.

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**NEW BLOOD**

CVLS Welcomes Our New Child Rep Coordinator

CVLS would like to introduce our new Child Representative Coordinator, Marlyse Vieira! Marlyse graduated from Princeton University this June with a degree in Politics and a minor in Spanish. She joins CVLS as part of the Princeton AlumniCorps P55 Fellowship Program, which facilitates the placement of recent graduates in civic service positions. Marlyse plans to attend law school after her time at CVLS, with hopes of pursuing a career in public interest law.

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Chicago Volunteer Legal Services