



Chicago Volunteer Legal Services

Because equal access to justice is everyone's fight.

Upcoming Events

February 13 - Seminar: Child Rep Training; CVLS Office 1:30 pm

February 18 - Seminar: Preparing 2019 Income Taxes; CVLS Office 12:15 pm

February 20 - Seminar: Real Estate Closings; CVLS Office 12:15 pm

March 4 - Seminar: Child Rep Training; CVLS Office 1:30 pm

March 5 - Seminar: How to Represent a Detained Immigration Client in a Bond Hearing; CVLS Office 12:15 pm

March 11 - New Volunteer Orientation; CVLS Office 12:15 pm



Sandy Morris of Valentine Austriaco & Bueschel

FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE

Serving a Family Across Generations

When Felicia filed for divorce after a ten-year separation from her husband, she couldn't afford to make payments to her attorney and the case languished. Already reeling from years of emotional turmoil, this stalemate increased her stress and she didn't know what to do. But her mom had an idea.

A few years ago, Felicia's mom had adopted a grandson with the pro bono help of CVLS volunteer attorney, Sandy Morris of Valentine Austriaco & Bueschel. Delighted by Sandy's help, she suggested that Felicia reach out to Sandy through CVLS. Good-hearted Sandy stepped in and quickly got that

pokey divorce moving, despite the husband's best efforts. Although he dodged service, refused to respond and didn't cooperate, Sandy's persistence got the case resolved. The final court hearing turned into a joyful reunion as Sandy and Felicia's mother connected and caught up.

Proof that CVLS, in business since 1964, provides pro-bono assistance across the generations.

SAVE MONEY ON 2020 SPONSORSHIPS

2020 sponsorship packages are now available. Save up to 10% on your sponsorship fees when you bundle multiple events together. Why pay full price? Support Chicago Pro Bono while saving a little cash at the same time by visiting cvls.org/sponsor

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP

Schiff
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New FREE CLE seminars available online!

Allocation Judgments

Laura N. Ashmore, Davis Friedman
<https://bit.ly/2RmdAQc>

Conflicts: Not Just During a Family Thanksgiving

Mary Robinson
<https://bit.ly/2RNznPX>

How to Represent a Detained Immigration Client in a Bond Hearing

Mario Godoy, Godoy Law Office
*Diana Rashid, National Immigrant Justice
Center*
<https://bit.ly/2O9wEzI>

Nuts and Bolts of Decedent's Estates

*Meghan Terry Davis, Hoogendoorn &
Talbot*
<https://bit.ly/2RDmQhC>

More available at
www.cvls.org/onlinecle

BACK IN THE CLASSROOM

CVLS Volunteer Represents,
Educates Client in Family
Law Case

In their work, lawyers take on a variety of roles as advocate, counselor, and even mediator. In a recent parentage case, volunteer attorney Maria Burnett took on the unexpected role of teacher.

Jeremy has a five-year-old son. When he was denied contact with his child by the other parent, Jeremy formally filed for parenting time. The child's mother promptly hired an attorney and counter-filed for child support. That's when the case became too complicated for Jeremy to handle alone.

Maria met with Jeremy during the CVLS weekend clinic at Old St Mary's Catholic Church. After listening to his legal problems, Maria agreed to take on Jeremy's case herself.

At the outset, the parties both failed at following court instructions and neglected the court-ordered parenting time schedule. Maria worked with the adverse attorney and the Child Representative to establish a comprehensive agreed summer schedule...which the mother unilaterally ignored.

Maria made sure to file additional pleadings to ensure the other parent's compliance. In doing so, she secured additional, make-up parenting time for Jeremy. Maria even went so far as to find a parenting coordinator who has offered to work with the parties for the next year.

Throughout the case, Maria educated her client on the law and stressed to both parties the need to communicate and follow court orders. She hopes the parents can keep her teachings in mind as they parent their child years past the resolution of this case.

GUARDIANSHIP PLANNING FOR UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS CLINIC

Volunteer Attorneys and
Interpreters Needed!



Thursday, April 23
Noon to 3 PM

Hanover Park Branch Library
1266 Irving Park Road
Hanover Park, IL 60133

Volunteers are needed to advise families on the forms of guardianship available in Illinois and, in appropriate cases, assist families in completing short-term guardianship forms on site. The goal of this clinic is to provide undocumented parents with a legal safety plan for their children in the event of the parents' detention or deportation.

