

~~IN~~JUSTICE





Letter to our supporters

What if the civil **LEGAL** system was the civil **JUSTICE** system?

As lawyers, we often have to advise our clients that while they want “justice,” the best we can do for them is to try to get the law applied correctly and fairly to their case.

Why do we have to distinguish law from justice? Because the civil legal system enforces laws created by legislatures that are most accessible to... and, frankly, most responsive to... moneyed interests and people with privileged access based on their education, race, class, and networks. While we idealistically believe in “justice for all,” the reality, intended or not, is that too many people have a hard time accessing the legal system:

“There is no judge on this Court that believes in his or her heart or mind that justice is equal between the rich and the poor.”

—Judge Dale Cathell, Court of Appeals of Maryland, in *Frase v. Barnhart*

When we say our mission is “pursuing systemic change to build a just society,” we know that one of the systems we need to change is the civil legal system itself.

As you will see in this latest Annual Report, the PJC is taking action to make the legal system accessible to all, regardless of ability to pay, by identifying the barriers to the civil legal system and breaking those barriers down:

- Without a lawyer and an investigator, low wage workers who have not been paid what they have earned have a hard time finding, suing, and collecting from employers who use a variety of tactics to avoid paying. The PJC advocated for a Maryland law to make it easier to collect unpaid wages by putting a lien on the employer’s property – without going to court – and we are now representing workers and training other advocates to implement the new law.
- One of the greatest threats to a family is to lose their home through an eviction or because their landlord is in foreclosure. The Baltimore City “rent court” processes 150,000 eviction cases a year, and the tenants in almost all of those cases are unrepresented and lose their homes as a result. The PJC produced and regularly shows a “know your rights” film in rent court and provides advice to teach tenants how to better handle their cases. This fall we will publish a white paper identifying specific unjust practices and the rent court process that make it difficult for tenants to raise and prove good defenses in rent court.
- On a national level, the PJC facilitates the National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel. This is the long game — to require the government to provide legal counsel to low-income persons when basic human needs are at stake, such as shelter, sustenance, safety, health, or child custody.
- National studies show that only 20% of the legal needs of low-income people are met by the existing delivery system, including staffed legal aid offices and pro bono attorneys, and government enforcement agencies rarely have the capacity to enforce the law for all. We know that we must engage more private attorneys to take these cases, and PJC advocates for laws and rules such that require a losing defendant to pay the legal fees of the prevailing plaintiff. This will encourage more attorneys to take cases, acting as “private attorney generals.”

- PJC staff are involved in workgroups, coalitions and partnerships that extend our reach and impact. For example, John serves on the Maryland Access to Justice Commission, whose specific mission is to expand access to justice in Maryland, and on the Advisory Committee of the Voices for Civil Justice, a national communications hub to elevate the profile and need for civil legal aid.

You make all of this possible. **Together, we will keep pushing the legal system to be the justice system.**

Sincerely,

Thomas X. Glancy, Jr.
Board President 2014-15
Belsky Weinberg & Horowitz, LLC

John Nethercut
Executive Director



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How do you build a just society?

You establish the right to counsel in civil cases

NATIONAL COALITION FOR A CIVIL RIGHT TO COUNSEL

If you were losing your home, would you want a lawyer to represent you against the landlord or big bank who most assuredly has lawyers? **Yes.**

If you were fighting to keep custody of your child, would you be better off with a lawyer protecting your rights in complicated legal proceedings? **Yes.**

If you were a victim of life-threatening domestic violence, would you need a trained lawyer to represent you in court hearings about a protective order, so that you would not have to face your abuser alone? **Yes.**

This is more than just common sense: numerous studies have shown that people fare better with a lawyer by their side in court, especially when the other side has a lawyer. Lawyers help ensure that judges have the whole story before they make their ruling.

But what you might not know is that most states don't provide a right to counsel for any of these situations. And because it's not a right, there's less funding available. This means legal aid organizations are forced to turn away 50% of the people who seek help. In the end, there is only one legal aid attorney available for every 6,415 low-income people.

We should all care about access to justice. Criminal troubles spill over into civil issues: criminal convictions

and jail time can mean bigger problems when someone wants to secure housing, employment or child custody. And unaddressed civil legal problems can lead to criminal convictions. Imagine losing your home through eviction. You become homeless. You sleep on the steps of a church. You are arrested and brought to jail for vagrancy. Or maybe your paycheck comes up short and you're jailed for failing to pay child support. You miss more work, you get further behind. Legal challenges mount.

A right to counsel is not just something we need to provide justice, but also to save money. When we don't pay for lawyers to avoid these negative consequences, we all pay for the consequences instead. As a taxpayer, you pay for homeless shelters, prisons, emergency health care, and foster care. These expenses can often cost more than providing people in need with lawyers.

This is the perfect storm.

You decide to fix the problem

The time to fix our access to justice problem is now. The National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel (NCCRC) has more than 280 participants from 38 states. The PJC provides the necessary backbone to this growing movement. We encourage and support state-level initiatives that expand the right to counsel in basic needs civil cases. Attorney John Pollock leads and staffs



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the NCCRC, offering technical assistance, research and strategic planning.

You support litigation victories

Acting to protect the fundamental rights of parents, the Supreme Court of Montana became the sixth state court to find an equal protection violation when a state provides a right to counsel in state-initiated termination of parental rights cases but not private adoptions. This decision recognized that the "fundamental right to parent is equally imperiled whether the proceedings are brought by the State or by a private party." The Court adopted much of the reasoning the NCCRC contributed to the briefing.

Breaking exciting new ground, the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts became the first high court to rule that parents have a right to counsel in proceedings to establish private guardianships of their children. In this case, a mother was not given counsel at the proceeding where she agreed to guardianship because Massachusetts law only guaranteed counsel when the state is a party. She later sought to revoke the guardianship. A legal aid organization brought

the case and was supported by the Massachusetts public defender service and a consortium of legal aid and nonprofit groups. The NCCRC provided extensive technical support to that consortium. The Court recognized that the interests at stake in a guardianship are "no less compelling" than in a termination case because the parental rights are "severely circumscribed" in a guardianship, and the right to counsel should attach whenever "someone other than the parent, whether it be the State or a private entity or individual, seeks to displace the parent and assume the primary rights and responsibilities for the child."

In another victory, the Georgia Court of Appeals protected the right to counsel for parents appealing a termination of parental rights decision. The NCCRC contributed substantially to an amicus brief submitted by Georgia Legal Services. In the case, the state did not appoint counsel for a mother on appeal even though state law said she was entitled to one, and when she tried to file the appeal on her own, she did it incorrectly. By the time she eventually got counsel, the appeal was too late. Accepting arguments made in the amicus brief, the Court of Appeals said it was obligated to accept the late appeal because the mother's right to counsel was violated.

