

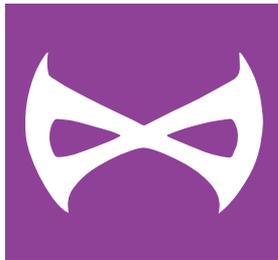
THE CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER OF CONNECTICUT

ANNUAL REPORT

celebrating our heroes of twenty five years

est. 1993

A LOOK AT 2018



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 outside the court system.

CLC's new mission supports expanding our services to the children, parents, and communities in which we work.

CLC touched the lives of over 2,050 children in our 25th year.

Our 5-year strategic plan bolsters our goals to help children, advance non-adversarial approaches and outcomes in the family court system, and tells our story to fortify relationships.

celebrating 25 Years

Dear Friends,

2018 was a year of celebration at The Children's Law Center: celebration of 25 years of your unwavering support and dedication. We celebrate the work you help us do protecting 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 2018, work we could not have done without your support, and for which we thank each of you:

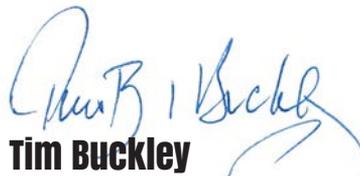
- We served over 2,050 children through our programs.
- 97% of orders entered by family court judges reflected CLC attorney recommendations, focusing on the best interests of children.
- 73% of our Families in Transition mediation participants reported that they would return to FIT before returning to family court.
- 84% of callers to the Children's Law Line found CLC's advice to be "helpful" or "very helpful."

As you will see throughout this report, CLC has made great strides in our first 25 years, and we cannot stop and rest on these successes. YOU are why we are here and together, with your continued support, we can further our mission of protecting Connecticut's children.

**Thank you, wholeheartedly, for being a part
of The Children's LAW Center family.
We are looking forward to much more
in our next 25 years!**



Justine Rakich-Kelly
Executive Director



Tim Buckley
President, Board of Directors



Legal Representation

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 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.

We seek to achieve the safest, most stable arrangements for children who are caught in the middle of these cases.

In 2018...

We served **552** children in **358** families through our **Legal Representation Program**.

97% of court orders reflected CLC recommendations.

Only 12% of cases were cases that re-opened, indicating that a high majority of cases have no re-emerging issues.

In 82% of cases, parental conflict decreased after CLC involvement.

Leah, 8, & Will, 5, share strong bonds with their parents, Stephen & Jackie. However, shortly after the parents' divorce was finalized...

DCF received a complaint about drug use in the home. The siblings were placed with their grandparents on an order of temporary custody.

Stephen immediately complied with all treatment requirements and custody of the two children was transferred back to him within a year.

Jackie made efforts to become sober but fell into a pattern of staying sober just long enough to regain custody before relapsing.

After Jackie's eighth motion to modify was filed, the court appointed CLC to assist the court in determining what was in the best interests of the children.

The CLC guardian *ad litem* (GAL) focused in on key considerations: How did the continuous changes in schedule impact the children? What was Jackie's mental health status and was she complying with treatment? Would the children be safe if Jackie had unsupervised parenting time and relapsed?



The GAL also weighed factors such as the children's progress in therapy, their academic and emotional health, Stephen's increasing reluctance to agree to additional modifications of orders, and the availability of Jackie's parents to supervise her parenting time. Jackie's history of frequent relapses resulted in constant disruptions to the children's lives.

When custody was shared, the children would start out happy, but over time would lose their enthusiasm for play and their academics suffered. Although they loved their mother and were always happy to see her, their interests were best served when her parenting time was supervised.

Based on CLC's recommendations, Stephen was granted full custody with primary residence for Leah and Will. Jackie was granted substantial parenting time under the supervision of her parents, who are involved, reliable caretakers.

To seek unsupervised parenting time in the future, Jackie will first need to submit a 6-month clean hair follicle test. She has since been incarcerated on drug charges, but the children continue to follow the established parenting plan by visiting their grandparents instead.

