

Chicago Volunteer Legal Services

Because equal access to justice is everyone's fight.

Upcoming Events

August 16 - Child Rep Training
1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

August 24 - New Volunteer
Orientation, 12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

September 4 - Labor Day
CVLS Closed

September 9 - Individual Packet
Pickup, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Potbelly - 3424 N. Southport

September 10 - Individual Packet
Pickup, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Potbelly - 3424 N. Southport

September 13 - Team Packet
Pickup, 11:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Block 37 - 108 N. State St., 2nd Floor

September 14 - Race Judicata®
6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR RACE JUDICATA®!

Register today for the special reduced rate of \$34 and receive a t-shirt, goodybag, timing chip, and wristband good for free beer and wine at the event! Don't delay, this rate won't last forever. The full price rate of \$39 begins August 26. CARA members receive an additional \$5 discount on their registrations.

www.cvls.org/judicata

SEARCHING FOR LEY'GACY

One volunteer's career begins with a manhunt

At Skadden Arps, lawyers are free to take on pro bono assignments as though they were billable assignments. The fall months were slow, and my hours didn't start counting until January. "You should take a GAL case," my girlfriend suggested one November evening. Ingrid was right. CVLS' GAL program was just about the only pro bono work that got me excited. There was something different about being a Guardian Ad Litem. Something real.

Then, I got my first and very real case.

The mother had a history of homelessness and untreated bipolar disorder. She refused to take any prescription, preferring to self-medicate with marijuana. "I'm a be honest - I smoke a LOT," she said, her eyes unflinching. But despite this, she was smart. She knew her grandmother had guardianship. She knew she had rights as the mother. And she was willing to fight to make sure that everybody understood that fact.

The grandmother was a sweet, elderly woman on government benefits. She lived with her disabled husband and eight grandchildren. The grandmother had lost her house to a reverse mortgage scam, and now rented month to month. Despite this, she felt optimistic about the future of her and her kin.

Any hesitations I had about the case melted away when I saw Ley'gacy, a vivacious eight year old with the resilience of a Spartan. Despite what she'd been through, her eyes were bright with



Ajay N. Sundar, Associate at Skadden Arps
Slate Meagher & Flom LLP

wonder and optimism. "It's snowing," she said. I looked out the window and saw a few flakes. "I heard we're supposed to get a couple of inches this week," I said. "I hope so," she replied. "I love snow." "Me too," I said, although it has been years since I had an opinion about snow. She smiled, and in her eyes I saw why I signed up for the case.

The first month of the case went by in a gray blur of appointments and investigations. As luck would have it, I quickly became embroiled with a billable deal, a massive M&A assignment that absorbed time and energy. I was balancing my work until, one day, the phone rang while I was drafting the first agreement of my career. "Ajay," the grandmother said, her voice cracking ever so slightly, "Ley'gacy is gone."

She'd been kidnapped by her mother, her whereabouts unknown.

I called the police. "... so what exactly is your involvement with the case?" "I'm an attorney-". I hadn't even finished my sentence before I was met with a

continued on page 2...

Ley'gacy continued...

dial tone. It would take five unsuccessful attempts before I finally got the police to talk to me. But they couldn't find her. Then, after weeks of phone calls to relatives, Facebook sleuthing and scouring public records, the grandmother was contacted by the Redlands California school district where the mother had enrolled Ley'gacy in school. We had a location.

I called the Child Abduction Unit in the California District Attorney's office. Eventually, I managed to convince the DA that yes, I am the child's attorney and yes, I could actually make this work. The next thing I know, I'm on a plane to San Bernardino County. Through Skadden's network, I got help from an amazing public interest lawyer in California, who guided me through the research I needed. Finally, after last-minute preparation and time spent brooding over the intricacies of California Civil Procedure, I headed to court. The DA was there to support me, but ultimately I was on my own.

The mother was there. I didn't have anything against her - didn't want her to go to jail, or for her life to be ruined in any way. But I was going to get the kid back, no matter what. After two hours of passionate pleading, the judge rendered his verdict.

I won. The next fourteen hours melted away, as I accompanied the most well-behaved eight year old on the planet back home. Ley'gacy was safe.

I plan on taking on another GAL case soon. The thrill of a successful outcome is matched only by the poignancy of realizing that there is so much more that I could be doing for so many other children. There is more work to be done. But for a time, at least, I was able to make a positive impact in one child's life.

Not bad for my first year.

CHERRISH UPDATE

In late March, CVLS won an appeal that restored our client Cherrish Tolliver's rental subsidy. The Housing Authority of Cook County had terminated the subsidy after a series of administrative hearings, accusing Cherrish of not timely reporting her income. The Appellate Court vacated the termination, finding the HACC, in not following its own procedures and rules, had failed to properly administer its program and violated our client's process rights. CVLS reported this wonderful result in our last newsletter.

