# THE CHILDREN'S, LAW CENTER

Annual Report

**OUR MISSION** 

To promote the best possible outcomes for children and families in transition or crisis by providing access to legal services and support they could not otherwise afford and by advancing collaborative, non-adversarial options for resolving conflicts.

### **Dear Friends**,

As another successful year has come to pass, we find ourselves in awe of the unwavering support you continue to show us. Because of your commitment and generosity, we are able to help protect the best interests of indigent children in Connecticut, moving their turbulent family circumstances in a positive direction.

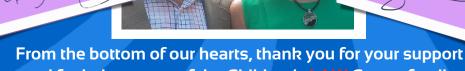
This annual report highlights the incredible work CLC was able to do in 2019, achievements that are just as much yours as they are our own:

- We served 1,955 children through our programs.
- In 78% of our cases, the presence of chronic conflict decreased

President, Board ol

• 73% of our Families in Transition mediation participants reported that they would return to FIT before returning to family court

• 72% of callers to the Children's Law Line found CLC's advice to be "helpful" or "very helpful"



# **THANK YOU**

and for being a part of the Children's LAW Center family

## **In 2019...**

We served **588** children in **365** families through our **Legal Representaion Program.** 

In **78%** of cases, conflict decreased

83% of CLC's cases remained closed with no re-emerging issues

In **71%** of cases, family environment improved after CLC involvement The cases we handle are among the most difficult and contentious that the courts see, and many are exacerbated by conditions of violence, addiction, abuse, neglect, mental illness, incarceration or other chronic challenges. The centerpiece of CLC's services is our Legal Representation Program

We play a unique role in Connecticut's legal aid community as the only agency devoted to indigent children in Family Court, focusing on protecting the interests of children whose parents are involved in high-conflict family court disputes. The Children's Law Center was appointed as Guardian *ad litem* to represent two girls: eight-year-old Paige and six-year-old Emma. When the girls were just four and two-years-old, their parents, Jason and Alexa, separated due to Jason's history of substance abuse and criminal offenses. Shortly after, Jason was arrested and incarcerated for two years. Upon his release from prison, Alexa allowed Jason to see Paige and Emma under her supervision, but when Jason began coming to his visitations intoxicated, Alexa refused visitation. Jason then disappeared without warning for two years and upon his return, contacted Alexa and asked to resume his parenting access. Jason had used those two years to work on himself and told Alexa that he was now sober but she was distrustful of his sobriety and refused to allow Jason to see Paige and Emma.

When Jason filed a motion requesting that he see his children every other weekend, the court appointed The Children's Law Center to represent the minor children. CLC's attorney and social worker worked with Jason on ways he could maintain his sobriety as well providing him tools to decrease negative communication with Alexa. CLC's goal was to help Jason and Alexa establish a healthier co-parenting relationship with one another for the benefit of their children.

With improved communication and CLC's help, trust began to form between Jason and Alexa. Jason's relationships with Paige and Emma began to mend, allowing CLC to focus on reunification of the children with their father. With CLC's intervention came the slow but steady process of repairing the broken relationship. It was a long road for the family but with CLC providing the necessary tools to Jason and Alexa to effectively communicate and co-parent, a parenting agreement was reached. Since then, the case has remained closed and Paige and Emma enjoy spending weekends at their dads; they are overjoyed to have both parents back in their lives.



### **In 2019...** The Children's Law Center served 1,335 children through 863 calls.

72% of callers surveyed said that they found the Law Line either "Helpful" or "Very Helpful."

requirements.

The labyrinth of agencies, courts and laws are often overwhelming and unmanageable even for 

advocate, and simply impenetrable for the average parent. Our Children's Law Line is an easily accessible legal resource that can assist callers on a variety of topics including custody, visitation and children's rights. Services like our Law Line are desperately needed by those who want to help a child, but who are at the mercy of a complex system. All calls placed to our Law Line are free, answered by a trained professional, and open to everyone as a public service without A respondant said: screening or income

"Thank you! Wow! You have changed everything. I don't know what I would do if I didn't call."