You boost legislative and other efforts across the country

In New York City's housing court, 90% of tenants are unrepresented in court proceedings, while more than 90% of landlords have counsel. This is not equal justice for all.

The Right to Counsel Coalition of New York City is working on a bill that would provide lawyers to low-income people facing the loss of their home. There is

From the Montana Decision:

"[A]lthough Mother did not request counsel formally, we have recognized that pro se litigants are not required to use specific words when requesting counsel ...In this case, where Mother was not advised of any right to counsel, she preserved the issue when she explained that she represented herself only because she did not have the money to employ an attorney."

—Matter of Adoption of A.W.S. and K.R.S., 339 P.3d 414 (Mont. 2014).

1:6,415

In the U.S. there is only one legal aid attorney available for every 6,415 low-income people.



“If landlords knew ahead of time that every single tenant in that courtroom would have representation, do you think bad landlords will still try doing whatever it is they are thinking about doing in the first place? They won’t bring the frivolous lawsuit; they won’t refuse to do the repairs, because they know if they go to court they are going to lose.”

—John Pollock, quoted in “Housing Justice: What the Experts are Saying”

strong support for the legislation from city leaders who are committed to increasing funding for civil legal services and who created the first-ever Office of the Civil Justice Coordinator. The NCCRC has provided extensive technical support, helping to build the coalition and providing expertise about the need for and value of counsel.

John Pollock contributed to “Housing Justice: What the Experts are Saying,” a public forum hosted by the Impact Center for Public Interest Law at New York Law School. John’s remarks included evidence from pilot projects conducted in other cities. For instance:

Tenants in Massachusetts without counsel were able to keep possession of their home only 2% of the time. In contrast, tenants with counsel were able to keep their home 66% of the time. And in San Francisco, evidence suggested landlord attorneys were more accommodating whenever tenants had a lawyer. John praised the state of New York for its national leadership in other areas: it’s the only state that guarantees the right to a lawyer for all domestic violence and child custody matters.

New York City’s efforts – and the NCCRC – have attracted significant media attention from such sources as *Newsweek*, the *New York Times*, *Truthout* and the *Marshall Project*. In an opinion piece in *Al-Jazeera*, the authors provided a link to the resourceful website [civilrighttocounsel.org].

In addition to efforts in New York City, the NCCRC responded to assistance requests from the California, Connecticut, Michigan, and Minnesota Bar Associations, as well as the access to justice commissions in North Carolina and Wisconsin. The Maryland General Assembly Commission on Child Custody Decision-Making asked the NCCRC to share information on civil right to counsel, particularly as it relates to gender bias and disability. In its subsequent report, the Commission urged the Legislature to adopt recommendations of the Maryland Task Force to Study Implementing a Civil Right to Counsel in Maryland, which had called for providing a right to counsel in domestic violence cases and creating a custody pilot project. And in New Hampshire, the NCCRC submitted comments and organized opposition to a proposed court rule change that would shorten the duration of a parent’s right to counsel in abuse and neglect cases.

You bring public attention to an idea whose time has come

With your support, John Pollock is on the road often, crisscrossing the U.S. to talk with advocates and deliver workshops about the right to counsel in civil cases. Some highlights from this year: teaching a civil right to counsel class for students at Touro and Penn Law Schools, hosting a panel at the annual National Legal Aid and Defender Association conference, and serving on a panel titled “Addressing Unmet Legal Needs” at the Maryland Professionalism Center’s symposium. John also presented during a plenary session and hosted a breakout session at the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty conference. Looking ahead, John will be part of the national Housing Justice Network conference in December.

NCCRC staff also work hard to educate the public about this important issue. Realizing that many in the judiciary are not aware of some of their appointment powers, the NCCRC collaborated over several years with the American Bar Association to publish the *Directory of Law Governing Appointment of Counsel in Civil Proceedings*. This 50-state resource tells judges which types of civil cases in their state require or permit them to appoint counsel. John Pollock also published an op-ed in the *New Jersey Law Journal* critiquing the New Jersey Supreme Court for refusing to decide whether domestic violence victims should have a right to counsel. ○

NCCRC
National Coalition for a
Civil Right to Counsel



The National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel is an invaluable resource for the Minnesota State Bar Association Civil Right to Counsel Subcommittee. We were charged with developing a policy proposal to create or expand a civil right to counsel for cases that affect the basic needs of indigent Minnesotans. When we started the process, John Pollock provided us with an overview that was tailored to our state, and he has answered our questions along the way. He sends us alerts when cases or media coverage surrounding civil right to counsel issues arise in our state. We routinely rely on the Interactive Map on the NCCRC website to find out how we rate compared to other states in specific subject areas. Through NCCRC’s social media presence and listserv, we stay informed about national trends in the civil right to counsel movement.

— Lindsay Davis, Access to Justice Director,
Minnesota State Bar Association

The NCCRC provides expertise and advice to the Minnesota State Bar Association Civil Right to Counsel Subcommittee. From left to right: Sally Silk (chair), Cathy Haukedahl, Lindsay Davis, Ellen Krug, Julian Zebot, Sue Pontinen, Janine Laird



How do you build a just society?

You move mountains so kids can stay in school

EDUCATION STABILITY

You help us spread the word

As kids went back to school this fall, you helped us launch a multi-week social media campaign to spread the word that homeless kids have the right to stay in school.

We posted on Facebook and Twitter news about the needs, rights, and accomplishments of homeless students.

#NoPlaceLikeSchoolMD

We published a series of online ads supported by Google to explain the PJC’s education stability work and encouraged families and providers to make use of our services. You followed along as we tweeted live from PJC attorney Monisha Cherayil’s back-to-school training for service providers and advocates for homeless youth from around the state. This training was one of many supported this year by The Journey Home and United Way. There’s #NoPlaceLikeSchoolMD.

You promote change “behind the scenes”

Sometimes the PJC’s greatest impact happens when few people see it but lots of people benefit. One of our behind-the-scenes strategies is to encourage collaboration between a variety of agencies and organizations that serve homeless youth and children and youth in foster care so that these young people

receive protections and benefits they are entitled to under the law without unnecessary roadblocks.

This year, we are especially pleased by an agreement we helped broker between Baltimore County Public Schools (BCoPS) and Baltimore County Department of Social Services (BCoDSS). Children who are in foster care have an array of education rights under the McKinney-Vento Act, the Fostering Connections Act, the Uninterrupted Scholars Act and other federal and state law. The PJC and our ally, Advocates for Children and Youth, worked with school administrators and officials from BCoDSS to develop an agreement which establishes specific procedures to ensure that foster kids are enrolled without delay, stay stable at the same school when their home changes, and receive transportation to and from school.

