



# Chicago Volunteer Legal Services

Because equal access to justice is everyone's fight.

## Upcoming Events

**June 17** - Seminar: Zoom in the Courtroom - Preparing Clients, and Handling Contested Hearings; 12:15 pm, ZOOM

**June 22** - Board Orientation; 12:00 pm, ZOOM

**June 25** - Seminar: Property Tax Issues; 12:15 pm, ZOOM

**August 20** - Race Judicata; CANCELED

**November 13**- Vino + Van Gogh; 6:00 pm, ZOOM



## CVLS OFFERS FREE HELP FOR HOMEOWNERS WHO NEED MORTGAGE RELIEF UNDER CARES ACT

The federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) allows struggling homeowners who have federally-backed mortgages to pause mortgage payments for at least six months and up to one year. Once payments resume, lenders must review the homeowners for a range of payment options, including loan modifications. The Act also freezes foreclosure actions in court.

A homeowner must ask the bank for this relief while the President's disaster declaration is still in effect. Most people don't know about the program and time is of the essence.

Chicago Volunteer Legal Services has created a simple step-by-step tool to help homeowners find out if they are eligible for this relief and to request it if they are. Instructions, form letters, and links to helpful sites and FAQs are free and available to anyone on CVLS' website. Homeowners can also call CVLS' hotline or send an email to get free help with the process.

**COVID MORTGAGE RELIEF**

Website  
[cvls.org/covid](https://cvls.org/covid)

Hotline  
**312-332-8785**

Email  
[covid@cvls.org](mailto:covid@cvls.org)

## TEMPORARY OFFICE CLOSURE

Out of concern for the safety of our employees, volunteers, and clients the CVLS administrative office is temporarily closed. Please visit [www.cvls.org](http://www.cvls.org) for the latest updates.

# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP

*Schiff*  
**Hardin**  
**SIDLEY**

## New FREE CLE seminars available online!

### Medicaid Planning Basics

Melissa Kallio, Dutton Casey & Mesoloras  
1 hour CLE credit  
<https://bit.ly/301IMZP>

### Special Immigrant Juvenile Status

Hillary Richardson, NIJC  
Rebekah Rashidfarokhi, CVLS  
Rob Zielinski, CVLS  
2 hours CLE credit  
<https://bit.ly/3eKDndK>

### Subsidized Housing Issues

Matthew Hulstein, CVLS  
1 hour CLE credit  
<https://bit.ly/2XYQGR6>

More available at  
[www.cvls.org/onlinecle](http://www.cvls.org/onlinecle)

## BED BUG BREAKTHROUGH!

### Dykema Attorneys Win Big for CVLS Client

Dealing with an unresponsive landlord can be mentally exhausting and even physically painful. Andrea's story shows how having a pro bono attorney can make all the difference.

Andrea and her teenage son lived together in an apartment building. After her landlord had some work done on the outside of the building, Andrea noticed bugs in her unit. These turned out to be bedbugs, which unbeknownst to Andrea, had infested a neighboring unit about a year before.

Although Andrea notified her landlord immediately, he delayed having an exterminator come out, causing the problem to get worse. Andrea's home remedy attempts failed and despite numerous phone, text, and personal pleas to the landlord, she was forced to throw away many of her belongings. Not only did the landlord's inaction cause property damage and mental anguish, Andrea had to seek medical attention for a bite that became infected. She had no choice but to move out.

On a Monday night after work, Andrea met with volunteers at CVLS' Jewish United Fund (JUF) clinic to learn about her legal options. Ian Sherman and Christina Brunty of Dykema Gossett were moved by Andrea's story and took her on as a client. An initial demand letter to the landlord was ignored, so Ian Christina filed suit on Andrea's behalf for violation of City of Chicago ordinances, negligence, and other theories.

After a certain amount of discovery and expert handling of the case overall by Ian and Christina, the case was settled to Andrea's satisfaction in April. Thanks to her pro bono attorneys, Andrea was able to financially and emotionally recover from this setback.



