INJUSTICE
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.”

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:

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

Sincerely,

Thomas X. Glancy, Jr.
Executive Director

Belsky Weinberg & Horowitz, LLC
How do you build a just society?

You establish the right to counsel in civil cases

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 a complex legal proceeding? Yes. If you found yourself arrested and being taken to jail for failing to pay child support, you would want to speak with a lawyer immediately, wouldn’t you? Yes. If you were in need of medical care, and your insurance company was refusing to pay, would you want a lawyer to represent you in court? Yes. And what about getting assistance with your taxes, or trying to stop a utility from shutting off your electricity or water? Yes. The right to counsel is not just something we need to consider in criminal cases. Criminal troubles can spill over into civil issues: criminal convictions. Imagine losing your home through eviction. Or maybe your paycheck comes up short and you’re behind in your medical bills. Or maybe you’re the custodial parent of a child and the other parent refuses to pay child support. Or you are a tenant in a poorly maintained apartment and the landlord refuses to make repairs. Or a relative is in jail for failing to pay child support. You miss more work, you get further behind. Legal challenges mount. And because it’s not a right, there’s less funding available. You establish the right to counsel in civil cases 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 scenarios. 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 a criminal proceeding. Or maybe your paycheck comes up short and you’re being forced to pay child support. You miss work, you get further behind. Legal challenges mount. A right to counsel is not just something we need to provide just society.

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. There is only one legal aid attorney available for every 6,415 low-income people.

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The NCRC, 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 provided a right to counsel in state-initiated termination of parental rights cases but not private adoptions. This ruling, recognized by the Montana Supreme Court in cases of parental rights cases but not private adoptions. This recognition also recognized the interest in providing legal representation for a 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 existing 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 termination of parental rights proceeding where she agreed to guardianship. The 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 termination of parental rights proceeding where she agreed to guardianship. The Court recognized that the interests at stake in a guardianship are ‘too loss compelling’ than in a termination case because the parental rights are ‘sincerely and important concern’ 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 provided extensive technical support to that consortium. The Court recognized that the interests at stake in a guardianship are ‘too loss compelling’ than in a termination case because the parental rights are ‘sincerely and important concern’ 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 New York City, 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.”


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Tenants in Massachusetts without counsel were able to keep possession of their home only 2% of the time. And in San Francisco, tenants in Massachusetts without counsel were able to keep possession of their home 66% of the time. And in San Francisco, tenants with counsel were able to keep possession of their home 98% of the time. In contrast, tenants with counsel were able to keep possession of their home only 2% of the time.
WORKPLACE JUSTICE

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 lied to him about what this meant. They lied to his union about what this meant. They lied to his lawyer about what this meant. They lied to his local government about what this meant. They lied to his family about what this meant. We held employers accountable for their deceptive acts. 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 lied to him about what this meant. They lied to his union about what this meant. They lied to his lawyer about what this meant. They lied to his local government about what this meant. They lied to his family about what this meant. We held employers accountable for their deceptive acts.

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. This law allows a worker to place a pre-judgment lien on the employer's property in order to recover unpaid wages. 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.

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.

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 of the clock, steal tips, withhold wages or simply refuse to pay workers at all. These “business as usual” practices are not reigned 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 “havin’ money” this way. We must stop this practice of wage theft. If we represent groups of wage-earners 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”

You smell a rat’ when paychecks come up short

How do you build a just society?

You ‘smell a rat’ when paychecks come up short.

You raise the voices of workers harmed

In July, Congresswomen 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 of a home care worker, was one of 78 workers who participated in a successful PJC wage theft case against several construction subcontractors. Other panelists shared perspectives of law-enacting 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.

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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.

“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

The Montgomery County paid sick leave bill had strong support from a wide coalition of workers and advocates. (PHOTO: Máté Vladár)

PJC attorney Andrea Vaughn (2nd from left) helped pass the new legislation. (PHOTO: Charmington’s)

PHOTO by Pete Souza

“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.”


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.

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.
Human Resource released a new "Language Access Office of Community Initiatives and the Department of proficient.' To better serve all residents, the Governor’s close to half of them are considered 'limited English delays. What if English is not your native tongue? How document, fight a traffic ticket or drop our kids at school. Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration to renew our Just about every day, most of us interact with one PUBLIC BENEFITS ACCESS TO HEALTH AND PUBLIC BENEFITS

Women’s Coalition for Health Care for All, and the Maryland for Children and Youth, Maryland partner with groups like Advocates 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 do not close our legal services 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.