In addition, under the agreement, representatives from BCoPS and BCoDSS will meet regularly to facilitate the implementation of the agreed-upon practices and procedures, and to develop strategies to evaluate and support the academic success of foster kids at both the individual and population levels.

Brokering an agreement was the first step. Next, we led joint trainings for frontline staff at both agencies on the requirements of the law and the procedures set out in the new agreement. We hope to build on this success in other school districts around the state. ○

How do you build a just society?

You ‘smell a rat’ when paychecks come up short

WORKPLACE JUSTICE

Employers find creative ways to boost profits by cutting labor costs. What exactly does this mean? They might pay less than minimum wage, refuse to pay overtime, force their employees to work off the clock, steal tips, withhold wages or simply refuse to pay workers at all. These “business as usual” practices are not relegated to the back corners of our economy. They are happening right under our noses... in the restaurants where we eat, in the homes where our elderly parents receive care, in the stores where we shop.

Yes, these practices are illegal. But unless a worker complains, employers keep ‘saving money’ this way. We must stop this practice of wage theft. So we represent groups of low-wage workers to enforce state and federal wage payment laws. Over the past year, the PJC has represented restaurant workers, home care workers, construction workers, and employees of residential cleaning businesses to recover unpaid minimum and overtime wages.

You insist “no more wage theft”

We had several victories this year in the fight against wage theft, and you can feel proud of contributing to this progress. First, in *Peters v. Early Healthcare Giver*, the Maryland Court of Appeals held that workers can use both the Wage and Hour Law and the Wage Payment and Collection Law to sue for unpaid wages and seek additional damages. On remand, the Circuit Court of Montgomery County awarded Muriel Peters the full measure of relief to which she was entitled, or treble damages.

Shortly thereafter, in another suit on behalf of a low-wage home care worker, *Kelly v. LifeMatters*, the Circuit Court for Wicomico County held that the employer’s ignorance of its obligations under Maryland law is not a valid reason for failing to pay an employee’s overtime wages. See a longer description of Ms. Kelly’s case in the Appellate Advocacy section of this report.

We also lead the statewide campaign to implement and enforce the Unpaid Wage Lien Law, a game-changing Maryland statute that went into effect in October 2013. This law allows a worker to place a pre-judgment lien on her employer’s property to recover unpaid wages. It takes a lot of effort to make sure a new law has the teeth to change “business as usual.” To this end, we educated workers about how to use the lien; trained a cadre of legal services attorneys, private lawyers, and worker advocates to take these cases; and represented workers to test and establish the new procedures. We’re making the law strong, but most importantly we are getting workers their wages back.

Successful lien cases have attacked various forms of wage theft, including not paying for the first two weeks of work by calling them “training,” misclassifying an employee as an independent contractor, shorting hours worked, and trying to evade being a joint employer by hiring workers through another company.



Heriberto Lopez with a check for lost wages and additional damages (PHOTO: PJC)

When Heriberto Lopez was hired

to cast concrete stair molds for a building supply company, his employers required him to sign a contract stating that he would not receive overtime, no matter how many hours he worked. They lived up to that illegal promise, paying him only at his regular hourly rate when he worked more than 40 hours a week. Mr. Lopez asked several times for overtime to no avail. Frustrated, he called us. We confirmed that the lack of overtime pay violated both state and federal law, and that any attempt by his employers to have Mr. Lopez waive his right to overtime was illegal. PJC attorney Andrea Vaughn sent Mr. Lopez’s employers a letter demanding payment of the overtime wages plus penalties. Utilizing the Unpaid Wage Lien Law which we had encouraged the legislature to pass, the letter also informed Mr. Lopez’s employers of his intent to establish a lien for unpaid wages on their property. It worked. The possibilities of the lien and further legal action got his employers’ attention. After settlement talks, Mr. Lopez received a check in an amount sufficient to compensate him not only for lost wages but also for additional damages.



You demand the right to earn sick leave...and WIN!

Too many Maryland families are one illness away from missing a rent payment, or not being able to afford groceries. The PJC has made paid sick days a priority because working families need to be able to care for themselves and their families when they’re sick without risking their economic survival.

As the legal experts on paid sick days legislation, the PJC was instrumental in helping pass **new paid sick days legislation in Montgomery County, Maryland**. Attorney Andrea Vaughn led the Workplace Justice team on this action, working with our partners in the Working Matters coalition to write the bill, answer questions about the legislation and help fend off attempts to amend or limit the bill. Now the Montgomery County law is one of the strongest in the nation. Celebrate the victory! But our job is not yet done. Stay with us as we continue to press in the Maryland General Assembly to expand this important right across Maryland.



At the bill signing, U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez thanked the Montgomery County Council for recognizing that “the high road is the smart road” and for building “a community that works for everyone.” He also thanked the Working Matters coalition for its work, noting “they got game.” Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett signs paid sick leave into law.

(PHOTOS: Máté Vladár, CASA)

Paul Isom (far right) represents the voice of workers who suffer because of wage theft and misclassification. (PHOTO: Office of Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson)

You raise the voices of workers harmed

In July, Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson (FL-24) hosted a briefing called “Worker Misclassification: The Consequences for Workers, Burden on Businesses and Strain on Federal Government.” Panelists included policy experts, misclassified workers, and affected business owners. PJC client Paul Isom shared his experience as a worker who was misclassified as an independent contractor, rather than an employee, and was therefore stripped of vital federal benefits and protections. Mr. Isom was one of 76 workers who participated in a successful PJC wage theft case against several construction subcontractors. Other panelists shared perspectives of law-abiding businesses who struggle to compete against companies that drastically cut their labor costs by misclassifying workers and the federal government, which loses billions of dollars in revenue each year from unpaid Social Security, Medicare, and unemployment taxes. ○

Follow us @PublJusticeCntr and stay in touch. Attorney Sally Dworak-Fisher tweeted throughout this interesting hearing.



You understand we are stronger when we build coalitions and work together

The movement for paid sick days has gained significant momentum across the country – and an important ally in President Barack Obama – in the last several years. To date, four states and twenty localities have enacted such paid sick days laws through legislation or voter-driven ballot initiatives. In January, President Obama dropped in at Charmington's, a worker-owned business in Baltimore and member of the Working Matters coalition. Please show them your support by stopping in for a yummy cookie and cup of joe.



The Montgomery County paid sick leave bill had strong support from a wide coalition of workers and advocates.

(PHOTO: Máté Vládár)

PJC attorney Andrea Vaughn (2nd from left) helped pass the new legislation.

“Today, we are the only advanced country on Earth that doesn’t guarantee paid sick leave or paid maternity leave to our workers.