*Ian Sherman, Dykema Gossett PLLC*



*Christina Brunty, Dykema Gossett PLLC*



David Gotzh, Law Office of David Gotzh

## TRUSTED GUARDIAN AD LITEM PULLS THROUGH AGAIN

### Keeping Calm to Prevent Tragedy

If you've read our newsletter before, you've heard the name, David Gotzh. A longtime volunteer, CVLS award-winner, and Guardian ad Litem for minor children, David handles some of our most challenging cases. His most recent Domestic Relations Child Representative assignment was no exception.

CVLS was appointed to represent a six-year-old girl whose parents were locked in a contentious custody case. The mother had wrongfully relocated with the child without notice to or consent from the father. The Court requested that CVLS investigate and provide additional information, so David took the case as the child's GAL and advocated for her best interests.

After a lengthy court hearing in which David presented his report and recommendations, it was revealed that the mother was living with a dangerous individual who posed a serious risk to the child - a fact the mother had

hidden from the judge and the GAL. The Court immediately ordered the child transferred from mother to father.

The mother, who had consistently disobeyed orders throughout the case, refused to turn over the child. David worked with local law enforcement to peacefully diffuse the toxic situation. The young girl is now living with her father and is properly enrolled in school.

David's calm demeanor and comprehensive approach resulted in a final order that protects the child and ensures her safety. Without his involvement, this case could have ended much differently.

## CVLS UPDATES MISSION STATEMENT

### A New Statement for a New Age

For 56 years, CVLS has been proud to serve our community by providing high quality legal representation to those who would otherwise be unable to pay for it. First, we started in church basements. Not long after, we expanded to community centers, and eventually with a permanent administrative office. Now in the age of COVID-19, we have added ZOOM and other remote services to our ways we interact with our clients. With each expansion, our impact has grown, and we've been able to protect tens of thousands of families from being taken advantage of by a lopsided legal system. One thing that never changed was our commitment to those we serve.

In May, our board of directors voted to adopt a new mission statement that clarifies our core goal in this new age. We are proud to share it with you now.

**CVLS MOBILIZES CHICAGO'S LEGAL COMMUNITY TO DELIVER TRADITIONAL REPRESENTATION AND INNOVATIVE LEGAL SOLUTIONS TO PEOPLE WORKING OR LIVING IN POVERTY.**

**WE ARE CHICAGO PRO BONO.**

Thank you to our supporters and volunteers for your friendship and work towards legal equality in Chicago these many decades.

## SIMPLE DIVORCE STAYS SIMPLE

A Pro Bono Attorney's Amicable Outcome



Michael Rohan, Locke Lord LLP

St. Procopius Catholic Church is home to just one of over two dozen clinics run by CVLS in the Chicagoland Community. This clinic meets every second Saturday of the month and is staffed by volunteer attorneys from the nationally recognized firm, Locke Lord LLP.

A client named Silvia came to the clinic, seeking representation in a divorce case. Locke Lord's Mike Rohan met with Silvia and agreed to represent her. Fortunately the proceedings were amicable, and the parties resolved most issues outside of court.

After clarifying his client's goals, Mike prepared the necessary paperwork and negotiated with Silvia's husband. Once they both agreed on all of the issues, they had a ten-minute hearing in front of the judge and the case was over.

If Silvia had been unrepresented, this case, as simple as it seemed, would have taken longer to resolve. Thanks to Mike, a potential headache was resolved with very little fuss. Divorce is often a necessary and expensive burden. Mike was happy that he was able to represent Silvia pro bono so that she and her now ex-husband could move on with their lives.

## CREATIVE WILL DRAFTING

Novel Coronavirus Brings Novel Legal Solutions

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all of us, our volunteers are still making a difference in the lives of low-income clients. Protecting against the virus has caused attorneys to be more creative with how they help and advocate for those in need.

In Mid-April, a 91-year-old army veteran named Robert called CVLS for help with estate planning and advance directives. Volunteer Crystal Caison conducted the interview over the phone, noting how knowledgeable and articulate Robert was despite his age. Robert told Crystal that he reads three newspapers daily to stay sharp and that the Wall Street Journal is his favorite one. It's Crystal's favorite paper too.

In less than a week, Crystal drafted the necessary paperwork and coordinated with our clinic at Old St. Mary's Catholic Church to safely arrange for execution of the documents. Crystal, two witnesses, and the client met at the parish office with everyone wearing masks, using disposable pens, and keeping a safe distance from one another.