Unfortunately, the order was issued as a Rule 23 decision, which limited its value. CVLS filed a motion to publish which was granted in May. The published opinion, featured in May 23rd's ISBA E-Clips, can be found here: <https://goo.gl/F6m9Lj>

The positive response from the legal aid community is overwhelming. Here are just a few of their reactions from across the state:

- Welcome news!
- Congratulations. That's great news!
- THIS IS GREAT NEWS!!
- Congrats! What a case!
- Wonderful news! Congratulations.
- This is a great victory. I'm glad it got published. Not only is it good for voucher cases, the language about specificity of notice should help in all kinds of HUD evictions. Excellent work; congratulations.

Since the order was entered, CVLS resolved all remaining issues with the HACC and secured Ms. Tolliver's full reinstatement to the program. The Tolliver case joins a growing list of CVLS victories at the Appellate Court concerning the voucher program: Miles v. HACC, Burch v. CHA, and Lipscomb v. HACC. If you are interested in handling a rental subsidy case, please contact Matt Hulstein: mhulstein@cvls.org



Marielle Blake Blaney-Koen

Congratulations to CVLS volunteer Daniel Blaney-Koen and his wife Lisa on their new baby girl. Everyone is doing well and they are home safe and sound.

New FREE CLE seminars available online!

Consular Processing Overview and Recent Developments

Ericka McFee, McFee Law Offices, P.C.
1.00 hours CLE credit
<https://goo.gl/e36bjt>

I-751 Immigration Petitions: Removing Conditions of Residence

Ginger Devaney, Domestic Violence Legal Clinic
.75 hours CLE credit
<https://goo.gl/gawf6y>

Loan Modifications

Ian Turnipseed, CVLS Staff Attorney
1.50 hours CLE credit
<https://goo.gl/vc8xud>

Lost in the Cloud: Electronic Communications and Social Media

Wendy Muchman, Chief of Litigation and Professional Education at ARDC
1.00 hours Professional Responsibility CLE credit
<https://goo.gl/uzE9Fp>

Reverse Mortgage Litigation

Gabriel Borges, CVLS Staff Attorney
Dennis Smith, JMLS Law Professor
1.5 hours CLE credit
<https://goo.gl/7Jy9uR>

More available at www.cvls.org/onlinecle

J.M.'s STORY

Tales of a Child Representative

When Jeremiah was six months old, his parents started fighting. Just before his first birthday, he suffered domestic violence. By three years, he was the subject of a contested custody case.

In Cook County, if two parents cannot agree on how to parent their child, the Court can appoint an attorney to advocate for that child's best interests - a Child Representative. The judge appointed CVLS volunteer Lindsay Weinberg for Jeremiah.

Although her first Child Rep case was shaping up to be a difficult one, Lindsay is not one to back away from a challenge. Aided by her social work background, Lindsay assessed the family's mental health issues, contacted healthcare providers and teachers, investigated the home environment, and secured low-cost therapeutic services for the child.

Parsing through conflicting information and allegations of abuse, Lindsay represented Jeremiah's best interests in court and mediated with the family. As his advocate, she sought community-based services, kept a keen eye on his progress in school and fought for his best interests in court for more than fifteen months.

Throughout her representation, Lindsay focused on protecting the child from further trauma and on rebuilding his relationship with his parents. "I have always been passionate about advocating for children and ensuring that they are in safe, loving homes," said Lindsay.

"Volunteering as a Child Representative for CVLS was a great supplement to my current position at the Adoption Center of Illinois at Family Resource Center where, although the best interests of children are our primary concern, I generally only work with parents. This provided me with a long-term opportunity to advocate on behalf of a specific child while forming a relationship with his family."



Lindsay Weinberg, Adoption Specialist at Adoption Center of Illinois Family Resource Center

"This provided me with a long-term opportunity to advocate on behalf of a specific child while forming a relationship with his family"

Jeremiah is now five years old. His parents were able to settle their differences and resolve their custody case. Thanks to Lindsay, this child enjoys a good chance of living a safe and happy life while spending time with both of his parents.

FORECLOSURE NEWS

Judge Issues Order Prohibiting Language

Attention all volunteers handling foreclosure cases: Presiding Judge Moshe Jacobius has issued General Administrative Order 2014-04 which addresses certain language that is prohibited in a judgment of foreclosure and sale. If you currently have a foreclosure case with us, or plan on taking one in the future, we highly recommend you familiarize yourself with this document.