## **In 2019...**

# We served **32** children in **24** families through FIT.

Our Families in Transition (FIT) Program provides mediation and positive co-parenting services to low and middle income level parents who are embroiled in high-conflict family court disputes. CLC provides a gender-balanced team of mediators consisting of an attorney and a mental health professional, both of whom are trained mediators and familiar with the family court process. Our FIT program helps each party voice concerns and understand the concerns of the other parent. We give parents the tools necessary to communicate more effectively with one another, in turn decreasing their conflict level and creating a healthier, more stable environment for their children.

### THANK YOU To the volunteer professionals whose invaluable donation of time

makes FIT possible!

•

A parent participating in FIT mediation commented: "Working with my mediation team in the FIT program has been a very positive experience. Divorce is a difficult process and they help to make it very amicable and fair. Also, with the payment being on a sliding scale it is affordable."

# **OUR COMMUNITY**



**Rakich-Kelly** Executive Director

Artila Lubonia

Staff Attorney

Deb Shulansky

Director of

Development



**Margaret Bozek** Staff Attorney

> 100 ----

Kathryn Phillips

Staff Attorney

Nicole Silva

Staff Social

Worker



**David Coughlin** *Staff Attorney* 

Aisha Roche

Staff Attorney

Jenna Trott

Development &

Marketing Associate



Randa Hojaiban Deputy Director

Monique Ryan Staff Attorney



Tonia Tubaya Professional Assistant

**FIT Mediators** 

William Brown Tom Buczynski Susan Busby Abby Cole **Rachel Diamond** Kim Duell **Robert Fiedler Douglas Fishman Bruce Freedman Kelly Gallagher** Lisa Giliberto Andrew Hechtman Charles Higgins

Sidnev Horowitz Kate Kowalyshyn **Howard Krieger Robin Landeau** Karen LaRose Robert Madden **Nicholas Maglio** Kata Maluzewski Jeff Mickelson **Kathleen Nevins Ben Shapiro Corey Somerville Martin Wheeler** 

### Interns

Kaylin Benitez **Daman Brar Audra Inglis** 

Matthew Rossi Alex Tomcho **Kayleigh Vocca** Wiktoria Zduniak

### **Volunteer Trainers**

**Robert Madden, LCSW, JD** "The Maginalized Parent: Neuroscience for Lawyers"

**Connecticut Children's Medical Center - Center for Care Coordination:** "Protective Factors Training"

Dr. Stephen Humphrey & Dr. Lisa Cippola: "The Language of Children"

In 2019, we said farewell to: Jodie Comer Oshana, Staff Attorney, & Danielle Murray, Development Associate

### 2019 Board of Directors

From left:

Melissa Arkus James Russell Cara Hardacker Scott Esposito Pam Magnano, *Secretary* Dan Brody Patricia Pheanious Jonathan Fink, *Treasurer* Laura Post, *Vice President* Justine Rakich-Kelly, *Executive Director* Tim Buckley, *President* Elizabeth Thayer Patrick Proctor

In 2019, we said farewell with grateful thanks to...

Jovanni Valentini

Thank you, Jovanni for your support of CLC!



### Meet Our 2019-2020 Roisman Fellow



Each year a recipient is selected for the competitive **Roisman Fellowship**. It is designated to give law students the opportunity to get hands-on legal experience at The Children's Law Center. In 2019 we said farewell to **Onya Brown** and welcomed **Olivia Benson!** 

### Read more about Olivia's experience with CLC below:

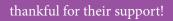
My undergraduate studies focused largely on psychology and I was fortunate to work in two research labs: the Early Detection of Autism Laboratory and the Child and Adolescent Anxiety Laboratory. One summer I participated in an internship at the Child Mind Institute assisting in an intensive therapy program for children with selective mutism. I also partnered with the UConn Health Child Trauma Clinic in order to carry out my honors research thesis, during which I studied the benefits of drama therapy for adolescents who had experienced trauma. These experiences inspired me to explore family law in law school.