This is a limited scope pro bono opportunity that does not require any representation of clients after the clinic date. Training for this opportunity is via an online video. CVLS staff will be on site to provide supervision and guidance.

Email Rebekah Rashidfarokhi if you would like to register for this clinic. Please indicate if you speak Spanish or if you will need an interpreter. If you are not a registered CVLS volunteer, please also provide your phone number, address, ARDC number, and date of admission to the Illinois bar in your email. For additional information please email Rebekah at rebekah@cvls.org.

FAMILY FEUD

Unraveling a Tangled,
Post-Foreclosure Surplus



James Trail, Bernstein Law Firm, LLC

Sothsri and her siblings purchased an investment property just a few years before the 2008 financial crisis. Although each sibling started with an equal fraction, over the years they transferred their interests back and forth with quit-claim deeds—some recorded, some not—and kept refinancing the loan. The result was that title was a mess.

When the property was lost to foreclosure, the sale left a \$50,000 surplus. One of the siblings petitioned for the funds, but the hopelessly tangled title and the family's utter confusion caused the judge to appoint CVLS through its Access to Justice Program.

CVLS placed this puzzle of a case with James Trail of Bernstein Law Firm, LLC. He carefully decluttered the title history, crafted an agreed order that preserved each of the sibling's equitable and respective shares and presented the petition to the Court, leading the siblings through sworn testimonies in court. Thanks to James' patience and hard work, this messy case was resolved. Sothsri and each her siblings received their correct share of the surplus.

LEGAL SERVICES ON SPEED DIAL

Quick Call to CVLS Saves Client \$42,000

Finding a good lawyer is daunting. Sure, you can look up attorneys online and check their reviews. People might tell you to ask for referrals from your family, friends, or even your local bar association. But it's hard to be sure that you're getting the right attorney for you. One positive experience can change all of that. Find a good attorney or law firm, and you can worry a little less when you have a future legal problem.

Isaac, a military veteran, was a first-time CVLS client in 2017. Back then, he asked for help adopting his granddaughter. Staff Attorney Rob Zielinski took Isaac's case and successfully represented him throughout the adoption process.

In the three years since, Isaac has called Rob from time to time with legal questions. These phone calls include welcome updates about how well Isaac's granddaughter is doing in school and how much she is enjoying her extracurricular activities.

At the end of last year, Isaac called CVLS with a more worried tone. Isaac said a bank had incorrectly filed a lawsuit against him, alleging that he owed \$42,000. Rob told Isaac of CVLS' Debt Collection and Credit Protection Clinic and helped him make an appointment that same day.



*Bryan P. Thompson,
Chicago Consumer Law Center, P.C.*

Bryan P. Thompson, a volunteer at the clinic, met with Isaac a few nights later and agreed to represent him. Bryan contacted the adverse attorney and explained that they had filed suit against the wrong person. Within just a few weeks, the opposing side agreed to dismiss the case.

One phone call to CVLS helped Isaac avoid a serious legal problem and move on with his life. Isaac now has a response whenever someone asks him if he knows a good lawyer:

"I have a place you should call."



*James Marek Figueiredo,
Born January 2nd, 8lbs 8oz, 21.5"*

NEW FACE FOR THE NEW YEAR

Congratulations to CVLS board member, Michelle Marek Figueiredo and her husband on their new baby boy. Born on January 2nd at 1:12 pm, James Marek Figueiredo is a very welcome addition to the family. Described as a future linebacker, James came in at a respectable 8 lbs 8oz and 21.5". Everyone is doing well and they are home safe and sound.

LEAVING A LEGACY OF CHICAGO PRO BONO



Ralla Klepak, CVLS Legacy Circle Member

Attorney Ralla Klepak died last April at the age of 82. This January CVLS received a \$100,000 bequest from her—a legacy to Ralla’s passion for and belief in the value of social justice. CVLS is proud to have been honored in this way by such a wonderful woman.

