

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Families Growing Stronger



The Children's LAW Center



The mission of The Children's **LAW** Center is 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.

Through its programs and services the Children's **LAW** Center strives to create safe, stable environments for children whose parents are in chronic conflict.

A Letter from Our Executive Director & Board President

Dear Friends,

We are thrilled to share with you our 2022 Annual Report, where you will find reports on challenges, triumphs, and the impactful stories stemming from our efforts throughout the year. More than anything, what we hope resonates most with you is the deep sense of gratitude we feel for those who stood by us, supported us, collaborated with us, and lifted us up during what turned out to be another demanding year.

With your invaluable assistance, we successfully navigated through the challenges and emerged stronger. For example, while our annual caseload remained consistent with more than 500 cases and 700 kids served, nearly all (96%) of the orders that were entered substantively reflected the recommendations of The Children's LAW Center Attorneys (a slight increase over 2021). Our Families In Transition (FIT) Mediation program also served more cases and kids than the year prior, thanks to the dedicated efforts of our volunteers.

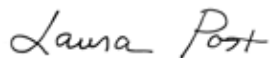
As we reflect on these activities and achievements, we are excited about the possibilities ahead.

We extend our sincerest thanks to our dedicated team, generous donors, passionate volunteers and supportive partners whose unwavering commitment makes our work possible. Your dedication to CLC and our mission is truly inspiring. We invite you to explore the achievements in this report with the knowledge that you had a part in bringing these accomplishments to life.

With sincerest gratitude,



Justine Rakich-Kelly
Executive Director



Laura Post
President, Board of Directors



LEGAL REPRESENTATION

501
Cases
728
Kids

66%
of cases ended
in an
agreement,
avoiding a
high-conflict trial

96%
of orders entered
substantively
reflected CLC
recommendations

78%
of cases,
attorneys
assessed that
conflict had
decreased

75%
of cases,
attorneys
assessed family
environment had
improved

"Love that CLC can help find therapists and other programs a family might need."

"Needed, child focused, driven to protect the young clients."

"Always so well prepared and have a good grasp of all of the issues confronting a family."

"ALL the CLC attorneys are great. Second to none."

Comments
from Judges:



LAWLINE

544
Calls
772
Kids

86%
of callers found
our advice helpful
or very helpful

60%
said their
situation had
improved

Comments
from Callers:

"Very pleased with the knowledgeable individuals at CLC and the advice given."

"You guys made the process simple for me"

"The advice you guys gave me was so helpful"



FAMILIES IN TRANSITION MEDIATION

35
Cases
49
Kids





Getting Stronger Together.

When the Children's Law Center was first appointed to represent Bella as Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), it was 2019 and she was 10 years old. It was the early days of her parents' divorce and their emotions were running high. They were fighting over custody of Bella.

The mother was not in agreement with Bella spending any time with her father. She argued that the father had a history of mental illness and was not capable of parenting Bella on his own. This was the primary issue presented as we started work on the case.

As GAL, we conducted home visits with Bella, spoke with Bella and her teacher at school and, importantly, spoke with the father's mental health provider. His provider let us know that, while the father had been diagnosed with a mental illness, he had been successful in treatment.

He maintained his medication regimen, attended therapy regularly, and was doing well. In her opinion, there was nothing limiting the father's ability to parent Bella.

We continued to work on the case with the knowledge that Bella would be safe in her father's care. We began to specifically speak with Bella, in an age-appropriate manner, about having time with both her mother and father separately. While Bella struggled with her parents' divorce, she clearly wanted a dependable and loving relationship with both of her parents.

The mother remained concerned, primarily because of the unpredictability of mental illness and that the father's wellness was reliant on him choosing treatment. Her concerns were not unreasonable and we worked with the family to understand that relapse was a legitimate concern. We discussed the avenues available to address the parenting plan should father's mental health become an issue in the future. However, the father was doing well and Bella deserved to have a healthy relationship with him.

We drafted recommendations for the court based on all of the information we had accumulated and presented those recommendations to the parents prior to the trial. With our guidance, they were able to reach an agreement to follow a shared parenting plan, with Bella spending Monday and Tuesday with her father, Wednesday and Thursday with her



mother, and alternating weekends between each home. The family was spared the emotional and financial burden of an adversarial trial and Bella was pleased with a parenting plan that allowed her to be with both of her parents.

In January of 2022, Bella called the GAL who had worked on her case to let her know that something was not right with her father. With the child's consent, we contacted the mother about the report. The mother filed an emergency motion with the court asking to suspend the father's parenting time with the child while the issue was investigated. The request was granted and CLC was reappointed to represent Bella in the case.

We met with Bella and learned more about the father's behaviors. The child disclosed that the father was staying up all night and was saying strange things to her about aliens. Bella thought that he might not be taking his medication anymore.

As we had done two years prior, we spoke with the father's mental health provider who confirmed that father had, months earlier, stopped attending sessions.

Together with the father and his provider, we worked to get the treatment back on track, but any significant progress would take time and Bella was not seeing her father because of the emergency order.

We met with both parents about the importance of Bella maintaining her relationship with her father in a safe manner. With our input, the parents were able to agree that Bella would see her father with supervision by her paternal grandmother. Bella was excited that she got to see her father again and felt safer having her grandmother there. By September, the father's provider reported that the father had been compliant with his treatment and medication management and was, once again, stable. Bella also reported that her father was



doing better. The GAL worked with the parents to advance the parenting plan and they agreed that Bella's time with her father no longer required supervision, but that she would not resume overnights quite yet.

This plan went well. Bella continued to report that her father was not displaying the strange behaviors she had previously reported. The father continued to be compliant with services and the mother reported

that she was no longer concerned about Bella's safety in father's care. By November, the family had resumed the original parenting plan they had agreed-upon in their divorce.

We met with Bella one last time in December to make sure everything was going well before closing the case. She confirmed that it was and that she was enjoying time with her father again and was happy that he was not "acting weird." Bella had now just turned 13! She agreed that if she suspected something was wrong with her father again, she would tell someone right away. With this successful handling of a relapse, the hope is that the family will follow the same model if necessary in the future and not have to return to court.

INTERNS

Nina Brockelman
Meghan Gendron
Laney Nicholson
Tyler Ropp
Angela Saidman
Riley Shea

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In 2022, we said farewell to: Monique Ryan & Deb Shulansky



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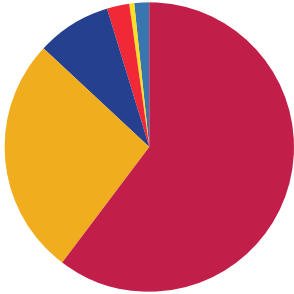
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TOTAL REVENUE:

\$1,238,146

Grants & Foundations: \$840,469

Legal Representation Fees: \$370,089

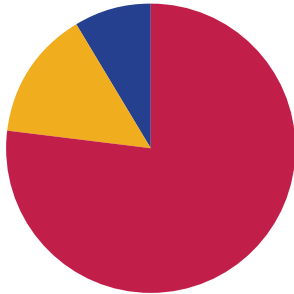
Events: \$117,119

Individual, Corporate & Community: \$34,715

Rebuilding Families: \$9,375

Interest and Dividend Income: \$19,651

Investment (losses) Gains, Net: (\$153,254)



TOTAL EXPENSES:

\$1,235,740

Program Services: \$952,089

Fundraising: \$177,467

Management & General: \$106,184





The Children's **LAW** Center, Inc.

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www.clcct.org