Forty-three million workers have no paid sick leave – 43 million.

Think about that. And that forces too many parents to make the gut-wrenching choice between a paycheck and a sick kid at home.”

—President Barack Obama, State of the Union address, January 20, 2015



PHOTO: Pete Souza



President Barack Obama in a selfie with workers at Charmington's. (PHOTO: Charmington's)



How do you build a just society?

You know jail shouldn't be hell on earth

PRISONERS' RIGHTS



PHOTO by Marshall Clarke

“Approaching its 157th birthday, an occasion to be celebrated by no one, Baltimore's jail has been a Dickensian horror for decades—dirty, dank, dangerous and a disgrace both to the city and the state, which has run it for the past quarter-century.”

—*Washington Post*, “A disgrace in Baltimore, discontinued”, August 8, 2015

For more than twelve years, we have advocated for the rights of detainees within the Baltimore City Detention Center to receive timely and appropriate medical and mental health care. In 2009, we reached a settlement with the state-operated facility. That agreement required early assessment of detainees' medical needs upon entry, quicker responses to detainees' sick call requests and emergencies, ongoing treatment for chronic diseases, an on-site psychiatrist available five days per week and on call for emergencies, and accommodations for people with disabilities. The jail was also required to fix plumbing issues quickly.



The bottom of a shower stall at the Baltimore City Detention Center, one example of substandard conditions. (PHOTO: ACLU)

You demand reform

Despite this settlement and court orders dating back to 1993, the conditions at the Baltimore City Detention Center remained inhumane and downright disgusting. So, this June, the Public Justice Center, along with the Law Offices of Elizabeth Alexander and the American Civil Liberties Union's National Prison Project filed a

motion to reopen *Duvall v. Hogan* in the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland. We pointed out that, in addition to its crumbling, vermin-infested infrastructure, the jail endangers the health and safety of detainees by failing to provide adequate medical and mental health care. And poor or absent medical attention is possibly implicated in the deaths of seven detainees in the last two and a half years.

In late July, Governor Larry Hogan announced that the state will close the Men's Detention Center and that inmates will be moved into other parts of the Baltimore City Detention Center and other facilities. In the flurry of press attention that followed his announcement, the PJC and our allies repeated the same message: moving inmates from the most disgraceful part of the jail is good, but it won't solve the problem of delivering medical and mental health care or the still quite serious infrastructure problems in other parts of the jail such as the former Women's Detention Center, which now houses more men than women (separately).

As the *Washington Post* wrote:

“...the reform agenda should include not only physical upgrades to the remaining facilities, but an overhaul of what advocacy groups have documented as a terrible health-care system.”

We continue to prepare for litigation and press for positive changes. ○



How do you build a just society?

You know language shouldn't be an obstacle

ACCESS TO HEALTH AND PUBLIC BENEFITS

Just about every day, most of us interact with one government office or another. We might head to the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration to renew our driver's license, need to request a copy of an important document, fight a traffic ticket or drop our kids at school. At the best of times, we might be frustrated with lines or delays. What if English is not your native tongue? How might that change your experience?

Fourteen percent of Marylanders are foreign born, and close to half of them are considered 'limited English proficient.' To better serve all residents, the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives and the Department of Human Resource released a new "Language Access

Toolkit." Through our leadership in the Governmental Access Workgroup, the Public Justice Center played an important role in creating this resource. State agencies now have guidance on how to make sure that people who speak little English can use government services whether they are asking for job assistance, obtaining critical documents, or need support meeting their basic needs, including health care.

You demand cultural competency and language access

PJC attorney Camilla Roberson is the chair of the Governmental Access Workgroup. This public-private

partnership includes people from the Department of Human Resources, other state agencies and advocates from various non-profits, including Legal Aid, Maryland Hunger Solutions, SEEDCO, and the International Rescue Committee. The group helps state agencies identify language access barriers and develop cultural competency and language access law training. In addition the group monitors implementation of the new language access policies created by each local Department of Social Services office during the past year.

Our strategies are multi-pronged. In addition to working with government leaders, we presented information on language access laws to advocates and caseworkers



at the Welfare Advocates Conference, the Partners for Justice Conference, the 7th Annual Baltimore Immigration Summit, and the Fighting Hunger in Maryland Conference.

Along the way, we uncover systemic obstacles and draw the attention of senior level officials, demanding solutions. We found a technology issue that caused unnecessary delays for individuals with limited English proficiency when they attempted to access health services even after being found eligible for Medicaid. We discovered that sometimes children enrolled in Medicaid have trouble talking with their dentist because the dentist or the managed care organization refuses (illegally) to pay for interpretation services. With each new discovery, we demand changes.

Our long-range plan remains the same: to protect and expand access to health care and Medicaid.

And because coverage doesn't necessarily ensure access, we will continue to identify and address systemic issues as people attempt to access quality health care services.

Farewell, Mary Lou Magee-Kern

We are sad to lose a fine champion for health rights. We first shared Mary Lou Magee-Kern's story in 2013. Her successful lawsuit forced the State to speed up its response to low-income Marylanders with severe disabilities and serious medical needs who apply for Medicaid. After her husband was laid off, Mary Lou lost her private insurance and applied for Medicaid. While she was waiting for an answer to her application, she couldn't see doctors to help manage her disabilities. She got sicker and sicker. Mary Lou had been waiting for Medicaid eligibility determination for more than 233 days – far longer than the 90 required by federal law – when she filed her lawsuit, represented by the Public Justice Center, Homeless Persons Representation Project, and National Center for Law and Economic Justice. Within two days of filing the lawsuit, Mary Lou was approved for Medicaid. Because of her courage, the state of Maryland eliminated a backlog of over 9,000 delayed cases and agreed to promptly process all new applications within the federal requirements. Mary Lou died in June. She was a firebrand and a truly spirited woman. We miss her.

OUTSTANDING PARTNERS

A very special thank you to the Public Justice Center's Outstanding Partner:
Lou Curran
Office of Public Defender

Every year, Lou organizes "O'sPD" with group rate tickets to Baltimore Orioles baseball games and proceeds benefiting the Public Justice Center and other public interest groups. Lou also keeps co-workers and others in the loop, sharing news about the PJC and helping us spread the word about upcoming events. Lou, we are so glad to count you as our friend.

A very special thank you to the Public Justice Center's Outstanding Partner:
Voices for Civil Justice

Voices for Civil Justice is a national communication hub for civil legal aid, helping to build awareness that civil legal aid ensures fairness in America's justice system. The fabulous Voices team provides technical assistance to those of us "in the field" seeking to gain media coverage and also bridges requests between reporters seeking input for stories and programs doing the work. On behalf of the entire national civil legal aid community, thank you for leadership, expertise and enthusiasm.

