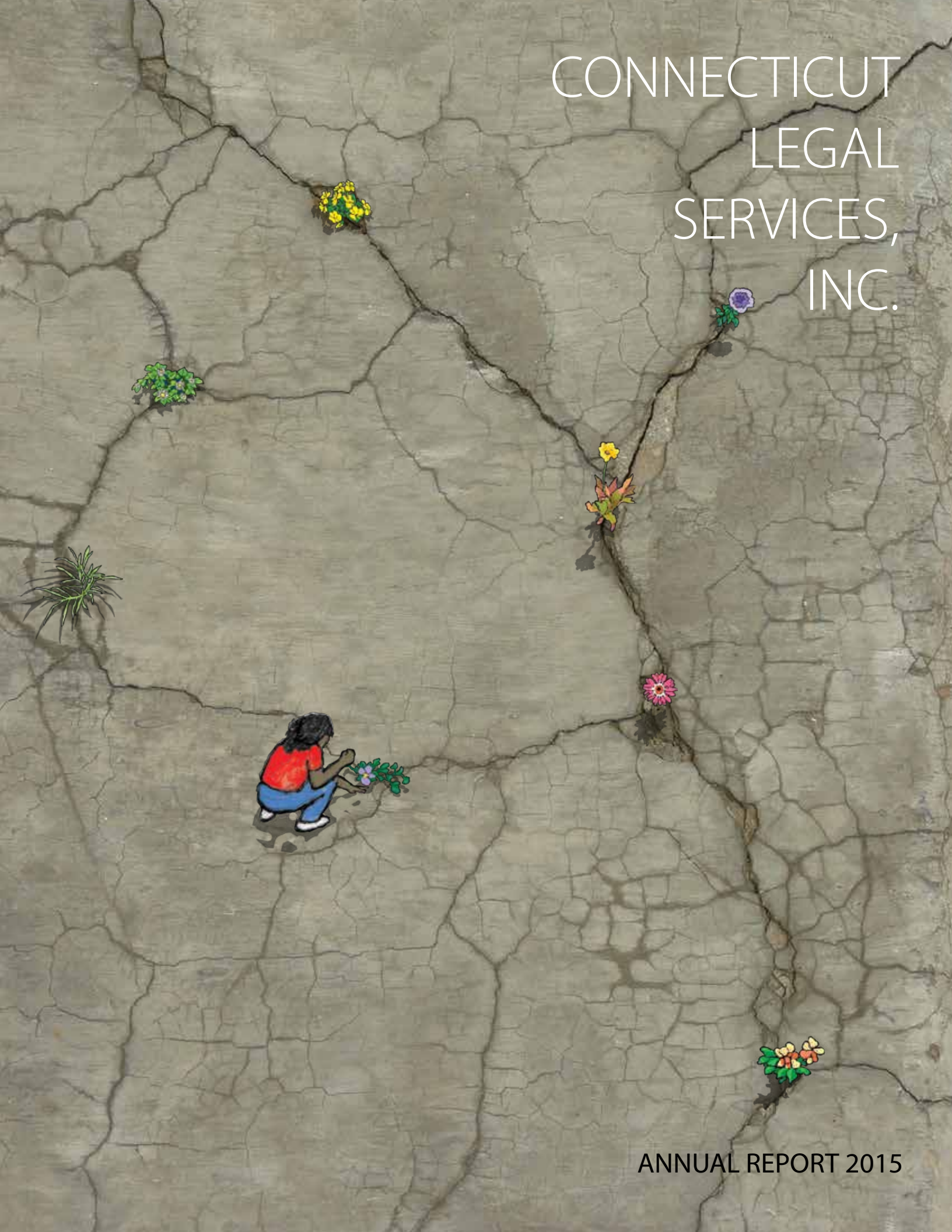


CONNECTICUT LEGAL SERVICES, INC.



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Dedication to Attorney David S. Stowe

Connecticut Legal Services dedicates its 2014–2015 Annual Report in loving memory of Attorney David S. Stowe's life and in celebration of his commitment to ensuring equal access to housing for all.