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 met Mary Lou Magee-Kern’s story in 2013. Her successful lawsuit forced the State to speed up its response to low-income Marylanders with serious 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 days mandated 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 answers and brought every Marylander in Medicaid. Mary Lou died in June. She was a 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 reporters between reporters seeking input for stories and programs doing the field work. On behalf of the entire national civil legal aid community, we thank you for your leadership, expertise and enthusiasm.

A very special thank you to the Maryland Public Defender’s Office: Public Defender’s Office Executive Director Anne Marie “OOFD” with group rate tickets to Baltimore Orioles baseball games and passes including 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.

On behalf of the entire national civil legal aid community, we thank you for your leadership, expertise and enthusiasm.

10 11
APPELLATE ADVOCACY & THE FRANCIS D. MURNAGHAN, JR. APPPELLATE 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. Just as Anna’s time with the PJC came to a successful petition for writ of certiorari, authored by Murnaghan Fellow Anna Jagelewski, in collaboration with lawyers from the PJC’s Human Right to Housing Project, army to enforce the new law. Legal aid is a claim for money damages to tenants facing the threat of eviction or other retaliation because of their protected status. 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 miles in order to achieve a just society. This is why the PJC convened a group of tenants who complained about lease violations and a claim for money damages to tenants facing the threat of eviction or other retaliation because of their protected status. 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.

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You protect tenants against retaliation; 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.
How do you build a just society? You uncover ironic double standards

HUMAN RIGHTS QUOTES

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 or rented for housing or when they are not certificated 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 legal leases and advocating in the legislature to strengthen protections. We stopped up our efforts this year, determined to uproot injustice.

With support from the Abell Foundation, the Human Rights Project initiated a study of targeted 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. Detesse 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, Dowridge, a named plaintiff in the case, took a leading role once she realized that Sage Management’s practices were harming others like her.

In another case, we defend Felicia Locket, 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.

“You challenge (some very creative) landlord abuse. 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.”

“How’s happening here and 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 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

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 tied to the indictment of former Ku Klux Klan members responsible for the murder of Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson and Denise McNair. The article featured an amicus curiae brief submitted by the ACLU of Maryland, the Maryland Attorney General, the Maryland Legal Aid, 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 in the courts.

Douglas Jones, Former U.S. Attorney

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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 2015. 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 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.

The Francis D. Murnaghan, Jr. Appellate Advocacy Fellowship

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The Francis D. Murnaghan, Jr. Appellate Advocacy Fellowship

“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

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 tied to the indictment of former Ku Klux Klan members responsible for the murder of Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson and Denise McNair.

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Our efforts don’t stop in rent court. We encouraged landlords to see if the properties were compliant with the law. We were eager to sue for rent, none of the “landlords” bothered to do so. Each of the sisters prevailed in rent court because while they were paying double the rent from five different entities including the new owners of the property. Then each sister received demands for double rent from the same landlord. That landlord sold the properties. Then the Court dismissed over 75 additional cases for lacking proper notice. The written opinions in these cases have been widely circulated among housing advocates so that advocates can use them as a defense in future cases.

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 problem and pay the PJC’s legal fees. The Court did not award damages to the PJC, but three days after the trial judgment became final, the landlord filed a petition seeking to appeal the judgment. The PJC filed an application for a writ of certiorari, which was granted by the Court of Appeals. See the Appellate Advocacy section in this report for more about this case.

Love and home are a basic human right. The Maryland Court of Appeals will hear argument on this case in November 2015 regarding additional compensation awarded the plaintiffs for the value of the rental property. PJC attorney Andrea Vaughn will present oral argument. See the Appellate Advocacy section in this report for more about this case.

How do you build a just society?
You honor one woman’s legacy of justice

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 attended the inaugural Justice Training Institute sponsored by the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law. The Institute trains attorneys and community activists to work in coalition with One Baltimore and Food Justice Initiative Training to represent tenants facing eviction. 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 women with deportation orders in Baltimore, Vaughn received intensive trial training by the National Institute of Trial Advocacy (NITA). The Rikki Fleisher Fund covered the remaining expenses, and Vaughn headed to New Orleans for the seven-day training. There were also other alumni: Andrea was only one of two interest attorneys.

You make Rikki proud

December 12, 2014, was Rikki Fleisher’s 80th birthday. We celebrated with a big concert. Thanks to spectacular performances by Julian Fleisher, Leor Feinsilver, 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.