Receiving the Roisman Fellowship in Family Law at the Children's Law Center has been an incredible opportunity to use the skills I learned studying psychology, while also honing new legal skills. The Children's Law Center staff is knowledgeable, experienced, and supportive. I was given the freedom to treat cases truly as my own without ever feeling lost. The numerous opportunities to conduct client intake meetings, do home and school visits, attend short calendar and represent my clients in front of a judge have been absolutely invaluable. The Fellowship has allowed me to narrow the gap between what we learn in school and the practical nature of how the law works outside of the classroom.

As an evening student, I have two more years before I graduate law school. In that time, I plan to explore more areas of the law and continue to use and hone the skills I've learned. I am undecided on the exact area of law I wish to practice, but I hope to always give back to the families and children in need through pro bono work.

### **Blue State Coffee**

Blue State Coffee allocates a percentage of its sales each year to **benefit local non-profits.** The Children's Law Center was fortunate to have been one of 8 non-profits chosen by **Hartford's Blue State Coffee** to receive a donation and we are so







### **Congrats Justine!**

In 2019, Justine was the recipient of two awards: **The Charles J. Parker Legal Services Award**, presented to a member of the CT Bar who has demonstrated a dedication to the delivery of legal services to the disadvantaged in CT, and the **Greater Hartford Family Advocacy Center Works of Compassion Award**.

### **Legislative Breakfast**

Thank you, **Representative John** Hampton, for hosting The Children's Law Center's Legislative Breakfast. We would also like to thank all the **legislators & legislative staff** who stopped by to learn more about The Children's Law Center and what we do!





### Morneault's Wine, Music & Fashion!

We had a blast at Morneault's Stackpole Moore Tryon's event! Together we raised nearly \$2,000 to help continue CLC's important work and we couldn't have done it without you!

### The Children's Law Center Annual Meeting

We are thrilled to be able to celebrate **26 years** of success! We are grateful to all of our supporters who came to **celebrate** with us!





1st Annual CT Street Legends Car Show

Cars, food and prizes, oh my! **The Connecticut Street Legends** know how to host a great car show. **Thank you** for helping raise funds for the Children's Law Center!

### More 2019 Highlights May Cares Colf

### Max Cares Golf Tournament

It's always a great time when we help our friends at Max Cares Foundation who do so much for CLC and the community.

### **Birdies for Charity**

We participated in the 2019 Birdies for Charity program in partnership with the Travelers Championship. Together we raised over \$13,000!

BK & Co.

Thank you to BK & Co. for helping to support CLC!

### **Hog River Trivia Night**

Craft beer, food trucks and trivia; giving has never been more fun! Thank you to our trivia host, Geoff Pusko, for making the night extra special.

### **Moose Riders**

Thank you to the East Hartford Moose Riders for hosting a bike show to benefit CLC.

Thank you to everyone who attended our 2019 Gala!

We are so grateful to everyone who helped to make The Children's Law Center's 2019 Gala extraordinary.

With your help, 2019 was a record setting year. Nearly **300** guests gathered at Delamar West Hartford, raising **\$130,000** to support our programs.

We'd like to **thank all** of our Gala Sponsors, your committment to our work is greatly appreciated. We would also like to offer a special thanks to our Champion Sponsor: **Hartford Evergreen Masonic Lodge #88**; your continued support of our community helps to make this event possible.

Finally, thank you to our esteemed emcee, **Renee DiNino**, for making our 2019 Gala memorable!



# **THANK YOU!**



### **Special Thanks to:**

Gala Committee:

Gala Volunteers:

Margaret Bozek Ed Bryan Lena DiGenti Garlinck Dumont Stephanie Esposito Cara Hardacker Karen Herbert Paddi LeShane Pam Magnano Carol McCabe Heather McRoberts Kelly A. Scott Deb Shulansky Nicole Silva Jenna Trott

Onya Brown Alyssa DePaolis Brooke Garcia Carolyn Gershman Eileen Hurley Audra Inglis Katelyn Kohl Jacob Morrow-Spitzer Gabriel Oshana Liz Panico Laura Post Christa Rakich-Kelly Steve Silva Erica Titi Wictoria Zduniak