The benefits are palpable: the children thrive under their routine, are doing well in school, and continue to enjoy a strong bond with each other and their family.



Children's Law Line

In 2018...

We served **1,509** children in **1,045** families through our **Children's Law Line**.

The labyrinth of agencies, courts, and laws are often overwhelming and unmanageable even for the most experienced 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 screening or income requirements.

84% of callers surveyed said that they found the Law Line either "Helpful" or "Very Helpful."

Respondents said:

"I've referred four others to you because you're awesome! I'm really thankful for you guys. Without you, I would've been really lost."

"You guys helped me do the right things."

"You saved me from making the biggest mistake in my life. Keep doing what you're doing. You guys are great!"

Anna adored her niece, Joy, from the moment she saw her. With Joy's father out of the picture, Joy's mother, Lisa, happily accepted Anna's help. Anna would frequently babysit, pick Joy up from daycare, and have sleepovers when Lisa worked late.

Before Joy, Lisa struggled with alcoholism. While pregnant and nursing, she abstained completely.



After Joy was weaned, Lisa began to relax her stance. Before long, her addiction was out of control and her behavior erratic; she was late picking up Joy, who often wore the same outfit multiple days in a row.

When Lisa was hospitalized for alcohol poisoning, Anna reassured her that she would care for Joy until Lisa recovered and beyond, if Lisa would consider rehabilitation. Lisa refused.

Anna confided to hospital social services that if Lisa would not accept treatment, Anna would do whatever necessary to keep Joy. Social services called DCF and referred Anna to CLC's Law Line.



Anna called CLC saying that she had no intention of giving Joy back to Lisa or letting DCF take her. CLC's attorney explained that because Anna could not legally keep Joy from her mother, Joy was vulnerable in Anna's care.

However, if Anna had guardianship of Joy, DCF might be satisfied that Anna could keep her niece safe. The attorney discussed filing for guardianship in Probate Court and gave Anna an outline of the necessary steps.

Months later, CLC called Anna back to check in on their situation. Anna reported that the situation had improved, calling the information she got "very helpful" and stating, "I learned a lot about my rights and my sister's rights."

She had been granted temporary guardianship of Joy until Lisa completed a rehabilitation program, motivating Lisa to seek the help she needed. While Lisa initially resented Anna, she has come to appreciate Anna's support of Joy and how she always puts the child's needs first.

Joy has benefited greatly from the stability of her Aunt's home; she is succeeding in school, smiling more and loves having friends over to play.



Families in Transition

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.

FIT Mediators

William Brown	Kate Kowalyszyn
Tom Buczynski	Howard Krieger
Susan Busby	Robin Landeau
Abby Cole	Karen LaRose
Rachel Diamond	Pamela Magnano
Kim Duell	Robert Madden
Robert Fiedler	Nicholas Maglio
Douglas Fishman	Kata Maleuzewski
Bruce Freedman	Jeff Mickelson
Kelly Gallagher	Kathleen Nevins
Lisa Giliberto	Ben Shapiro
Andrew Hechtman	Corey Somerville
Charles Higgins	Martin Wheeler
Sidney Horowitz	

In 2018...

We served **28** children in **19** families in FIT.

Thank You...

To the volunteer professionals whose invaluable donation of time makes FIT possible.

Kate and Drew had a very contentious custody trial which resulted in Kate having sole decision-making authority for their child Anderson, and Drew having scheduled parenting time. They could have decided to end things there, particularly Kate, who did not even have to consult with Drew to make decisions about their child.

However, both parents recognized that the status quo was untenable. They still experienced high conflict to which the child was being exposed. The stress this caused the child manifested as bedwetting at age 9.



Kate and Drew committed to attending the FIT program. Sometimes sessions involved yelling, crying, or talk about quitting. However, each time they both come back, committed to creating a better future for their child. Sometimes an entire session was focused on disussing how a high-conflict, two-minute interaction could have gone differently and sometimes on greater themes such as the child's religious upbringing.

