



Chicago Volunteer Legal Services

Because equal access to justice is everyone's fight.

Upcoming Events

August 23 - New Volunteer Orientation; 12:15 p.m.

August 25 - Race Judicata Registration Fee Increase

August 30 - Guardian ad Litem for Minors Training; 12:00 p.m.

August 30 - Child Representative Training; 4:00 p.m.

September 7 - Race Judicata Online Registration Closes; 4:00 p.m.

September 13 - Race Judicata; 6:30 p.m.

September 18 - Guardian ad Litem for Adults Training; 12:00 p.m.



Laurence Tooth, Cozen O'Connor

FIGHTING "TOOTH" AND NAIL

Volunteer prevails in housing subsidy battle

At 56 years old, Timothy lives with his family in a rent-subsidized home in the middle of a high-crime neighborhood in Chicago. He's done his best, for the past 15 years, to provide a safe environment for his two daughters and five grandchildren. But four years ago, without warning, the Chicago Police Department knocked at Timothy's door with a warrant for Timothy's son, an alleged gang member.

Timothy's son did not live at the home, but he was visiting the family that morning. After conducting a search of the property, the police found two illegal weapons. The son was immediately arrested for unlawful gun possession, and he eventually pled guilty to the

charges. When the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) learned of the son's arrest and conviction, they terminated Timothy's housing subsidy, threatening the rest of the family with homelessness. Timothy and his family had no idea that his son was storing weapons in the home.

Timothy filed a complaint for judicial review, and the Court appointed CVLS through the Access to Justice (A2J) Program. CVLS argued that the CHA could not terminate the family from the subsidy program because Timothy's son was a guest, and CHA's regulations do not permit terminating a family for a

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RACE JUDICATA®

Don't wait until the last minute to start planning your firm's Race Judicata team. This year's event will be held on September 13th so please visit www.cvls.org/judicata to get started.



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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New FREE CLE seminars available online!

Child Representative Training

Phil Mohr, Deputy Director
Rob Zielinski, Staff Attorney
2.25 hours CLE credit
<https://goo.gl/gPWPmB>

Inventories and Accounts for Minors & Disabled Persons

Steve Raminiak, Law Office of Steve
Raminiak
1.00 hours CLE credit
<https://goo.gl/sY4Esi>

Post I-601A: Helping your Clients Navigate Consular Processing to Become Residents

Alix Strunk, Minsky McCormick &
Hallagan, P.C.
1.00 hours CLE credit
<https://goo.gl/9WXGsP>

More available at
www.cvls.org/onlinecle

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guest's crimes. The Court agreed with our argument, but upon remand, the hearing officer found that Timothy constructively possessed the guns. Timothy returned for further review, and this time, CVLS placed his case with Laurence Tooth of Cozen O'Connor.

Laurence filed a detailed, well-written brief, arguing that there was no evidence in the record to support a finding of constructive possession. Recognizing the strength of Laurence's argument, the CHA relented. They agreed to settle and reissue the subsidy. After four years of litigation, it took just one volunteer's skilled advocacy to save this family's home.



Elizabeth Peterson, CVLS Volunteer

CREATIVE MANUSCRIPTS KEPT SAFE

Author shows unique form of gratitude

Not all CVLS cases involve contested litigation or fierce courtroom advocacy. Sometimes, a client just needs a few documents drafted and some legal advice without incurring extraordinary fees. Donald, an 80-year-old author, came to CVLS with that kind of simple task: he wanted to make sure his possessions went to a close friend after Donald's death.

With only a small monthly Social Security benefit as income, Donald could not afford the hundreds of dollars it would take to consult with a private estate planning attorney. Enter award-winning CVLS volunteer attorney, Liz Peterson. Liz met with Donald and agreed to draft the appropriate paperwork to accomplish Donald's goals.

Donald's estate, while financially meager, was rich with sentimental and artistic value. His last will and testament leaves four books and a screenplay to his closest friend, Julie. Along with a will to dispose of his property, Liz also helped Donald create the appropriate Powers of Attorney for property and healthcare.

Once the documents were finalized, Donald sent a personalized, typewritten note to CVLS expressing his gratitude, which is appended below.

The pleasure was all ours, Donald

Dear Ms Harrison:

This is a much belated note of appreciation for the estate resolution your organization did for me.

I am now finally past the radiation treatment I was facing concerning the [REDACTED]. Hopefully that will have resolved that problem.

It is good to have both, accomplished.

Again, my sincere thanks.