Liz Reynolds *Event Liasion* 

Justine Rakich-Kelly Executive Director



**Grants & Foundations** AmazonSmile Foundation **American Savings Foundation** AXA XL Bristol Brass General Fund and The Bristol Savings Bank Fund at the Main Street Community Foundation **Budd Family Fund** Catherine M. Kornas Fund CATIC Foundation, Inc. Charles and Doris Bryan Fund Charles B. Cook Fund Charles Nelson Robinson Fund Community Chest of New Britain and Berlin, Inc. Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, Inc. **Connecticut Community** Foundation **Connecticut Judicial Branch** David L. Savin Family Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation **Duncaster** Foundation Farmington Bank Community Foundation Hartford Evergreen Masonic Lodge #88 Hartford Foundation for Public Hartford Wolf Pack Community Foundation

Ion Bank Foundation J. Walton Bissell Foundation Max Cares Foundation McPhee Foundation SBM Charitable Foundation The Ellen Jeanne Goldfarb Memorial Charitable Trust The Shulansky Foundation, Inc. Thomas Atkins Memorial Fund United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut Walmart Community Grants Women & Girls' Fund at the Main Street Community Foundation

### \$10,000 & Up

Apex Systems GalaxE Solutions Hartford Evergreen Masonic Lodge #88 UST Global

### \$5,000 - \$9,999

Cigna Dornenburg | Kallenbach Advertising Mr. Scott & Ms. Stephanie Esposito Max Cares Foundation Ruel Ruel Goings & Britt, LLC

### \$2,500 - \$5,999

Delamar Flaherty Legal Group, LLC Atty. Aaron & Atty. Sandra Gersten Moses Tax Group, PC Hon. Robert & Atty. Kathleen Nastri PricewaterhouseCoopers Pullman & Comley, LLC Russell & Company CPAs PC

### \$1,000 - \$2,499

4AVNow/John Dawson blumshapiro Brown Paindiris & Scott, LLP Mr. Tim Buckley & Atty. Patricia O'Neil Connecticut Collaborative Divorce Group Atty, Mary Roche & Mr. James Cronin Mr. Jonathan & Ms. Carolyn Fink Freed Marcroft Atty. Scott Birrell & Atty. Karen Gersten Ms. Cara & Mr. Jason Hardacker Ms. Lisa Harris Hartford Flavor Company Atty. Charles Higgins Ms. Theresa Wing Hines Ms. Judith Hvde Intel Jean-Francois Photography Law Offices of Kim L. Duell LAZ Parking Mester Law Group, LLC Morneault's Stackpoole Moore Tryon

Mohawk Northeast, Inc. The O'Neil Law Firm P.C. One Pearl Ms. Patricia & Mr. Robert Pheanious Ms. Gail & Mr. David Porteus Pue, Chick, Leibowitz & Blezard, LLC Robinson+Cole LLP Mr. James & Atty. Debra Ruel Hon. Thelma Santos Shipman & Goodwin LLP Sullivan & LeShane, Inc. Drs. Jack & Liza Thayer Travelers Championship Mr. Oliver Tuller Webster Bank

### \$500 - \$999

Acrisure, LLC, dba: The Health **Consultants Group** Bendett & McHuah, PC Berman Mickelson Dembo & Jacobs LLC Mr. Gordon & Ms. Karen Binkhorst BK & Co. Atty. Dan A. Brody Mr. Michael & Ms. Lisa Cicchetti Hon, Edward Dolan Dumont Law, LLC Fiduciary Investment Advisors Ms. Sheri & Mr. David Ginden Mr. Christopher & Atty. Dara Goings I Giovani Solisti Atty. Justine Rakich-Kelly

Maluszewski Law Mr. Thomas Morgan Ms. Sheila & Mr. Paul Moses Mr. Frank Nemia Ms. Laura Post & Mr. Mark Pazniokas Pension Consultants, Inc. Mr. David & Ms. Gail Porteus Law Offices of Susan Busby Ms. Linda & Mr. Patrick Proctor Mr. Jason Kemp & Ms. Kimball Robbins Mr. James Jr. & Abiah Ruel Mr. Paul Sapiro Mr. Todd D. Shepard Ms Deborah & Mr. Stuart Shoflick Ms. Geraldine & Mr. Timothy Sullivan The Friday Club Mr. Andv & Ms. Lauren Wyeth Mr. Stefan & Ms. Maureen Zavatone