Collaborations build a just society

As with most of the work of the Public Justice Center, we are not alone in our efforts to expand access to health care and public benefits. We partner with groups like Advocates for Children and Youth, Maryland Health care for All, and the Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care

Reform, to develop and advocate for consumer focused health policies. We work closely with legal services organizations and clinics, including Maryland Legal Aid, Homeless Persons Representation Project, Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia, and University of Maryland

Casey School of Law Drug Policy Clinic. We also work with other nonprofit service providers, including CASA, International Rescue Center, SEEDCO, and Maryland Hunger Solutions. We lead the Maryland Governmental Access Work Group, staffed by those at the Department

of Human Resources, and we are members of the Maryland Alliance for the Poor (MAP) and Maryland Legal Aid's Language Access Task Force, Public Benefits Task Force, and Elder Law Task Force.



How do you build a just society?

You know the road to justice is long and often bumpy

APPELLATE ADVOCACY & THE FRANCIS D. MURNAGHAN, JR. APPELLATE ADVOCACY FELLOWSHIP

The Francis D. Murnaghan, Jr. Appellate Advocacy Fellowship is a year-long position, this year held by Anna Jagelewski. By partnering with other Public Justice Center projects, as well as other legal services and public interest organizations, and lawyers in private practice, the Murnaghan Fellow works on a variety of issues in appellate cases to influence the development of civil rights and poverty law. Victory can take a long time, and often several consecutive fellows will work on a case before the end goal is realized.

You stand up to racism

A decision in *Boyer-Liberto v. Fountainebleau Corp.* was one such long-awaited victory. On May 7, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit determined that

a single incident of harassment could be sufficiently severe to create a hostile work environment under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

The Court also ruled that a single incident can give rise to a retaliation claim if the employee was fired for complaining about it. This opinion is a sweet

victory for worker's rights and good news for Reya Boyer-Liberto, who was fired after complaining that a manager had twice in 24 hours called her a "porch monkey." Our efforts in this case started in 2006 when former Murnaghan Fellow Roscoe Jones (2005-06), former PJC attorney Suzanne Sangree and Metropolitan Washington Employment Lawyers Association (MWELA) counsel Jonathan Puth filed a brief challenging a ruling in a previous case that set unreasonably high bars for a hostile work environment and retaliation. More recently, former Murnaghan Fellow Ilana Gelfman (2013-14) and MWELA members Stephen Chertkof and Douglas Huron seized the opportunity to convince the court to revisit that earlier decision by filing an amicus brief in support of Reya Boyer-Liberto.

Racism is at the heart of another of this year's appellate efforts. Teleta Dashiell, represented in this case by the ACLU of Maryland, was surprised to receive a voicemail containing a racial slur from a state trooper during an investigation. Ms. Dashiell's complaint about the incident was investigated and sustained. The trooper was disciplined, she was told. The Maryland

State Police then denied Ms. Dashiell's request for the records of her complaint about the incident, citing the personnel records exemption in the Maryland Public Information Act and confidentiality under the Law Enforcement Officer's Bill of Rights.

The PJC filed an amicus in support of Ms. Dashiell's appeal, in which we discussed the renewed focus on the **persistent problem of police misconduct and its disproportionate effect on communities of color.**

We argued that public disclosure of misconduct investigations could help police identify abuses and inadequacies and build trust between the police and the communities they serve. We lost this one but will continue to seek opportunities to address the issue.

You shine light on illegal employment practices

At the heart of another tag-team effort by Murnaghan Fellows was the question of whether an employer's

ignorance of the law creates a bona fide dispute. Victoria Kelly is a home health worker who sometimes worked as many as one hundred hours a week without being paid overtime. Ms. Kelly's employer asserted that her wages were withheld because he didn't know that Maryland law required him to pay his employees overtime. Former Murnaghan Fellow Ilana Gelfman worked with the PJC's Workplace Justice Project lawyers and Maryland Legal Aid to file an opening brief on Ms. Kelly's behalf; Anna Jagelewski, the 2014-15 Fellow, picked up the case, filed the reply, and argued the case in the Maryland Court of Special Appeals. The Court remanded the case to the Circuit Court. In July, that court rejected the employer's ignorance of the law defense. Maryland's Wage Payment and Collection Law allows workers like Ms. Kelly to recover additional damages and attorney's fees only if the wages were withheld because of a bona fide dispute. The Court's decision means that Ms. Kelly is not barred from seeking those additional damages, and the matter is set for trial in mid-December.

You protect tenants against retaliation

We know we must walk many steps in order to achieve a just society. This is why the PJC twines together long-view strategies, like we have in our effort to combat landlord retaliation against tenants. Back in 2011 and 2014, the PJC encouraged state lawmakers to

legislate stronger protections for tenants. Maryland's retaliatory eviction law now provides both a defense and a claim for money damages to tenants facing the threat of eviction or other retaliation because of their participation in a tenant organization. The law also protects tenants who complain about lease violations or poor housing conditions. This strategy is now bearing fruit as we enforce the new law.

Felicia Lockett is one tenant who benefits from such strong protections. Ms. Lockett lives in upper Park Heights in Baltimore. In May 2014, after a series of difficult meetings between the tenants association (for which Ms. Lockett was a spokesperson at the time) and the management about the building's master meter utility billing system, Ms. Lockett suddenly received a "non-renewal of lease" notice from the landlord. This seemed like a drastic reaction to Ms. Lockett's efforts to stand up for resident interests. The situation worsened in August when the landlord filed a court case to evict her. The PJC's Human Right to Housing team represented Ms. Lockett in the eviction case and claimed that the landlord's actions were retaliatory. She lost the case in District Court, but pressed forward and ultimately won on appeal. The Circuit Court for Baltimore City not only denied the landlord's eviction case, but also awarded Ms. Lockett the maximum amount of money damages allowed by

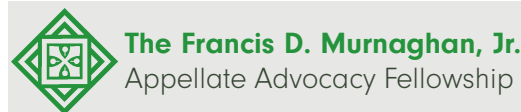
Victoria Kelly is a home health worker who sometimes **worked as many as one hundred hours a week without being paid overtime...** The Court remanded the case to the Circuit Court. In July, that court **rejected the employer's ignorance of the law defense.**

the anti-retaliation law on one of her claims.

But the story doesn't end there. On a technicality, the court denied her other claim and denied her request for attorney's fees. Murnaghan Fellow Anna Jagelewski, in collaboration with lawyers from our Human Right to Housing Project, authored a successful petition for writ of certiorari and the opening brief in the Maryland Court of Appeals, asking the Court to clarify some provisions of the retaliation statute, including a definition of rent, and urging the Court to encourage trial courts to liberally exercise their discretion in awarding attorney's fees. New Murnaghan Fellow Tassity Johnson will carry the torch forward with further briefing and the oral argument in November.