To laugh often and love much; to win the respect of intelligent persons and the affection of children; to earn the approbation of honest critics and to endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to give of one's self; to leave the world a little better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation; to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived, this is to have succeeded.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Attorney David S. Stowe
August 22, 1950–January 15, 2015

Dave joined our legal services family in 1984, beginning a 31-year career of zealous advocacy on behalf of Connecticut's poor. A pioneer in protecting tenants' rights, Dave persuaded the Connecticut appellate court to uphold the principle that tenants facing eviction have the right to know exactly why they are being evicted. Dave also co-counseled a state court appeal in a case of first impression regarding whether a complainant in a Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities case has the right to intervene in her own case when the defendant removes the case to Superior Court.

In a landmark case that spanned almost 20 years of Dave's career, the Connecticut Supreme Court held that state law prohibits discrimination against prospective tenants on the basis of legally obtained sources of income, specifically receipt of a government rent subsidy. These are only two examples of the ways in which Dave advocated for his clients and the enforcement of their housing rights.

Dave's work as a legal services attorney is indeed impressive and worthy of celebration. The loss of his presence, personality, and humanity, however, cause his legal services family the most grief. Dave was amazingly supportive of his colleagues. He trained numerous attorneys to become capable and effective housing advocates for their clients. He always took the time to listen and advise on cases, and everyone appreciated his unending patience and equanimity. Dave was kind and sincerely interested in and concerned about other people and their lives. He firmly believed in justice and was unafraid to actively seek it on behalf of his clients and his colleagues.

We at CLS celebrate his life and all he meant to each and every one of us. We all breathe easier because he lived.

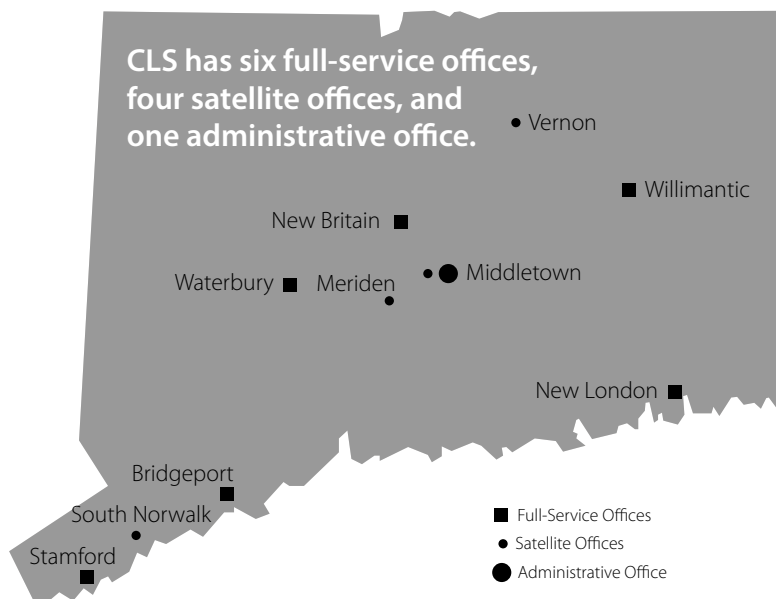
We miss you, dear friend.

Service Area, Offices, and Staff

Connecticut Legal Services is a private, not-for-profit law firm dedicated to improving the lives of low-income people by providing access to justice. In the CLS service area—all of Connecticut except the Greater Hartford and New Haven areas—more than 200,000 people are financially eligible for services (2010 census).