### \$250-\$499

Atty. Peter Arakas & Ms. Karen<br/>KellermanAtty. James & Ms. Susan Bergenn<br/>Atty. Peter & Ms. Deborah Berry<br/>Mr. Santos & Ms. Leslie Bonilla<br/>Mr. Vijay Chakravarthy<br/>Ms. Kim Crowley<br/>Mr. Terry & Ms. Catherine D'Italia<br/>East Hartford Moose Riders<br/>Mr. John & Ms. Debra Gilbert<br/>Mr. Jesse Goodale<br/>Ms. Maureen Gould<br/>Hartford Court Staff

Atty. Randa Hojaiban Atty. Robert & Ms. Lynn Katz Mr. Edward & Ms. Trish Keves Mr. Scott & Ms. Rebecca Lehmann Mr. Garrett Lunden Atty, Robert & Ms. Doreen Madden Atty, Pamela & Mr. Brian Magnano Ms. Natalie & Mr. Lee Pollock Ms. Rebecca Rehel Mr. Michael & Ms. Diane Roach Ms. Cynthia Sanstrom Mr. Todd & Ms. Paula Shepard Hon. Joseph Shortall & Atty. Sara **Bernstein** Ms. Deb Shulansky Atty. Lynne Ustach Atty. Regina Wexler Atty, Edward & Ms, Brooke Whittemore World Diamond Source, Inc.

### \$100-\$249

Hon. Gerard I. Adelman Allied World Mr. Peter & Ms. Dianne Antos Ms. Melissa Arkus Mr. Paul & Ms. Vivian Batterson Mr. Aaron & Ms. Laurie Bayer Ms. Sandra Berinstein Atty. Edward Bryan Mr. Thomas Chapman Dr. Abby & Mr. James Cole Connecticut Street Legends

**Bridgewater Chocolate** Mr. Kyle Divico Dr. Elaine Ducharme Mr. Chandra Dyamangoudar Ms. Mary Jane Eisen Atty. Joshua Feldman Mr. Leonard Felson & Ms. Julia Rosenblum Ms. Brette Fitton Atty. Robert Fried Mr. David & Atty. Sandi Girolamo Atty. Rosemary Giuliano Give Greater Waterbury-Litchfield Atty. Damon Goldstein Ms. Andrea Greika Mr. Edward Goldberg Hartford Fire Insurance Company Mr. Charles & Ms. Karen Herbert Ms. Eileen Hurley Atty. Kimberly & Mr. Eric Jacobsen Mr. William & Ms. Erin Johnson Dr. Jeffrey & Ms. Sunny Kagan Mr. Nicholas Karlowicz Ms. Maureen Kirouac Ms. Mary & Mr. Robert LaPorte Ms. Brenda Larkin Ms. Fatima Lobo Mr. Eapen Mathew Dr. Allison McCluer Atty, Heather McRoberts Ms. Margaret Murphy Atty. Geoffrey Naab Atty. Kathleen Nevins

AT

Mr. Robert & Mrs. Joan Pennev Ms. Heather Perbeck Atty. Yolanda Preysner Atty. Mark Rosenblum & Ms. Lisa Derenzo Ms. Rosalie Roth Atty. Lee Sauerhoff Dr. Gerald Sazama Dr. Harold Schramm Atty. Kelly A. Scott Mr. Doug & Mrs. Claire Scully Mr. Rick Silva Mr. Tim & Mrs. Tina Staino Mr. Andrew & Mrs. Sandra Stern Mr. Greg & Mrs. Debra Stump Mr. Frank Szilagyi Atty. Meghan Sweeney & Mr. Scott Burns Ms. Karen Tomasko Ms. Melissa Torni UnitedHealth Group Dr. Elliot & Mrs. Esther Urdang Ms. Susan Watson Mr. Michael Weber Mr. Howard & Ms. Patti Weiner