The client and his nephew expressed their gratitude for getting the documents executed in a safe manner and in such a short turnaround time. According to Crystal, it was an absolute pleasure to work with this client. She was grateful that he provided her with the opportunity to execute her motto:

**"SERVICE IS THE RENT  
WE PAY FOR THE  
PRIVILEGE OF LIVING  
ON THIS EARTH."**

**- SHIRLEY CHISHOLM**



Crystal Caison, Circuit Court of Cook County

## MEG RECEIVES LEADERSHIP AWARD



Margaret Benson, CVLS

Congratulations to CVLS' Executive Director, Margaret C. Benson, on being named an inaugural honoree for Chicago Daily Law Bulletin and Chicago Lawyer Magazine's influential Women in Law Awards! The honorees were selected because of their work to advance other women in the profession, and we couldn't agree more with their choice. Well done Meg, and thank you for being a shining example of leadership!



## BOARD ELECTIONS

### New Leadership Takes Stage

CVLS' Board of Directors recently held elections for new members and officers for the upcoming year. Congratulations to **Jordan Heinz**, Kirkland & Ellis LLP, and **Elizabeth Lewis**, McDermott Will & Emery on being elected to serve a second three-year term. We would also like to welcome **Howard Ankin**, Ankin Law Office, **Kathleen Garvey**, Sidley, **Eleni Katsoulis**, Northwestern Memorial Healthcare, **Kumar Ravula**, Latham & Watkins, **Patrick Spangler**, Vedder Price, and **Katherine Walton**, Schiff Hardin, to the board. Patrick, Eleni and Katie are former Junior Board Members. Eleni and Katie both previously served as the Chair of the Junior Board.

Thank you to retiring board members **Eddie Houlihan**, **Steve Raminiaik**, **Corey Sealy**, **Dan Spira** and **Bryan Webster** for your service. We will miss you.



Jordan Heinz  
Kirkland & Ellis



Elizabeth Lewis  
McDermott Will & Emery



Howard Ankin  
Ankin law



Kathleen Garvey  
Sidley Austin



Eleni Katsoulis  
Northwestern Memorial  
Healthcare



Patrick Spangler  
Vedder Price



Katherine Walton  
Schiff Hardin

## JUNIOR BOARD ELECTIONS

The Junior Board of CVLS has reelected **Colton Long**, Baker McKenzie, **Roya Samarghandi**, Carmel Law, and **Charles Zagnoli**, Ropes & Gray, to serve a second three-year term. We thank our departing members **Nora Endzel**, **Justin From**, **Jeanna Palmer Gunville**, and **Alexa Van Brunt** for their hard work.

Six new Junior board members have joined our ranks this year and we are very excited for you to meet them. Please welcome to the CVLS family **John Aramanda**, Quarles & Brady, **Christopher Cassella**, Locke Lord, **Jessica Chang**, Dinsmore, **Britt DeVaney**, Katten Muchin Rosenmann, **Emily Marie Halter**, Latham & Watkins, and **Sarah Lewis**, Cook County Circuit Court.

Welcome to all new members, and thank you again to those who are retiring. Your dedication to CVLS and pro bono is an inspiration.



Colton Long  
Baker McKenzie



Roya Samarghandi  
Carmel Law



Charles Zagnoli  
Ropes & Gray



John Aramanda  
Quarles & Brady



Christopher Cassella  
Locke Lord



Jessica Chang  
Dinsmore



Britt DeVaney  
Katten Muchin Rosenman



Emily Halter  
Latham & Watkins



Sarah Lewis  
Circuit Court of Cook County

## OFFICER ELECTIONS

The Board of Directors held officer elections on May 20 with the following results:

Jordan Heinz - President  
Joseph Seder - VP Finance  
Christine Skoczylas - VP Development  
Elizabeth Lewis - VP Client Services  
Laverne Horton - Secretary

Kate Dennis Nye - Executive Committee  
Elizabeth Riddle - Executive Committee  
Daniel Winters - Executive Committee

Congratulations to everyone and thank you for all that you do.



Jordan Heinz  
Kirkland & Ellis

Nick Niles, Kirkland & Ellis, has become the latest in a long line of fine leadership as Chair of the Junior Board. Nick joined the Junior Board in 2014 and has been a key member ever since. We are looking forward to seeing where he leads our Junior Board in 2020.