Each session created another opportunity for Kate and Drew to build trust in each other, see good intentions where they used to see bad, and grow more comfortable with compromise. They continued to build on each success, learning more effective communication techniques, and cultivating a relationship that made them proud.

Anderson was approaching his first "double-digit" birthday and Drew had wanted to make it memorable. He reserved a room at Anderson's favorite restaurant and then sent invitations to Kate and her entire family. Anderson was able to spend his 10th birthday in the company of all of his loved-ones, conflict-free. That's success!



our 2018 Board of Directors



From left: James Russell, Liza Thayer, Pam Magnano (Secretary), Laura Post (Vice President), Scott Esposito, Tim Buckley (President), Jonathan Fink (Treasurer), Pat Pheanious, Patrick Proctor, Cara Hardacker, Melissa Arkus, Dan Brody, Jovanni Valentini

In 2018, we said farewell with gratitude to: Mark Boxer, Sandra Gerten, Robert Madden, Gaurav Patel

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Executive Director



Jodie Comer Oshana
Staff Attorney



David Coughlin
Staff Attorney



Randa Hojaiban
Deputy Director



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Staff Attorney



Danielle Murray
Development Associate



Kathryn Phillips
Staff Attorney



Aisha Roche
Staff Attorney



Monique Ryan
Staff Attorney



Deb Shulansky
Director of Development



Nicole Silva
Staff Social Worker



Tonia Tubaya
Professional Assistant

In 2018, we said farewell to: Adelina Santiago, Professional Assistant; Abby Woodhouse, Development Associate

our Community

Our 2018 Interns



Paula Atallah
Bruce Bates

Emily Brodzinski
Jenny Cavallari

Carla Concha

Patrycja Danilczyk

Alicia DiLeo

Sarah Ertle
Anna Gailloud

Thalia Giraldo

Alexis Howard

Katelynn Kohl

Brian Linares

Jake Pember
Nirina Sangali

Aida Shilwa

Erin Stack

Erica Teti

Alison Walker

Roisman Fellowship

In 2018 we said goodbye to **Elizabeth Panico** and hello to **Onya Brown!**

Each was a recipient of the competitive Roisman Fellowship, designated to give law students the opportunity to get hands-on legal experience at the Children's Law Center.

Thank You...

To the professionals who donate their time to make our trainings successful and to everyone who attends.

Ethics and the Law

Robert G. Madden, LCSW JD

Marcy Tench Stoval, JD

Violence and Children

Stephanie Stein Leite, PsyD

John Padgett, PhD

Jennifer Shimer

Welcome 2 Reality

The Good, The Bad, & The Internet

Marcus Stallworth, LMSW

Qur-an Webb, MSW

Our 2018 Trainers

Amazing!

Field Instructor of the Year!

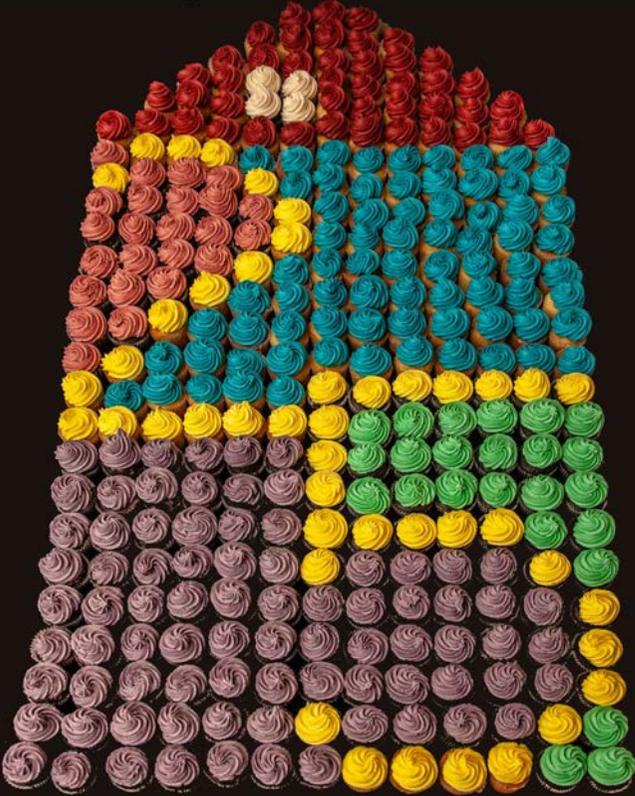
The University of Saint Joseph recognized staff social worker Nicole Silva LCSW with this award honoring her, as a social work professional, for her distinguished service as an educator who prepares students for social work practice in the field.