Yours,
Donald
Donald



SEP 13, 2018

www.cvls.org/JUDICATA

**RUN/WALK
AFTERPARTY
LIVE MUSIC
FOOD & DRINKS**

*valid photo ID required

\$34 EARLY REGISTRATION

Since 1994, Race Judicata has been raising funds to further CVLS' mission of providing pro bono legal aid to Chicago's poor and working poor. Find out more today at www.cvls.org

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RACE JUDICATA 2018 CATERING ORDER FORM

Please submit all orders by August 31st



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**

Phone **Email**

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 Mastercard Visa

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Exp Date

Signature **Date**

CVLS' RESIDENT FORECLOSURE DIVORCE TEAM IS AT IT AGAIN!

In our April newsletter, we told you about how CVLS Staff Attorneys Rob and Matt tag-teamed a divorce/foreclosure and helped a single mom, Archangel, save her home. Matt and Rob are at it again!

Crystal was the sole owner of her home and the only borrower on her mortgage loan. She was married, but the couple was separated and her husband had filed for divorce. Crystal fell behind on her mortgage and was soon facing foreclosure. Originally, the bank offered her a trial payment plan that promised a permanent modification after the trial period. She was thrilled with the prospect of being able to keep her home. Crystal followed through and made the necessary payments. The bank then sent her a proposed modification, with one caveat; the bank would only complete her modification if her husband signed the document. Crystal's hopes were crushed as her husband refused to sign. Crystal had done all she could alone and had to watch as the foreclosure of her home continued.

With nowhere else to turn, foreclosure judge, Hon. William Sullivan, referred Crystal to CVLS through the Access to Justice Program. Our resident foreclosure divorce team, Matt Hulstein and Rob Zielinski, stepped up to the plate to represent Crystal. Matt explained to the lender's attorneys why Crystal's husband's signature was unnecessary and how they were violating the trial payment plan offer and federal servicing requirements by not processing the modification. Meanwhile, Rob filed emergency pleadings in the divorce, and the Domestic Relations Judge ordered Crystal's husband to sign the modification offer.

Rob took the extra step and even visited Crystal's husband in jail to get his signature! But much to Rob's dismay, Crystal's husband refused, saying he'd



Matthew Hulstein, Supervisor, Chancery Court Access to Justice Program



Rob Zielinski, CVLS Staff Attorney

rather see the house burn down than Crystal keep it. But Rob would not be thwarted in fighting for his client. Rob took Crystal's husband's refusal to the Domestic Relations Judge and persuaded the Judge to sign the modification on Crystal's husband behalf. As Rob argued in Domestic Relations, Matt convinced Crystal's lender to finally relent and accept the permanent modification without Crystal's husband's signature!

Crystal's mortgage was brought current, and the foreclosure was dismissed. Also, with Rob's help, Crystal will soon be happily divorced. "CVLS did what I thought was impossible," says Crystal, "And I am so grateful!" Well done Rob and Matt, and thank you Judge Sullivan for the referral!

STAFF DEDICATION: SUSAN DECOSTANZA

This past December, our very own Susan DeCostanza was honored with Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI)'s Distinguished PILI Alumni Award. This is just one of the many awards Susan has been honored with and deserves. Susan has been with CVLS since 2010, working tirelessly to provide access to justice. She currently is the Director of our Adult Guardianship program and has been an invaluable support to our volunteers and staff alike. If you spoke to anyone who worked with Susan, they would sing nothing but praises about her work, her kindness, her mentorship, and her leadership.

But sometimes, life takes you to unexpected places. With a heavy heart we tell you that Susan will be transitioning out of her role at CVLS and will be starting a new journey at Ruben M. Garcia & Associate, LTD. Susan will always be a part of the CVLS family, and don't be surprised if you still see her around our office. Because Susan has made such a lasting impact at CVLS, we have asked some of our staff to say how Susan impacted them the most or their favorite Susan story. We'll miss you, Susan. We know you'll be successful no matter what you do or where you work.



"First of all—everyone will agree that Susan is the nicest person at CVLS. And, we have a lot of nice staff people so you can imagine how nice Susan is to be on top. Second, she started the CVLS book club! It was a fabulous idea and very popular for a while. Susan always brought snacks and, sometimes, wine to help the discussion flow along. The book club petered out only because no one could agree on which books to read. Not agreeing on something is very CVLS but we all loved the meetings, snacks and wine.

Seriously though, I am going to miss Susan's optimism, her smile, her practical advice, her willingness to always pitch in and help and her steadfast kindness. Susan is a great attorney and a great person."