I first met Ralla while working on several family law cases in the 1980’s and ‘90’s. She was tough but fair and we always got along, even as we advocated on opposite sides. Ralla was no nonsense and she didn’t mince words. If she thought you were full of bunk, she’d tell you. But if you were straight with her, she’d treat you in kind. I enjoyed talking and working with her.

Ralla cared strongly about protecting children, frequently serving as a Child Representative or GAL in custody and visitation cases. She fought hard for her kids even when she knew that she’d never see a dime in payment. She

worked to get the best results for them and to protect them from people who hurt them.

After she died, I discovered that Ralla had also spent decades fighting for the rights of LGBT Chicagoans. As early as the 1960’s, when legal services for LGBT people were virtually non-existent, Ralla defended owners, employees and patrons of gay bars against police raids and harassment. She championed same sex adoptions, helped trans people change birth certificates and legal names, defended gay soldiers in court martial cases and provided estate planning services for people dying of AIDS. Ralla was inducted into the Chicago’s LGBT Hall of Fame as a “Friend of the Community” in 2017.

Ralla was a mensch. She will be missed but her legacy of kindness and fighting for the underdog will live on. Thank you.

-Margaret Benson, CVLS Executive Director

AILA/CVLS PRO BONO BOND PROJECT

Volunteers Needed



Legal representation often determines whether an immigrant remains safely in the United States or is deported without ever having any legal counsel. Additionally, whether or not an immigrant is detained during removal proceedings greatly affects the outcome of their immigration case. While an immigrant can legally have an attorney represent him or her at any point in proceedings, representation cannot be at government expense. Statistically, only 14% of detained immigrants are able to obtain representation.

The AILA/CVLS Pro Bono Bond Project finds attorneys to represent detained immigrants that are unable to afford an attorney at their bond hearing. To date, we have provided nearly 100 clients the representation they would otherwise have been denied.

This project is for the limited representation of the detained immigrant at their bond hearing, but this limited representation is extremely helpful for the ultimate outcome of their removal proceedings. You do not have to be an immigration expert to make a difference! The Project provides initial training, as well as a helpful guide that includes a list of mentors who you can reach out to for case specific questions.

If interested, please contact us today to sign up for the next training. Email us at probonobondproject@gmail.com.

AN END OF AN ERA

We Say Goodbye to Deepa

With every new year come changes and new challenges that we must endure and overcome. This year, that change starts with saying goodbye to our dear friend, Deepa Arora. Deepa has started a new chapter in her life with a new city to explore and a new husband to do it with.

Deepa has been with CVLS since 2015, and served as GAL for Disabled Adults program director, as well as Junior Board staff liaison. Always ready with a smile, she was well known and loved by program volunteers and the legal aid community as a whole. We wish her well in 2020 and beyond and give our thanks for all the wonderful work she did to further Chicago pro bono.



Deepa Arora, former Adult GAL program director



Friendship bracelets were handed out during her goodbye party so we always remember

RULE CHANGE IN ROOM 1806

Effective January 1, 2020, Courtroom 1806 in the Daley Center has enacted the following rules:

1. A courtesy copy of all motions and GAL reports shall be delivered or faxed to chambers no later than 4:30pm on the second business day preceding the Court date.

2. For all matters set for trial or hearing on the 2:00pm call, a witness list (including names, addresses, phone numbers) and all discovery must be

tendered to all parties 2 weeks prior to the commencement of the trial or those witnesses and exhibits may be inadmissible at trial.

If you have any questions about the rule change or would like to talk about your current pro bono case, please contact staff attorneys Rebekah Rashidfarokhi at rebekah@cvls.org or Debi Martin at dmartin@cvls.org.

Get Involved in 2020

Become a Chicago Pro Bono Volunteer

CVLS offers attorneys and law firms a wide range of pro bono transactional and litigation opportunities, from brief consultations or transactional projects to representation in pending litigation. With a vast array of training and support materials, our dedicated and knowledgeable staff can help you develop the pro bono program that is right for you.

Interpreters

We connect volunteer attorneys with low-income clients who are in need of legal representation which is a linguistically diverse population. Our clients sometime need interpreters to help communicate with attorneys in depositions, at trial, and in the completion of paperwork. Your language skills could be critical in helping these clients receive essential legal assistance.

Join the fight

cvls.org/volunteer



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