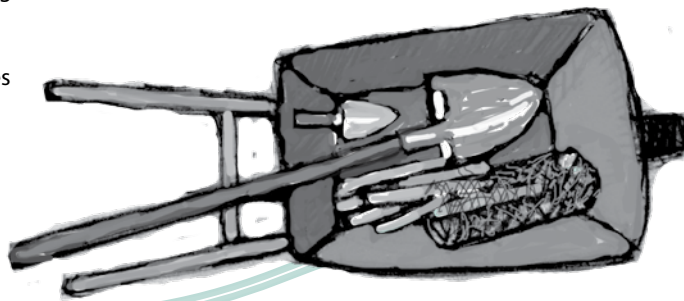
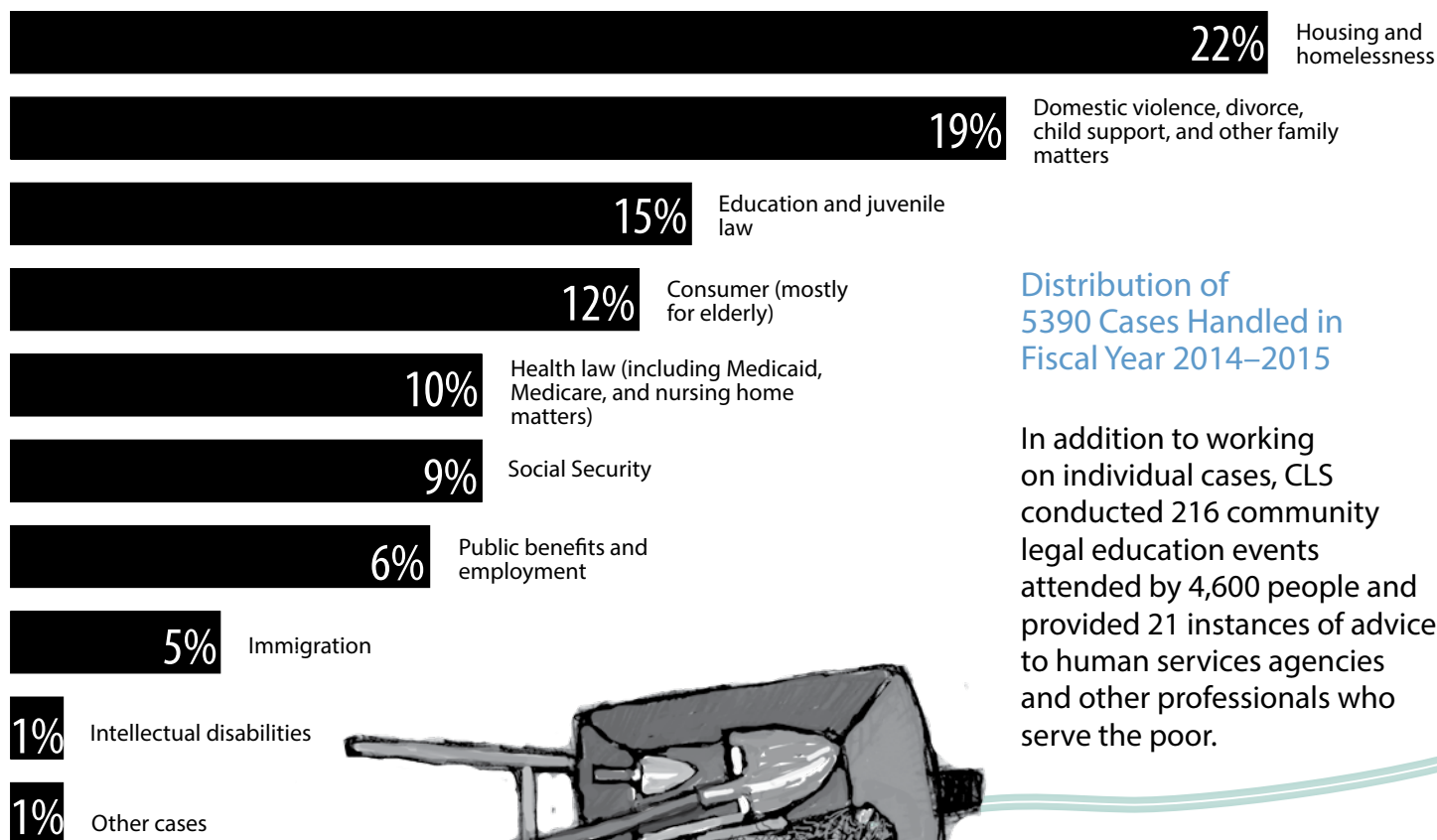
On June 30, 2015, the CLS staff consisted of

- 46.04 FTE lawyers
- 2.00 FTE paralegals
- 10.80 FTE legal assistants
- .67 FTE child welfare advocates
- 8.00 FTE administrative staff.



Distribution of Cases

In 2014–2015, Connecticut Legal Services received approximately 16,775 requests for service. We responded by opening 3,267 new cases for legal representation and counseling. We also worked on 2,123 cases opened in previous years. CLS services in these 5,390 cases benefited approximately 13,000 household members.