Ben Nellans, Segal McCambridge Singer & Mahoney, moves up to Second Chair, and Roya Samarghandi, Carmel Law, has been promoted to Third Chair of the Junior Board.

Congratulations everyone!



Nick Niles  
Kirkland & Ellis

## RACE JUDICATA 2020 CANCELED

Beloved Event Shut Down Over COVID Concerns



For 26 years, Race Judicata® has been the premier event for Chicago's legal community. Every summer, more than 5,000 people run, walk and party in a beautiful Chicago park near the lakefront. Unfortunately, the infamous COVID-19 is forcing a one-year moratorium of this great event.

We are happy to report, though, that RJ supporters are converting their race sponsorship and tent rental payments into charitable donations to CVLS so that we can continue helping Chicago's poor and working poor—a population that has been hit especially hard by the virus and the sudden evaporation of low-wage jobs.

This summer, CVLS will place an ad in Chicago Crain's Business thanking the firms who have shown their support of our work during the time of COVID-19. We hope we can add all of our RJ supporters to that list.

## REVERSE MORTGAGES GONE BAD

Not Always a Good Deal



Matthew Hulstein, Supervisor, Chancery Court Access to Justice Program and Foreclosure Mediation

Matthew Hulstein, Supervisor of CVLS' Chancery Court Access to Justice Program and Foreclosure Mediation, wrote an article for the June edition of the Illinois Bar Journal where he carefully examines Reverse Mortgages, how they differ from traditional mortgages, and some of the pitfalls that often trap unsuspecting borrowers. For eight years, Matt has dealt with lenders, both in mediation and litigation, and has a unique perspective that only experience brings.

The article is free to read for ISBA members at <https://bit.ly/2XQbh9W>. If you, or someone you know has ever considered a reverse mortgage, we strongly encourage you to take a look.



## CALM IN THE TIME OF COVID

Giving Advice to Families During Difficult Times



Lisa Murphy, CVLS Staff Attorney

Who would have predicted the coronavirus crisis and its impact on just about everyone in every way—health and safety, financial, employment and so much more. These problems are exacerbated in immigrant communities. Many people are now considering options that they did not envision thinking about for many years, if at all. CVLS staff attorney, Lisa Murphy, recently participated in a panel of 5 legal experts in the areas of: Domestic Relations, Workers' Compensation, Workers' Rights, Guardianships and Powers of Attorney, and Immigration, where they discussed various options that can be considered now as well as preparing for future crises.

The panelists included:

Hon. Grace G. Dickler, Presiding Judge, Domestic Relations Division, Circuit Court of Cook County  
Moises Hernandez, Hernandez & Reynolds  
Michael W. Massiate, DLA Piper  
Lisa Murphy, CVLS  
Richard Pena, Law Offices of Richard Pena  
Caroline Shoenberger, Shoenberger Public Interest Law Foundation

A recording is available for viewing at:  
<https://bit.ly/3eYK1NN>

## EVEN MORE LISA!

Testamentary Planning Explained

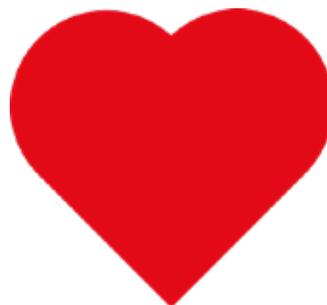


It's been a busy few months for our shining star, Lisa Murphy. She's at it again, and this time she's partnered with our friends at Illinois Access to Justice and The Resurrection Project. They hosted a Facebook Live presentation in Spanish on Illinois Emergency Testamentary Planning last month. They covered topics such as what to do if you or a relative is incapacitated or comes to die, how to make a will, and even choices for children. It was extremely helpful, and the public was encouraged to join in with their questions. If you weren't lucky enough to catch it live you can watch it online at: <https://bit.ly/2KZovvh>

## WE MISS YOU

Please Stay Safe and Healthy

CVLS would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to everyone who has volunteered with us remotely, supported us financially, and partnered with us professionally over these last few months. Your efforts make a difference. You make this fight possible. We hope you and your loved ones are staying safe and healthy. We love and miss all of you, and look forward to the day when we open back up and see you in person.



## 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](https://cvls.org/volunteer)



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