You stop forced medication

Other advocacy efforts this year included representing Gary Allmond against the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. In this case, we are challenging the constitutionality of Maryland statutes governing forcible medication of involuntarily committed individuals. Just as Anna's time with the PJC came to an end, we learned that Judge Lynne Battaglia signed an order granting the motion to stay Mr. Allmond's forced medication while the appeal continues. Murnaghan Fellow Tassity Johnson will argue the case in December. ○



“The government must be held fully accountable for the actions of police officers who abuse the power they are given. The words of the Maryland Constitution will ring hollow if there is no meaningful remedy for their violation.”

—Anna Jagelewski, Murnaghan Fellow 2014-15, quoted in the *Baltimore Sun*, October 30, 2014, “Civil rights groups ask court to strike down liability cap”

The article featured an amicus curiae brief submitted by the ACLU of Maryland, the Caucus of African American Leaders, and the Public Justice Center, in which we asked the Court to remove the cap on the amount of money that plaintiffs can receive after successfully suing a local government. We argued that larger penalties can ensure justice in police brutality cases. This case was not successful, but justice is often not won overnight. In another incremental step toward justice, the General Assembly increased the caps shortly after the decision came out.

Murnaghan Fellowship



Douglas Jones, Former U.S. Attorney

In November, the Murnaghan Fellowship sponsored a public lecture, “Justice Delayed But Not Denied,” featuring former U.S. Attorney Douglas Jones. Decades after one of the most devastating attacks of the Civil Rights era, Jones led the team that successfully re-opened the case of the 1963 16th Street Baptist Church bombing. Jones’ efforts led to the indictment of former Klu Klux Klan members responsible for the murder of Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson and Denise McNair.



Anna Jagelewski, 14th Murnaghan Fellow

A special thank you to Anna Jagelewski, the 14th Murnaghan Fellow. Before coming to the Public Justice Center, Anna served as law clerk to the Honorable Reggie B. Walton of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia and to the Honorable Florence Y. Pan of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Anna graduated from the American University Washington College of Law *summa cum laude* in 2011. She was a Public Interest/Public Service Scholar. Prior to law school, Anna worked as the Southeast Ohio Coordinator in Ohio’s HIV/AIDS community planning program. For her efforts, the Ohio Department of Health awarded Anna the Consortia Leadership Award in 2006 and the Pioneer Award in 2008.

Upon completing her fellowship with the PJC, Anna began a clerkship with the Honorable Andre Davis of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. ○



How do you build a just society?

You uncover ironic double standards

HUMAN RIGHT TO HOUSING

From the PJC’s tiny office in the busy Baltimore City rent court, we witness a culture of rent collection with little regard to fairness or compliance with the law. Landlords systematically file demands for rent and threaten tenants with eviction even when their properties are not properly licensed as rental housing or when they are not certified as compliant with lead paint laws. Landlords often charge illegal fees or wrongly bill tenants to repair damage that tenants did not cause. They take the tenant’s rent money, apply it to these fees, and then take the tenant to court for failure to pay rent. Our work is incremental but steady, representing tenants to enforce laws and advocating in the legislature to strengthen protections. We stepped up our efforts this year, determined to uproot injustice.

With support from the Abell Foundation, the Human Right to Housing Project initiated a study of targeted unjust practices at the Baltimore City rent court. We considered landlord compliance with licensing and lead registration laws and institutional hurdles that tenants face in asserting their legal rights. We work with organizers from the Right to Housing Alliance and other partners and expect to publish our report in the fall of 2015.

You challenge (some very creative) landlord abuse

With years of perspective on the unbalanced nature of landlord-tenant justice in Baltimore City, we continue to strategically challenge landlord abuses, addressing a

number of common practices in a way that has impact not only for one family but all families facing a lack of fair, affordable, habitable housing.

We represented tenants who filed a successful class action lawsuit against Baltimore-based rental company Sage Management, LLC, alleging that Sage engaged in the anti-consumer practice of “fee churning” that runs afoul of state consumer protection laws and violates a Maryland law that caps late fees at five percent of the monthly rent. This case resulted in a settlement which provides nearly \$1 million in compensation and debt forgiveness to current and former Sage tenants and prohibits Sage from engaging in these practices again. The lawsuit grew out of the PJC’s collaboration with the Right to Housing Alliance, in which we provide legal advocacy in support of tenants who are organizing their neighbors. Detrese Dowridge, a named plaintiff in the case, took a leading role once she realized that Sage Management’s practices were harming others like her. The PJC now represents tenants who reside at Dunne Wright-managed properties in a class action that involves similar allegations. Renters working together with legal advocates can wield significant power. In both cases the Public Justice Center and the law firm of Goldman & Minton, P.C. have represented the class plaintiffs.

In another case, we defend Felicia Lockett, a tenant leader whose lease was terminated in retaliation for her participation in a tenant association, winning on appeal both the continuation of her lease and money damages.

“What’s happening here with Sage Management is a symptom of a larger problem of the lack of accountability by landlords in the city,”

[Jessica] Lewis
[of the Right to Housing Alliance] said.

“We’re seeing an increase in the cost of rental housing, and it’s not been matched by an increase in people’s incomes. Landlords... are not in any position where they have to fix these problems because they know tenants have very few options.”

—*Baltimore Sun*, May 19, 2015, “Tenants of Sage Management get nearly \$1 million under settlement”

The Maryland Court of Appeals will hear argument on this case in November 2015 regarding additional damages and attorney's fees denied by the Circuit Court. See the Appellate Advocacy section in this report for more about this case.

Litigating individual cases at the trial level can have a bigger impact as well. In one PJC case, the trial court issued an extensive written opinion describing bed bugs as a serious threat to health and safety, ordering the landlord to abate the threat and finding the landlord liable for over \$6,500 in damages and reduced rent and attorney's fees. In another case, at the PJC's prompting, the Court issued a written opinion sanctioning the landlord for bringing a rent case in bad faith and ordering the landlord to pay the PJC attorney's fees. The written opinions in these cases have been widely circulated among housing advocates so that advocates can point to these opinions in future cases. Further, due to the PJC's advocacy in two rent cases on lead paint law compliance, the Court dismissed over 75 additional cases by the same landlord for failure to prove lead paint law compliance.

In an effort to crack down on unauthorized landlords, we represented a number of tenants, including sisters Florence and Mathilda, who rent separate houses on the same street from the same landlord. That landlord sold the properties. Then each sister received demands for rent from five different entities including the new owners and the previous owner's rental agent. With our help, each of the sisters prevailed in rent court because while eager to sue for rent, none of the "landlords" bothered to see if the properties were compliant with the law.