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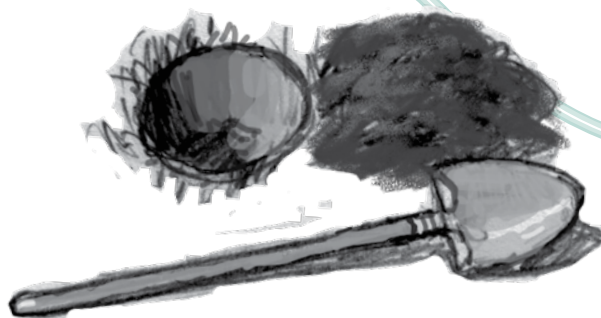
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Director of Development

Whit Freer
Information Technology Administrator

CLS Helps Pregnant Woman Escape Abusive Marriage

Ahani* came to the United States from Ghana after meeting a man who had traveled there looking for a wife. When she arrived in the United States, they dated for more than a year and then married. Soon after the wedding, her husband became abusive. Ahani felt trapped and didn't know what to do. After several very violent episodes, she decided to leave. She had no money, no car, no relatives, and no support system—and she was pregnant with twins. She needed help, and the domestic violence shelter she had found referred her to Connecticut Legal Services.

Because Ahani is an immigrant, her husband had used her immigration status to control her, threatening her with deportation as part of the abuse. Her CLS attorney helped her stabilize her immigration status, and Ahani got her green card. If she hadn't, she could have been deported without her children, who would have been forced to stay with her abuser.



Her attorney helped her file for divorce and secured a good financial settlement, so she can live independently and take care of her children. Now Ahani is safe from abuse, can work to support herself and her children, and no longer fears being separated from her children.

4 **Names and other identifying information in CLS client stories were changed to protect client confidentiality.*

Letter from Executive Director and Board Chair

Dear Friends,

Connecticut Legal Services has the opportunity to grow and flower in the coming years—with your support and the continued steadfast dedication of our staff.

We have faced tight funding since 2009, but we have survived. Despite the stress, our staff has continued to effectively advocate for thousands of low-income clients every year.

John Levi, the current chair of the Legal Services Corporation, recently quoted his father (a former U.S. attorney general) in stating that justice cannot be won for all time—it must be achieved over and over again, through constant effort.

Through dedication, persistence, and hard work, we have made our way through to a time of expanding opportunity.

- The legislature passed a bill to help fill the legal services funding gap with broad bipartisan support in both the Connecticut Senate and House of Representatives.*
- The legislature also enacted a bill to establish a task force to study what steps might be taken to increase the proportion of litigants who are represented by counsel.*
- CLS (along with its sister programs) received a major new grant from the state Office of Victim Services to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. We are joined in this expanded effort by the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence.*

Donor support from lawyers and law firms has remained strong throughout the economic downturn, and we are seeing new opportunities to build improved funding and increase services in the coming year.

With the support of our friends and our staff, we tended our garden during the drought years, and it looks ready to pay off in a new emergence of expanded services in the coming years.

Stay tuned!

Best,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Steven D. Eppler-Epstein
Executive Director

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Ross H. Garber
Board Chair

Financial Supporters and Other Income Sources for 2014–2015

Expenditures

Government Based Grants

Agency on Aging, Senior Resources (Eastern Connecticut)	\$ 43,082
Agency on Aging, Southwestern Connecticut Area	46,960
Agency on Aging, Western Connecticut Area	62,466
City of Middletown	10,000
Community Development Block Grant Program— City of Waterbury	10,072
Community Development Block Grant Program— Town of Fairfield	3,726
Park City Communities	53,863
State of Connecticut Court Support Services Division — Criminal Justice, Family Matters & Justice Employee Training Program	7,000
State of Connecticut Court Support Services Division	912,190
State of Connecticut Department of Aging	38,024
State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families	2,376
State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development	85,000
State of Connecticut Department of Housing	194,114
State of Connecticut Department of Social Services	738,942
State of Connecticut Judicial Branch	80,000
State of Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program	15,125
State of Connecticut Office of Protection and Advocacy	134,181
State of Connecticut Office of the Chief Public Defender	48,094
Town of Ashford	500
Town of Coventry	925
Town of Ellington	2,200
Town of Groton	10,000
Town of Mansfield	6,500
Town of Vernon	2,000
U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs	18,856
Total Government Based Grants	\$ 2,526,195