25th Anniversary celebration Gala

Thank You

for celebrating **25 years**
of helping little voices be heard



In November, we held our 25th Anniversary Celebration Gala, honoring our community heroes and CLC's work to protect children and strengthen families.



We raised a record \$119,000 thanks to our fantastic community's support.

We were thrilled to honor our founders, Judy Hyde and Debra Ruel, by announcing the establishment of the Ruel-Hyde Endowment.



Our Community

25 years of protecting children & strengthening families



Committee (left to right): Erum Randhawa, Laura Post, Garlinck Dumont, Liz Reynolds, Nicole Silva, Cara Hardacker, Pam Magnano, Artila Lubonja, Carol McCabe, Deb Shulansky, Lena DiGenti, Paddi LeShane, Danielle Murray, Justine Rakich-Kelly, Ed Bryan

Volunteers:

Ellie Abrams
Paula Atallah
Onya Brown
Garlinck Dumont
Brooke Garcia
Eileen Hurley
Katelynn Kohl
Alice Murchie



Volunteers continued:

Elizabeth Panico
Jake Pember
Christa Rakich-Kelly
Erica Scherzer
Steve Silva
Erica Teti
Abby Woodhouse

A special thanks to our
Champion Sponsor,
**Hartford Evergreen
Masonic Lodge #88**,
whose commitment
to our community
helped make this
event possible.



Thank you as well to
our other sponsors,
including: Judy Hyde,
Max Cares Foundation,
Cigna, Debra & Jim Ruel,
Bruce & Hanna Clements,
Ruel Ruel Goings & Britt LLC,
& Strategic Staffing Solutions.



Our Events

CLC was thrilled to celebrate our 25th Anniversary with our incredible family of supporters: heroes who see the needs of Connecticut's children and answer that need with generosity, warmth, and joy.



25th Anniversary Reception

We are grateful to George Jepsen & Diana Sousa, who opened their home to host this celebration for us!

Thank you to our hosts and attendees, and to Little Man Sweets for donating our birthday cake!

Pottery Night

Farmington Valley Arts Center graciously opened their doors to benefit CLC, allowing supporters to craft unique pottery. Thank you to our very patient instructor Pedro J. Centeno of Junkpot Studio!



VIP Women's Networking

Morneault's Stackpole Moore Tryon and Thomas Reuters promoted networking for women while benefiting CLC!



Annual Meeting

We were thrilled to invite our supporters to our Annual Meeting, where we celebrated our successes of 25 years. Not all heroes wear capes!

Our Community

something fun for everyone

CLC Bike Show & Ride

The East Hartford Moose Riders hosted this event to benefit CLC. Music, food, bikes and good company make this event memorable every time!



Wine, Women & Fashion

BK & Co. celebrated some of CLC's favorite things and donated 20% of all profits from the night to support CLC's important work.



Firefly Hollow Trivia Night

Giving made fun! Participants enjoyed craft brew and The Art of Yum food truck while flexing their knowledge and winning prizes. Thank you to Local Motion Entertainment for donating trivia services!