Our efforts don't stop in rent court. We encouraged officials from the Maryland Department of Housing

and Community Development to revise the Department's eviction notices to comply with tenants in foreclosure laws.

You said:
"Baltimore is not another Detroit"

In an op-ed in the *Baltimore Sun*, attorneys Matt Hill and Zafar Shah criticized Baltimore City's plan to shut off water to thousands of homes for delinquent water bills. We then testified at the Baltimore City Council on the plan's effect on tenants whose landlords fail to pay the water bills, and the fact that tenants have no access to a dispute resolution procedure. We suggest that Public Works allow tenants to open a water account in their own name and be allowed to challenge leaks and inaccurate bills. We continue to work in coalition with One Baltimore and Food & Water Watch to make this happen. ○

"Beware the city's suggestion that those of us who do pay our water bills are subsidizing other residents. The majority of the subsidy goes to commercial property owners, who account for \$15 million of the \$28 million owed in the city. Why not start with their taps first?"

—From "Water is a Basic Human Right, Baltimore,"
A *Baltimore Sun* Op-Ed written by Matt Hill and Zafar Shah
of the PJC's Human Right to Housing Project. April 2, 2015

**OUTSTANDING
PARTNERS**

A very special thank you to the
Public Justice Center's Outstanding Partner:
**Thomas J. Minton of
Goldman & Minton**

Tom co-counseled the victorious class action
Dowridge v. Sage Management with the PJC's
Human Right to Housing team and helped win
nearly \$1 million in compensation and debt
forgiveness from the lawsuit for former and
current tenants. Tom, we are so grateful!

A very special thank you to the
Public Justice Center's Outstanding Partner:
**Darin Dalmat and Ryan Griffin,
James & Hoffman, P.C.**

Darin and Ryan co-counseled with the PJC's
Workplace Justice team and the Employment
Law Center to represent seven drywall con-
tractors in a wage theft lawsuit. The suit went
to trial in federal court, the clients recovered
treble damages against the subcontractor, and
Darin and Ryan continue to assist in an appeal
related to whether another Defendant was
properly granted summary judgment. Darin
and Ryan, thank you for your tireless commit-
ment to this case and to our courageous clients.



How do you build a just society?

You honor one woman's legacy of justice

THE RIKKI FLEISHER FUND

Established in 2013 by Paula Fleisher and Julian
Fleisher to honor their mother's legacy, the Rikki
Fleisher Fund for Professional Development helps
the Public Justice Center staff deepen expertise and
explore strategies to advance our mission of building
a just society.



December 12, 2014, was Rikki Fleisher's 80th birthday
and we celebrated with a big concert. Thanks to
spectacular performances by Julian Fleisher, Leon
Fleisher, Ana Gasteyer and Tedd Firth, a packed
house and very generous donors, we added more
than \$15,000 to the Rikki Fleisher Fund for
Professional Development.

You create a ripple effect to continue that legacy

One explicit intention of the Fleisher Fund requires
those who benefit to share the expertise learned. In
2014, three PJC staff went to the inaugural Racial
Justice Training Institute sponsored by the Sargent
Shriver National Center on Poverty Law. The Institute
trains legal services attorneys and staff to analyze racial
barriers and opportunities encountered by people
in poverty, and to develop advocacy approaches to
expose and challenge the barriers. They came back
from Chicago and inspired us to create the Race
Equity Committee to continue motivating and leading
PJC's race equity work. We all attended a screening
of *Cracking the Codes* and some of us furthered
training in a workshop hosted by the Consumer Health
Foundation. We worked closely with Baltimore Racial
Justice Action and the National Legal Aid & Defender
Association to organize a staff retreat, which occurred
coincidentally just days after the Baltimore uprising.

We are sharing the knowledge gained with our allies,
too. In May, the PJC helped organize and facilitate
a very popular track on race equity at the annual
Partners for Justice Conference, sponsored by the Pro
Bono Resource Council, which convenes Maryland's
legal services professionals. PJC attorney Camilla
Roberson, one of the original staff trained in Chicago,
co-founded the Maryland Lawyers Alliance for Race
Equity and Human Rights. The Alliance has organized
a series of brown bag lunches where the PJC and other

allies explore the racial and human rights dimensions
embedded in a variety of substantive legal areas –
criminal justice, housing, equitable development,
employment and banking and lending.

The Fleisher Fund also made it possible for attorney
Andrea Vaughn to attend an advanced litigation skills
training. With a looming bench trial for five immigrant
construction workers suing for unpaid wages, Andrea
applied for and won a scholarship to attend the
intensive trial training by the National Institute of Trial
Advocacy (NITA). The Rikki Fleisher Fund covered
the remaining expenses, and Andrea headed to New
Orleans for the seven-day training. There were sixty
other students; Andrea was only one of five public
interest attorneys. ○

You make Rikki proud



PHOTOs by Steve Walsh

How do you build a just society?

You work with the people you serve

PJC IN THE COMMUNITY

Just Advice

University of Maryland's Just Advice clinic asked Zafar Shah to help law students revise and draft an article for the People's Law Library. Law students use this opportunity to do legal research on a topic of importance for use by self-represented litigants in Maryland. As a community subject matter expert, Zafar guided a pair of students to verify the legal accuracy of the article and ensure plain language readability of an explanation of the Housing Choice Voucher Ownership program. The article is currently available online through the People's Law Library.



Diverse Perspectives

Stevenson University hosted a Diverse Perspectives forum and asked Andrea Vaughn to give a presentation. Andrea spoke about the demographics of immigrant labor in the United States and the abuses of immigrant workers in a presentation called Immigrant Employment in the United States: Legal Rights and Abuses.

Legal observers training

Our commitment to race equity and justice led us to host several trainings for legal observers for the protests that grew out of the death of Freddie Gray. Special thanks to The Maryland Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) and the Baltimore Action Legal Team (BALT) for their leadership.

Lawyer Training

Matt Hill served as a co-presenter at a training for volunteer attorneys interested in taking on landlord-tenant cases on behalf of the tenant. Matt presented a range of topics at this training sponsored by Maryland

Volunteer Lawyers Service, paying particular attention to retaliation, illegal lockouts and similar affirmative, remedial actions.

Know Your Rights

Sally Dworak-Fisher shared "know your rights" information with Darfuri workers hosted by the Darfurian Refugee Association.

Encourage Others

At the annual FERIA Latina, the PJC's Jeopardy game helped workers learn more about their rights. Pictured: Camilla Roberson.

Jennifer Pelton

Jennifer Pelton returned to her alma mater, Wells College, as a featured speaker and a judge for the second annual "Be Your Own Boss" Idea Competition. With a growing interest in pursuing careers in nonprofits, or starting their own, students benefited from Jennifer's experience and enthusiasm for a career dedicated to the greater good.