Fairfield County Bar Association, Inc.	2,000
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund—General Re Corporation Fund	1,000
Frontier Employees Community Services Fund — Central Region	250
Hartford Foundation For Public Giving, Inc. (LawyerCorps Connecticut Fellowship)	14,458
Health Equity Solutions	22,667
Kitchings Family Fund at the Community Foundation of Middlesex County	14,458
Jeffrey P. Ossen Family Foundation	14,310
Frank Loomis Palmer Fund, Bank of America Fund, Bank of America Trustee	3,314
Seaman Family Foundation	75,000
St. John's Community Foundation	3,499
Tow Foundation, Inc.	49,761
United Way, Central and Northeastern Connecticut	61,700
United Way, Greater Waterbury	16,600
United Way, Greenwich	5,000
United Way, Meriden and Wallingford	21,500
United Way, Northwest Connecticut	6,227
United Way, Southeastern Connecticut	29,878
United Way, Southington	5,000
United Way, West Central Connecticut	5,100
United Way, Western Connecticut — Litchfield County	462
United Way, Western Connecticut — Northern Fairfield County	4,163
United Way, Western Connecticut — Stamford	12,025
University of Connecticut School of Law	9,975
Vera Institute of Justice, Inc.	19,580
Xerox Foundation	15,000
Total Private Grants	\$ 9,821,271

Private Grants

Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut	9,102
Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut— Woman & Girls Fund —Southeast	2,676
Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut — Woman & Girls Fund — Windham	10,051
Connecticut Bar Foundation (Interest on Lawyers' Trust Account)	1,150,495
Connecticut Bar Foundation (Court Fees Grants-in-Aid)	7,219,459
Connecticut Bar Foundation (Judicial Branch Grants-in-Aid)	763,595
Connecticut Health Foundation	30,000
Connecticut Health Foundation Health Equity Solutions	216,667
Estate of Ruth I Krauss	6,299

Donations and Other Income

Attorney Fees	\$ 209,925
Campaign for Justice	255,133
Donated Goods & Services	229,555
United Way Donor Designations	17,650
Interest/Dividends Earned & Unrealized Gain/(Loss) on Investments	2,158
Miscellaneous	4,498
Total Donations and Other Income	\$ 718,919
Total CLS Income	\$ 13,045,629

Statements of Financial Position—June 30, 2015, and June 30, 2014

ASSETS	June 30, 2015	June 30, 2014	LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	June 30, 2015	June 30, 2014
Current Assets			Liabilities		
Cash and Cash Equivalents—Operating Funds	\$2,186,490	\$1,546,808	Accrued Pension Liability	\$4,314,744	\$3,521,030
Cash in Escrow—Client Funds	9,236	2,214	Accounts Payable	58,088	203,347
Cash—Insurance Escrow	0	0	Accrued Expenses	31,848	32,891
Receivables			Refundable Advances	60,120	36,528
Grants and Contracts Receivable	35,927	103,569	Accrued Annual Leave	501,543	497,342
Promises to Give	1,247,485	654,884	Client Trust Deposits	9,236	2,214
Other Receivables	35,031	51,400	Total Liabilities	\$4,975,579	\$4,293,352
Prepaid Expenses	133,903	188,441	Net Assets		
Total Current Assets	\$3,648,072	\$2,547,316	Unrestricted		
Fixed Assets			Undesignated - attributable to operations	795,445	1,029,336
Property and Equipment	504,458	504,458	Undesignated - attributable to pension liability	(2,977,608)	(3,549,389)
Leasehold Improvements	792,020	776,457	Designated		
Total Fixed Assets Before Depreciation	\$1,296,478	\$1,280,915	Insurance Escrow	0	0
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(1,014,690)	(970,742)	Fixed Assets	281,788	310,173
Total Fixed Assets	281,788	310,173	Total Unrestricted Net Assets	(\$1,900,375)	(\$2,209,880)
Other Assets			Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	876,038	795,399
Security Deposits	21,382	21,382	Total Net Assets	(\$1,024,337)	(\$1,414,481)
Total Other Assets	21,382	21,382	Total Liabilities And Net Assets	\$3,951,242	\$2,878,871
Total Assets	\$3,951,242	\$2,878,871			

CLS Helps Teenager Change His Life

When Connecticut Legal Services met Jim, he lived in a youth shelter. His mother, who suffers from extreme mental health issues, had abandoned him when Connecticut passed a law prohibiting exotic pets. Rather than part with her animal, she parted with Jim and moved out of state with her pet kangaroo. By the time CLS met him, the shelter was no longer looking to have Jim placed with a family. The shelter's plan for Jim became "another planned placement living arrangement," which meant he would age out of the system without a family placement.