Classic car show

The Connecticut Street Legends generously offered us a table at one of their car shows, giving CLC the opportunity to let people know about our programs. A great fundraiser!

Birdies for charity

We participated in the 2018 Birdies for Charity program in partnership with the Travelers Championship, raising over \$6,000 for our work.

Brackets for Good

CLC had fun with the 2018 Brackets for Good single-elimination, bracket-style fundraising tournament, raising over \$6,000.



our supporters

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Eurest Dining
Farmington Miniature Golf Course
& Ice Cream Parlor
Fatima Lobo
Ferris Acres Creamery
Flanders Donut and Bake Shop
Food Schmooze
Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana
Gary Katz
Gouveia Vineyards
Hanging Hills Brewing Company
Harney & Sons Master Tea
Blenders
Hartford Flavor Company
Hartford Stage
Hartford Symphony Orchestra
Hartford Yard Goats
Heather McRoberts
Hon. C. Ian McLachlan
Howley Bread Group
Ichiro Hibachi & Sushi
Infinity Music Hall & Bistro
Innovative Fitness & Wellness
IRIS Photography
Jack & Liza Thayer
Jem's Garden and Dairy Barn
Jonathan & Carolyn Fink
Justine & Brian Rakich-Kelly
K & A Transportation
KidCity Museum
Laura Langlie
Laura Post & Mark Pazniokas
LEGO Systems Inc.
Liquid Nirvana
Little Man Sweets
Little Monster Shibas
LR Events / Liz Reynolds
Lux Bond & Green

Thank You!

Mark & Diane Roach
 Mark Boxer
 Mark Twain House
 Matthew Phillips
 Max Restaurant Group
 Maximum Beverage
 Medspa at the Delamar
 Melissa Arkus
 Milexy Couture
 Moe's Southwest Grill
 Morneault's Stackpole Moore
 Tryon
 Mortensen's Dairy Ice Cream
 Mount Southington Ski Area
 Muse Paintbar
 Mystic Aquarium
 New Britain Museum of American
 Art
 New England Patriots Foundation
 New York Football Giants
 New York Jets
 Oriental Trading Company
 Paddi LeShane
 Pam & Brian Magnano
 Pamela & Jeffery Verney

Patrick & Carol McCabe
 Philip David Jewelers
 Playhouse on Park
 Ray Jannelli
 Real Art Ways
 Salem Valley Farms
 Sandy Welch
 Seaglass Fine Art Photography
 Self | Will Apparel
 Shake Shack
 Shipman & Goodwin
 Sinatro Agency Insurance
 SkyeLine Studio
 Southwest Airlines
 Spoke + Spy Ciderworks
 SPoT Coffee Company
 Stanley Black & Decker
 Stepping Stone Children's
 Museum
 Still Hill Brewery
 Stonewall Kitchen
 Sullivan & LeShane
 Super Cellar Warehouse Liquors
 Susan Loraine Jewelry
 Susi Kinsloe-Byers

T. Michael McRoberts
 Talcott Mountain Science Center
 & Academy
 Tea Roses Tea Room & Gift
 Shoppe
 The Bear Factory
 The Bushnell Performing Arts Ctr
 The Children's Museum
 The Coffee Trade
 The Esposito Family
 The Golf Club of Avon
 The Liquorist
 The Silva Family
 The Silver Dahlia
 TheaterWorks
 Therapeutic Solutions
 Total Wine & More
 Toy Chest
 Truffles on Main
 Vineyard Vines
 Wampanoag Country Club
 Willimantic Brewing Co.
 Willington Pizza

our Financials

Revenue

\$1,075,344



- Grants & Foundations | \$633,446
- Legal Representation | \$280,238
- Event Income | \$155,476
- Individual & Corporate Contributions | \$46,473
- Rebuilding Families | \$5,892
- Investment Loss | -\$46,181

Expenses

\$1,158,180



- Program Expenses | \$882,117
- Fundraising | \$206,182
- Management & General | \$69,881





The Children's
LAW
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