Photos clockwise from top left: Andrea Vaughn at Stevenson University, Sally Dworak-Fisher at the Darfurian Refugee Association, Legal observer training, Jennifer Pelton at Wells College, Camilla Roberson at FERIA Latina (PHOTO: Hannah Walsh)

How do you build a just society?

You acknowledge the people who face injustice head-on

COURAGE AWARDS



The PJC honors **Mario Salinas Mendoza, William Ascencio Torres, Bernaldino Salinas Mendoza, Henry Garcia Viera, and Franklin Henriquez** with the John P. Sarbanes Courage Award.

These brave workers filed a lawsuit claiming wage theft. The case was arduous and took nearly three years. They spent countless hours missing work to attend depositions, settlement conferences, testifying at trial, and most importantly giving up spending time with their families. Their commitment enabled them to obtain a judgment of three times their unpaid overtime wages based on payroll records, a total of almost \$18,500, from J.I. General Contractors, a construction subcontractor. Our clients

also testified at trial in federal court about their remaining claims for uncompensated pre- and post-shift work, largely related to their allegations that they were required to report and load tools at a certain 7-Eleven store. While they did not prevail on those claims, they showed tremendous courage in facing their former employers in court and did an incredible job testifying about their claims. Despite that difficult loss, we are honored to have worked with these men who are as committed as we are to building a just society.

The Public Justice Center honors **Catherine Simmons** with the John P. Sarbanes Courage Award.

When her landlord refused to acknowledge the bed bug infestation in her home or to do anything about it, Ms. Simmons chose to fight. With representation from the PJC, she filed a complaint seeking damages and immediate relief. Ms. Simmons repeatedly encountered the attitude that bed bugs were "not a big deal," but she knew the effect that this issue was having on her family. She persisted with her court action and the Public Justice Center briefed the Court on the severe threats to health and safety that arise from a bed bug infestation. The Court issued a written opinion confirming that bed bugs are a significant threat to health and safety and finding the landlord liable for over \$6,500 in damages and rent abatement. Because of Ms. Simmons' courage and persistence, housing advocates around Maryland may now point to the Court's opinion in other cases and assist other tenants in fighting back against landlords who fail to maintain basic habitability in their properties.

The Public Justice Center honors **Francis Fimbar** with the John P. Sarbanes Courage Award.

Mr. Fimbar knew that his landlord's threats of eviction and non-payment of rent were baseless. The landlord had never passed a basic health and safety inspection for the property and obtained a license in order to be able to file a rent complaint against him. Nonetheless, the landlord filed the complaint. Even after losing a case for not having a license, the landlord filed another complaint causing Mr. Fimbar to take off from work again to defend against this bad faith complaint. With representation from the PJC, Mr. Fimbar pointed out this bad faith to the Court and sought sanctions. The Court granted Mr. Fimbar's request and issued a lengthy opinion detailing the landlord's bad behavior and describing why the landlord should have pay attorney's fees to the Public Justice Center. Because Mr. Fimbar was not afraid to stand up to his landlord, other landlords have seen this opinion and will think twice before filing complaints to harass and threaten their tenants.

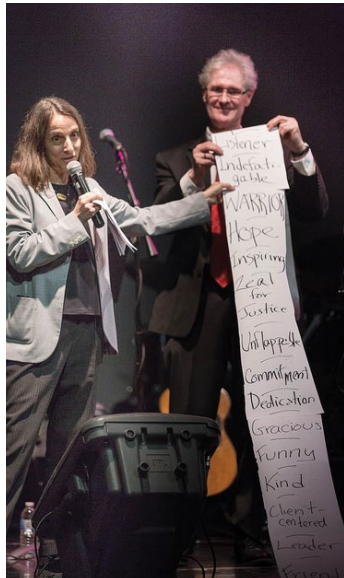


How do you build a just society?

You celebrate accomplishments

DEB GARDNER AND 15 YEARS WITH THE PJC

On May 15, we all gave a hearty thanks to Debra Gardner, the PJC's Legal Director for fifteen years. The party at the Walters Art Museum featured delicious food by Rouge and the Baltimore premiere of *Red Devil Moon*, a new musical inspired by Jean Toomer's *Cane* and written by Pam Ortiz and Robert Earl Price. Thanks to the many donors who helped us celebrate Deb and to the Hedgelawn Foundation and the Kent County Arts Council for generously supporting the music.



A special concert performance of the new musical
Red Devil Moon:
Inspired by Jean Toomer's "Cane"

in honor of
Debra Gardner
celebrating 15 years
as the Public Justice Center's Legal Director

PHOTOS: Steve Walsh
and A. Scott Britton



How do you
build a just society?

With the support
of our community

WE ARE BUILDING A JUST SOCIETY



Board President Tom Glancy and his wife Char Stivers amplified their own personal support by inviting friends to learn more about the PJC at their home this spring.

(PHOTO: PJC)

DONORS

The donors listed here made their gifts between July 1, 2014, and June 30, 2015, to support the Public Justice Center. Thank you. Your gifts are building a just society. In addition to the donors listed, we recognize and acknowledge those who make contributions through workplace giving campaigns. We might not know your names, but we are thankful for your support of our work.

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The party at the Walters Art Museum in honor of Debra Gardner, the PJC's Legal Director for fifteen years. PHOTO: Steve Walsh.

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The following information was prepared from end of year (June 30, 2015) financial statements prior to the completion of the annual independent audit.

Fundraising was better than projected: we raised 112% of budgeted revenues, thanks primarily to your generous support! We saw increased donations from individuals, donations of earned attorney fees from our co-counsel, and attorney fees PJC staff earned from successful litigation. Foundation grants held steady this year, which is an improvement over prior years when grants were in decline. We held expenses to 101% of budget, and thus were able to reduce the projected deficit from (\$150,117) to finish the year in the black with \$16,973 positive net income. The PJC remains in a strong position financially, with more than \$1.2 million in unrestricted net assets ("reserves").

Strong advocacy is possible only with a strong base of support, and we are thankful for the people and organizations who make our work possible.

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Donations from Individuals \$110,722
Donations from Law Firms \$83,306

Foundation Grants (restricted) \$1,253,941

Foundation Grants (unrestricted) \$122,500
Murnaghan Fellowship Grant \$97,400
Fundraising Events \$14,193
Interest & Miscellaneous \$1,173
Attorney Fees Received \$81,797

Total Revenue
\$1,765,032

EXPENSES

Personnel
\$1,335,751

Non-personnel
\$412,488

Total Expenses
\$1,748,239

NET INCOME: \$16,793

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