Jim was almost mute at this point, answering questions with only one word and staring at the floor. Because his father was deceased, we reached out to several family members in our search for a placement for Jim, but no one would take him. We contacted private foster care agencies in our area and finally identified a prospective foster parent. Jim, a 6-foot Irish boy, was placed with a petite, professional woman of Haitian descent. They were an unlikely pair from the start. Though Jim was her first foster child and she had no biological children, she immediately took well to motherhood. She was a tireless advocate for Jim and often reached out to help access the services he needed to give him what she called "a normal childhood."



Through our social worker's professional connections, we were able to secure therapy for Jim. We also advocated for Jim to have a tutor and karate lessons, go to football camp, and have a chance at other benefits of a "normal childhood." Although Jim fantasized that he would one day be reunited with his mother, he realized through therapy and the constant support of his foster mother that his mother didn't have the ability to parent him, and he began to reap the benefits of living in a healthy home. His grades improved, and he transferred from special education to a regular classroom. He became captain of the high school football team, qualified for his driver's license, and got a part-time job.

Just months before his 17th birthday, his foster mother adopted him, and Jim took her last name. A few months later, he called to invite us to his high school graduation. Now, full of words, he said he couldn't show us how happy he is over the phone and wanted us to see in person. Jim will attend the University of Connecticut in the fall of 2016 on a full academic scholarship.

Connecticut Legal Services Campaign for Justice Donor List

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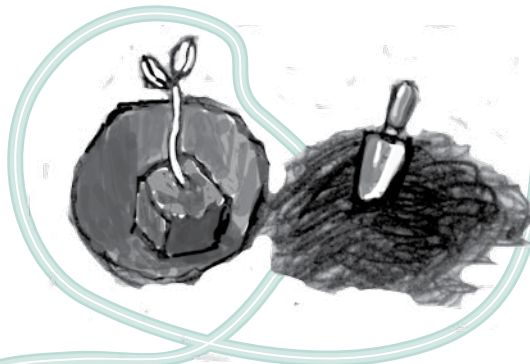
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CLS Saves Family from Homelessness

For many years, Bob, Angie, and their daughter, Lily, lived as tenants in Bob's childhood home. Bob's parents had owned the property previously, but it did not pass to Bob after they died. Bob suffers from a serious lung disease that prevents him from working and requires 24-hour care, a service his medical insurance does not cover. That means Angie is also unable to work because she is her husband's caregiver.

Recently, in a tax sale, the home was sold to a local redevelopment company that purchases, flips, and resells residential properties. After title passed to the company, a representative approached Bob and Angie and told them the company would give them \$1,500 to move out within the next three weeks and threatened to lock them out if they failed to meet that deadline. The company's ultimatum stunned Bob and Angie, and they didn't know what to do. Because of Bob's health and their financial difficulties, they knew finding a suitable place to live and moving in such a short period of time would be impossible. In desperation, Bob and Angie turned to a local social services organization for help, which referred them to legal aid.

Bob and Angie wished to avoid eviction and stay in the home until the end of June so Lily could finish the school year. Their legal aid attorney immediately began negotiating with the company for the time the family needed to find a safe, suitable home and worked out an agreement allowing the family to remain through the end of June, at which time they would receive \$2,000 in exchange for the keys. The agreement also provided that if Bob and Angie moved by the 20th of the month, they would receive an additional \$500. They were thrilled that their attorney was able to negotiate both more time and a higher cash-for-keys payment, which guaranteed their ability to find affordable, appropriate housing that would fit their needs.