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 to develop their expertise in building a just society.

You honor one woman’s legacy of justice
How do you build a just society?

You work with the people you serve

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 fair and just public policy led us to host several trainings for legal observers on 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 Darfurian workers hosted by the Darfurian Refugees Association.

Encourage Others
At the annual Feria Latina, the PJC’s Jeopardy game helped volunteer lawyers learn more about their rights. Pictured: Camilla Roberson, Jennifer Pelton.

Legal observers training
encouraged others to use by self-represented litigants in Maryland. As a community subject matter expert, Zafar guided pairs of students to verify the accuracy of the article and ensure plain language readability of the explanation of the Housing Choice Voucher Ownership program. The article is currently available online through the People’s Law Library.

PJC IN THE COMMUNITY

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 nonprofit, she and her own students benefitted from Jennifer’s experience and enthusiasm for a career dedicated to the greater good.

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You acknowledge the people who face injustice head-on who are as committed as we are to building a just society.

You work with the people you serve

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

These brave workers filed lawsuits charging wage theft. The case was arduous and took nearly three years. They encountered various missed work, attendance, settlement conferences, testify at trial, and most importantly, going up spending time with their families. The PJC in the Community

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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, written by Pam Ortiz and Robert Earl Price. We would like to thank the Hedgelawn Foundation and the Kent County Arts Council for generously supporting the music. We would like to thank the many donors who helped us celebrate Debra and to recognize and acknowledge those who made contributions through workplace giving campaigns. We might not know your names, but we are thankful for your support of our work.

WE ARE BUILDING A JUST SOCIETY

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, written by Pam Ortiz and Robert Earl Price. We would like to thank the Hedgelawn Foundation and the Kent County Arts Council for generously supporting the music.

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.

We appreciate the support of the following donors:

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

(Photography by Steve Walsh, with assistance from Matthew Daniel Skubera and A. Scott Britton.)

PHOTOS: Steve Walsh

WE ARE BUILDING A JUST SOCIETY

With the support of our community

Thank you. Your gifts are building a just society.

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John Pollock
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Sargent Shriver
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Thank you to the many law firms and lawyers that contributed to the PJC’s Annual Campaign or collaborated with us through our Litigation Partnership.

$3,000+
- Belsky Weinberg & Horowitz, LLC
- DLA Piper LLP
- Law Offices of Peter G. Angelos, PC
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$2,500+
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- Ballard Spahr, LLP
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$700+
- Shawe & Rosenthal LLP

$500+
- AARP Law, PC
- Chase, Banner, Lavy & Manthal, LLC
- Moosara, PA
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$500+
- Ates Law Firm, PC
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- AARP Maryland
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$100 or more
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- Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton, Garrison Charitable Gift Fund
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- AARP Maryland
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NCGRC Organizational Members
- The Chicago Bar Foundation
- Equal Access to Justice Foundation, Inc.
- Grice, Harrell, Stuart Foundation
- Philadelphia Bar Association
- Southern Coalition for Social Justice
- Texas Access to Justice Foundation

The following donors have shared with the PJC generous unrestricted contributions totaling $1,000 or more. Your gifts afford the flexibility to meet injustice where it rises and to use the tools necessary to balance the scales of justice—no matter how long it takes. We consider you to be our Champions of Justice. Thank you.
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Jula Joffe
Christine Lau
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NET INCOME: $16,793

FY2015 INCOME & EXPENSES
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 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 of ($150,117) to finish the year in the black with $16,793 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.

The Public Justice Center, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) public charity organization incorporated in the State of Maryland. All contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Copies of current financial statements are available upon request by contacting the Public Justice Center at One North Charles Street, Suite 200, Baltimore, MD 21201 or by telephone: (410)625-9409. Documents and information submitted to the Internal Revenue Service are available upon request by contacting the Internal Revenue Service. For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2015, the Public Justice Center was audited by the Maryland Office of the Auditor of State.

INCOME
Donations from Individuals
Donations from Law Firms
Donations from Foundations
Foundation Grants (restricted) $1,013,941
Fundraising Events $114,402
Interest & Miscellaneous
EXPERTS
Total Revenue $1,765,032
Personal $1,13,711
Non-personal $412,468
The Maryland rule of law principles of integrity, diversity, fairness, respect, humility, responsibility, and accountability in our programs and operations, grants to other nonprofit agencies, financial management and fundraising.
How do you build a just society?