The order can be viewed at:
<https://goo.gl/hPPZSW>

LSC UPDATE

Latest Report Highlights the Justice Gap in 2017

In 1974 Congress had a vision of equal access to justice and strived to bring it into reality. That same year the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) was created and has since served as the single largest funder of civil legal aid for low-income Americans. In 2005, 2009 and now in 2017 the LSC released a report to update the public on the justice gap, defined as the difference between the civil legal needs of low-income Americans and the resources available to meet those needs.

While the report is grim, it might look like a bright summer day compared to what could be in store. Today, Congress does not have the same vision they did 43 years ago and may eliminate the largest legal aid funder in the country.

While CVLS does not receive LSC funding, we ARE one of those resources that the public desperately needs. When 71% of low-income households experienced at least one civil legal problem last year alone, the legal aid world cannot afford to waste time and energy picking teams based on where our funding comes from. We spend all of our energy doing what we can for those in need. When one of our sister organizations is hurting, we all feel it. That is why we strongly oppose the elimination of LSC funds in the proposed 2018 federal budget. Those cuts would decimate legal aid organizations all across Illinois and would make the justice gap look more like a justice canyon.

Please take a moment to view the report and find out just how critical a strong legal aid community is to Illinois and our country as a whole.

The report can be viewed at:
<https://goo.gl/8P9dNp>



Hel.LAS

Greek Legal Clinic Celebrates One Year Anniversary

Realizing that there were countless members of their community with limited financial resources and a need for legal assistance, the Hellenic Foundation's (HF) Executive Director Peter Valessares and Hellenic Bar Association (HBA) Chairman Eleni Kouimelis decided to do something. They contacted CVLS Junior Board member Eleni Katsoulis and together they worked on a solution. On May 13, 2016 the Hel.LAS legal clinic, a partnership between the HBA, HF and CVLS, was born.

The clinic provides Greek Americans with access to legal information, referrals, and potential representation in a linguistically and culturally sensitive environment. During their first year, the clinic has served nearly 100 Chicago Greek families with their legal issues. Promoted and served by a dedicated group of 40 volunteer attorneys, Hel.LAS has become a beacon of hope to this closely knitted demographic of our city.

With an extremely high referral rate, the clinic boasts a full schedule of appointments every month.

"This is a huge compliment, and speaks volumes to the quality of our services"



Gabriel Borges, CVLS Staff Attorney

FISHING FOR A DEAL

The Sun Dries Out Underwater Mortgage

Mr. and Mrs. C. were determined to save their home from foreclosure despite the fact that it was seriously underwater. They'd applied for a loan modification several times but were always denied because of insufficient documentation. It didn't help that they did not speak English. Finally, the judge in their foreclosure case put them into the Cook County Foreclosure Mediation Program where, ultimately, they were lucky enough to get CVLS staff attorney Gabriel Borges. Working with Gabe, the clients applied to the SUN Initiative, which purchases underwater property as a short sale, then loans the homeowner money to purchase the property back from SUN at a price above its appraised value. When it works, the remaining balance owed to the bank from the short sale is forgiven and the homeowner keeps his home.

It didn't work. The bank refused to let the property go for anything less than the \$115,000 appraisal value, more than SUN was willing to pay. So, with financial help from his sons, Mr. C applied for another loan modification. Seven months later, the bank said no.

But Gabe noticed the bank's denial had the wrong income for his client. He submitted another loan modification to clarify the income. The bank corrected the income and said no.

By now, the appraisal value of the home had dropped to \$80,000, so Gabe had his client reapply to SUN. This time, SUN offered the bank \$77,000 and the bank said maybe but insisted on soliciting for other offers through an auction. Tick tock.

Eventually, the bank agreed to accept SUN's offer but set a very short date for the closing—too short for the paperwork to be ready. For a while, the bank's investor balked at postponing the closing date. Eventually, the investor agreed, but then, at the pre-closing inspection, SUN discovered that the furnace didn't work and Mr. C had to scramble to get an estimate for its replacement or repair.

Finally, the stars aligned and Mr. and Mrs.C. closed, both on the short sale and the buy-back.

Home saved. Whew.



Lauren Sanuw, Sanuw Law Office, P.C.

THE CLOSER

CVLS Volunteer Tackles Real Estate Closing Completely Pro Bono!

Many of our clients face more than one legal problem. In fact, more than half (54%) of low-income households face at least two civil legal problems each year. One in four (24%) has faced six or more legal problems in the past year alone.

In 2013, CVLS represented a disabled homeowner in foreclosure. First we helped the client's adult daughter obtain guardianship of her mother's estate. Then we were able to successfully resolve the foreclosure. Unfortunately, when the homeowner died in 2014, the daughter, now administrator of her mother's estate, needed us because the bank was threatening to foreclose again.