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CLS Helps Disabled Men Join the Community

Bob (66) and Ben (55) have intellectual disabilities and have spent their entire lives at the Southbury Training School. They were capable of living in the community, and Connecticut Legal Services advocates worked with the Office of Protection and Advocacy and the men's guardians to help bring this about. Bob and Ben, along with another school resident, found a three-bedroom home on one acre of land in a great neighborhood. They had never lived outside the institution, so CLS made sure the necessary services were in place. We monitored the transition so that any anxiety or trauma Bob and Ben felt could be addressed quickly without setting them back. After the move, we called all the parties together for a 30-day transition review. The change in Bob and Ben was astounding. They had never smiled or interacted much with other school residents, but during the meeting, they smiled and talked with multiple residents. They had never slept in a bed bigger than a twin and were very happy about their new home. Bob and Ben now go grocery shopping for themselves, practice sports with other school residents, and are thriving with community supports.

Campaign for Justice continued

CLS Helps Disabled Man Qualify for Benefits



John joined the Marines as a young man because his father had been a Marine. John had health problems, including undiagnosed mental problems, and left the Marines with an honorable medical discharge after 14 months. He moved in with his parents, staying there for years and working at various jobs that always ended with his being fired because he couldn't get along with people. John also descended into drug and alcohol use in an attempt to self-medicate his mental illness, subsequently diagnosed as bipolar disorder. While working as a janitor, his employer convinced John he needed help and drove John to a treatment facility. He became sober and increasingly aware of his mental illness and of the challenges of both staying in treatment for his mental illness and staying sober. He began receiving mental health treatment.

When he was denied disability benefits because he was unable to show that he was, in fact, disabled, John contacted Connecticut Legal Services. We appealed the denial decision and requested a hearing to set out John's case. His CLS advocate and his mental health treatment counselor worked tirelessly to collect and present the necessary information to convince the judge that John was disabled. He was granted disability benefits, which include mental health treatment. John, who had been living with relatives, was able to find a place of his own, work steadily, and live a healthy life.

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CLS Helps Terrified Young Woman End Relationship With Abuser

Kim is 16 years old. She was placed in an emergency shelter after school personnel observed that bruises and welts covered her body. Kim, known for her long, shiny black hair, also caught the attention of the school social worker, when she came to school with swollen eyes and her hair ragged and choppy. Kim broke down and told the social worker about long-term abuse by her father. The most recent beating had included his chopping off her hair to further her humiliation.

The school called the Department of Children and Families, and Connecticut Legal Services was appointed to help Kim. She was deathly afraid of returning to her father, who had threatened to kill her the next time he saw her and had also threatened to send her back to China to live with unknown relatives. Although DCF favors reunification, CLS strongly advocated against allowing Kim's father access to her. We secured a therapist for Kim, who found that contact with her father triggered her PTSD, which would make functioning in his home or at school impossible. The father's supervised visits were ended, and DCF pursued a termination of his parental rights. Kim was placed in a foster home, where she thrived and was adopted by her foster parents. She is now happy and healthy, plays soccer in high school, and dreams of going to the US Naval Academy.

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In Memory of

Tim Aher
Martin M. Berger
Roy F. Brown
My brother, Curt, who
always struggled and
still had a good sense
of humor