-Margaret Benson, Executive Director

"It was CVLS' 40th anniversary event. As with all of our events, staff becomes jacks of all trades - toters, haulers, organizers, solicitors... As always, Susan dives in and is as diverse a laborer as ever. As we are picking up and getting ready to return to the offices, I can tell she's even a little more diligent and nimble than normal, talking to staff to ensure that everything gets back to the office. She also seems most interested in ensuring that the leftover alcohol is on the first load back. As she is wont to do, she subtly nudges and prods and ensures everyone is into the kitchen - and then my office - and then the real 40th celebration begins. She is the perfect dichotomy - wonderfully supportive but also a bit of an imp; hard working but ready to party. CVLS is losing one of our best, but I will always have a compatriot."

-Phil Mohr, Deputy Director

"Susan's case load is rife with heart wrenching issues involving minor children and vulnerable elderly and disabled adults. Her clients range from unappreciative and demanding to dependent and nonverbal. Many have profound disabling or terminal conditions. Some live in dreary or deplorable conditions. It is easy in dealing with these cases to be overwhelmed by the parties' hopelessness and misfortune. Susan's compassion and dedication to her clients is obvious, but her optimism and sense of humor make her such a success and a joy to work with. We will miss her smile and ability to talk about gloomy cases and difficult clients in a respectful, non-judgmental and optimistic manner."

-Peter Ashmore, Managing Attorney

"I initially refused to participate in this tribute because I have not yet moved beyond the denial phase regarding Susan's pending departure from CVLS. But I will say that everyone loves Susan and we all wish we could be like her, but let's face it, folks—it's never going to happen. None of us are as kind, patient, humble, calm, poised, empathetic, understanding, dedicated and diligent as she is. We are all better people for knowing her (mostly because we have to behave ourselves to not look terrible by comparison). CVLS will not be the same without her; in fact the organization may very well devolve into chaos. TBD. We will miss her dearly and we are already plotting to make her do massive amounts of pro bono. I'm sure she would do it regardless, because: (1) she doesn't know how to bill hours and (2) she gives of herself so completely every day of her life while expecting nothing in return. Susan is a true servant leader, and I am so grateful to have worked with her for the past eight years."

-Rebekah Rashidfarokhi, Director,
Guardian ad Litem for Minors

"I have worked with Susan the entire time I have been at CVLS. I consider her part of the foundation of CVLS and I am not quite sure how things will be around here without her. I have seen Susan handle the most difficult of situations with an even temper and sheer grace. We are all very fortunate to have worked with her. She is always a part of the CVLS family and will be greatly missed by every single person here."

-Kristen Harrison, Panel Referral
Program Coordinator

"I could go on all day in praise of Susan because she is one of the best people I know. However, I will focus on one of the qualities I admire most in her -- how she interacts with people. She can relate to anyone, calm them down, provide guidance, and even lay down the law if she needs to; but no matter what she does, she always has such an innate empathy for every individual. We could all aspire to be the same."

-Jessica Engle, Office Manager

"When I started at CVLS as just an intern, I would listen to Susan make phone calls and think, "I don't know how she does it. No matter what is thrown at her she is calm, collected and kind." I would watch in amazement as she would handle the most difficult situation with grace and many times diffuse what seemed to be an untenable situation. As I listened, I hoped I would get to work with her more. I looked at her as who I wanted to be when I was a "real attorney". Years later, I am still amazed with who she is and her everlasting kindness. I am so lucky to have gotten to be counseled and taught by Susan and to have been able to work alongside her every day."

-Debi Filipovich, Staff Attorney,
Guardian ad Litem for Minors

"I have had the honor and the privilege to work with Susan since starting at CVLS. Susan has been a mentor and a friend, helping me navigate everything from the probate system to personal relationships. Her commitment to my professional growth inspires me to strive to be the most compassionate and impactful lawyer I can be."

I am excited for Susan to embark on her next chapter and know it will bring her great success, but I will miss her presence at CVLS dearly."

-Deepa Arora, Staff Attorney,
Guardian ad Litem for Adults

"Some people can't help but be an inspiration to others. They give without taking. They help without needing to be asked. The truly great ones are born with an empathy that isn't reserved for friends and family. Susan is one of those people and I have had the privilege to have been able to call her a colleague and friend for almost a decade. She will be missed more than she knows."

-Matt Pollock, Director, Communications



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makes a difference.**

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families.*

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The logo for Chicago Volunteer Legal Services is a black, stylized shape resembling a speech bubble or a banner. It has a pointed left side and a pointed right side. The text "CHICAGO VOLUNTEER LEGAL SERVICES" is written in white, bold, uppercase letters inside the shape. The text is arranged in four lines: "CHICAGO", "VOLUNTEER", "LEGAL", and "SERVICES".

**CHICAGO
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