### **In-Kind Gifts**

A.C. Petersen Farms Adventure Park at Storrs Amici Italian Grill Artichoke Basille's Pizza Artisan West Hartford The Art of Yum Avery's Beverages Ms. Barbara Panico Ms. Jane and Mr. Norm Barstow Becker's Diamonds & Fine Jewelry BK & Co. Blue State Coffee, Hartford Board & Brush **Bob's Discount Furniture** Boston Red Sox **Bottle Stop Wine & Spirits** Atty. Margaret Bozek Bridgewater Chocolate Atty. Dan A. Brody Atty. Ed Bryan Cafe Sofia Mr. Anthony & Mr. Logan Carducci The Children's Museum The Coffee Trade Compass Group USA Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo **Connecticut Science Center Copper Beech Institute** Ms Donna Cox Delamar West Hartford **Deepwater Seafood** The Flbow Room **Elements Massage Engine Room** Mr. Scott & Ms. Stephanie Esposito **Executive Valet Parking** Farmington Miniature Golf & Ice Cream Parlor Farmington Valley Arts Center

First & Last Tavern Foxwoods Resort Casino Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana Fringe Hair Works Atty. Sandra & Atty. Aaron Gersten Ginza Japanese Restaurant, Bloomfield Golf Club of Avon Golfers' Warehouse Gouveia Vinevards Ms. Cara Hardacker Hartford Athletic Hartford Baking Company Hartford Flavor Company Hartford Stage Hartford Symphony Orchestra Hartford Yard Goats Mr. Andrew & Mrs. Rachel Hechtman Hill-Stead Museum Ms.Theresa Wings Hines Imagine Float Innovative Fitness/Self | Will **IRIS** Photography Joey Garlic's Kidcity Mr. Jon Kukucka Ms. Laura Langlie LEGO® Ms Sarah Lewoc Lenny and Joe's Fish Tale Liquid Nirvana Long Wharf Theatre

Ms. Fatima Lobo Marcus Communications The Mark Twain House & Museum Max Restaurant Group Ms. Carol McCabe Hon C Ian McI achlan MedSpa West Hartford **Milexy** Couture Morneault's Stackpole Moore Tryon Mystic Aquarium New England Pasta Company New England Patriots New Haven Symphony Orchestra New York Giants The New York Jets Orangetheory Fitness Papcsy Janosov Roche Trial Lawyers Pet Supplies Plus Ms. Patricia Pheanious Pixi Hair Studio **Playhouse on Park** Pond House Café & Banquets Ms. Laura Post Mr. Danny Prince Ms Linda & Mr. Patrick Proctor Atty. Justine Rakich-Kelly Racquet Koop Real Art Ways Re:nu 180 Medspa Ms. Diane & Mr. Michael Roach S.K. Lavery Appliance Company

Mr. Keith Salmon Scoopy Doos Ice Cream Ms. Kelly A. Scott Ms. Deb Shulansky Ski Mount Southington The Spirited Design SPoT Coffee Stanley Black and Decker Stanley Golf Course Stone Age Rock Gym Stonewall Kitchen Stony Creek Brewery Susan Loraine Jewelry Talcott Mountain Science Center & Academy Terry Walters, LLC Dr. Liza Thayer **TheaterWorks** Total Wine & More Urban Air Orange Ms. Pam & Mr. Jeff Verney Vinevard Vines Wampanoag Country Club Water's Edge Resort & Spa Willington Pizza House Yale Repertory Theatre

Ihank You for

### REVENUE

\$1,206,129 Grants & Foundations | \$619,115 Legal Representation | \$260,413 Event Income | \$166,057 Individual & Corporate Contributions | \$41,305 Rebuilding Families | \$9,626

### **EXPENSES**

\$1,143,392

Program Expenses |\$883,517 Fundraising|\$182,897 Management & General|\$76,978

# OOKING FORWARD.

### **Join Our Community**

Want to be a part of the CLC family? Follow us on Facebook and Instagram and be sure to keep an eye on www.clcct.org/events for more information!

### **Help Us Celebrate!**

2020 is CLC's 27th Anniversary. Join the celebration at our Annual Gala! Tickets and auction items will be posted on www.clcct.org/gala-2020

### **Support Our Cause**

To find out more information on CLC's mission and ways you can get involved visit www.clcct.org/get-involved



Non-Profit Org US Postage PAID HARTFORD, CT