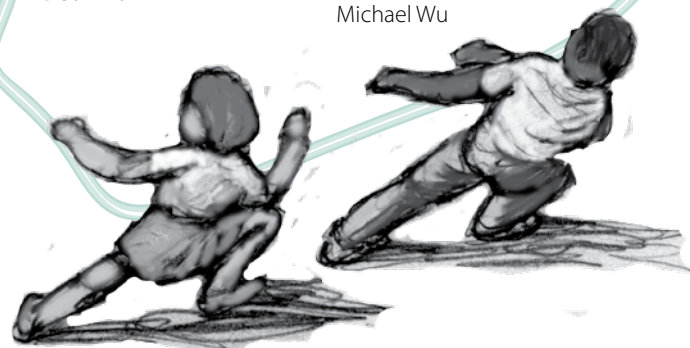
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Thomas Goldberg
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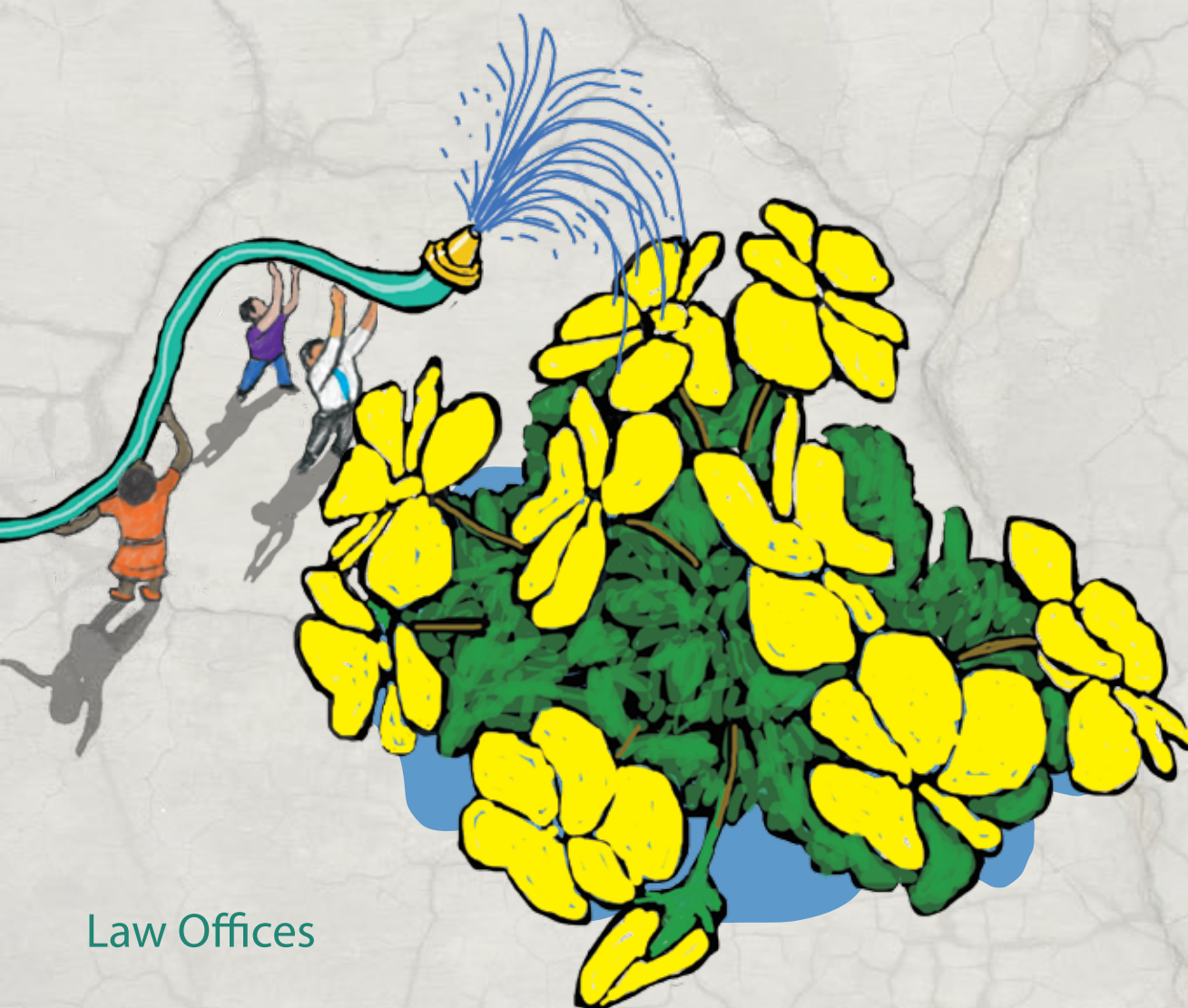
CLS Helps Laborer Get Paid for His Work

Pedro worked for a roofing company—eight hours a day, six days a week—for three weeks. At the end of that time, the owner of the roofing company refused to pay. Pedro was owed \$3,120, which included the overtime he should have been paid. Pedro went to the Stamford Day Laborer Wage Project for assistance. We first called and sent a letter to the employer, demanding that Pedro be paid for his work. When the employer did not respond, we prepared the paperwork necessary for Pedro to file a claim in small claims court. We also found a private attorney who volunteered to represent him at the hearing, where Pedro was awarded \$5,096.26 plus post-judgment interest at five percent per year.

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