Although the heirs had originally settled on one person to inherit the home and assume the loan, when one heir changed his mind, the probate judge told them to sell. The home was listed and a viable offer was accepted.

CVLS doesn't normally handle closings—our clients rarely need them. This time, however, volunteer Lauren Sanuw, agreed to handle the closing, pro bono,

so that the family could realize the maximum benefit from the estate.

“This was a tough one, but I was happy to be a part of the team to help get this to the closing table!”

After several obstacles, including the buyers threatening to walk away, the sale closed. If not for Lauren, the property would have sold in a foreclosure auction. Instead, the heirs shared a profit.

For modest Lauren, the case was gratifying: “This was a tough one, but I was happy to be a part of the team to help get this to the closing table!”

WELL DESERVED

CVLS Volunteers Rewarded for Their Service

CVLS would like to congratulate the 2017 CBA & CBF Pro Bono & Public Service Award recipients!

Howard Rubin has long been a friend and supporter of CVLS, not only as a volunteer but as a past member of our Board of Directors. Mr. Rubin is the Director of the DePaul University College of Law Legal Clinic, where he has always put access to justice at the forefront of his teaching. Thank you, Mr. Rubin, for your decades of dedication to pro bono legal services.

Seasoned volunteers Kathleen Robson and Sal Lopez of Robson & Lopez LLC have taken hundreds of pro bono mortgage foreclosure and civil cases through CVLS and other legal aid agencies. They also generously volunteer their time at the Daley Center's Foreclosure Help Desk and the Federal Court's Bankruptcy Help Desk. Well-deserved, Kathleen and Sal!

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP

Schiff
Hardin

SIDLEY



RACE JUDICATA® 5K

**RUN/WALK
AFTERPARTY
GRANT PARK
LIVE MUSIC
FOOD & DRINKS**
*valid photo ID required

**\$34 EARLY
REGISTRATION**

**BENEFITING
CHICAGO VOLUNTEER
LEGAL SERVICES**
*CVLS is a valid 501(c)(3) charity

ON SEPT 14, 6:30 PM
NOT ALL HEROES WEAR CAPES...

**Bloomberg
Law**

大成 DENTONS



MAYER • BROWN

WINSTON
& STRAWN
LLP



Akerman COZEN O'CONNOR

DrinkerBiddle

JENNER & BLOCK

Quarles & Brady LLP

ROPES & GRAY

SEYFARTH SHAW

McGUIRE WOODS

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Schiff
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KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP



Skadden

SIDLEY

BRYAN CAVE



JONES DAY

STRADLEY RONON

THOMPSON COBURN LLP

MARSHALL GERSTEIN ip

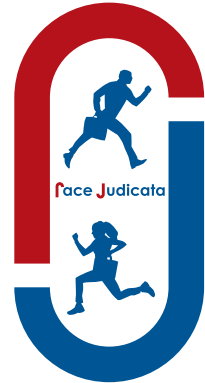


www.CVLS.org/JUDICATA



CATERING ORDER FORM

Please submit all orders by September 1st.



Race Judicata® is proud to partner with Potbelly® to offer our participants and teams a delicious and convenient option for your catering needs. As the preferred caterer for Race Judicata®, Potbelly® is offering three different boxed meals which will be available during the event. Teams with tents will have their meals delivered to their tents, individuals and teams without tents may pick up their meals at the Potbelly® tent during the event. Race Bib required for individual pick up. A portion of all proceeds will be donated to Chicago Volunteer Legal Services.

Potbelly® Box Lunches include sandwich, classic potato chips, oatmeal chocolate chip cookies and a bottle of water. Sandwich of choice features fresh lettuce and tomato.

Options Include:

- Turkey Breast with Swiss Cheese
- Smoked Ham with Swiss Cheese
- Mediterranean (Veggie) Zippy Hummus, Feta Cheese, Cucumbers, Artichokes & Roasted Red Peppers

Mayo, mustard, and hot peppers on the side for Do-It-Yourself deliciousness.

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 N. Dearborn St., Suite 400, Chicago, IL 60602

Team Name **Contact Person**

Phone Number **E-mail Address**

I would like to order the following number of boxed meals. Each meal is **\$10** **TOTAL (\$):** _____

Turkey _____ **Ham** _____ **Mediterranean (Veggie)** _____

Credit Card Number **American Express** **Matercard** **Visa**

Expiration Date

Signature **Date**

The logo for Chicago Volunteer Legal Services is a black, stylized shape resembling a speech bubble or a document page with a folded corner. The text "CHICAGO VOLUNTEER LEGAL SERVICES" is written in white, bold, uppercase letters inside the shape.

**CHICAGO
VOLUNTEER
LEGAL
SERVICES**

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