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.

Attorney David S. Stowe

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence, divorce, child support, and other family matters</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and juvenile law</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer (mostly for elderly)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health law (including Medicaid, Medicare, and nursing home matters)</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public benefits and employment</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual disabilities</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other cases</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Distribution of 5390 Cases Handled in Fiscal Year 2014–2015

In addition to working on individual cases, CLS conducted 216 community legal education events attended by 4,600 people and provided 21 instances of advice to human services agencies and other professionals who serve the poor.
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Astrid Lebron
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.

*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,

Steven D. Eppler-Epstein
Executive Director

Ross H. Garber
Board Chair
### Government Based Grants

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut</td>
<td>$9,102</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut—Woman &amp; Girls Fund —Southeast</td>
<td>$2,676</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut—Woman &amp; Girls Fund — Windham</td>
<td>$10,051</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecticut Bar Foundation (Interest on Lawyers’ Trust Account)</td>
<td>$1,150,495</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecticut Bar Foundation (Court Fees Grants-in-Aid)</td>
<td>$7,219,459</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecticut Bar Foundation (Judicial Branch Grants-in-Aid)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecticut Health Foundation</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
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<td>Connecticut Health Foundation Health Equity Solutions</td>
<td>$216,667</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estate of Ruth I Krauss</td>
<td>$6,299</td>
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### Donations and Other Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attorney Fees</td>
<td>$209,925</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campaign for Justice</td>
<td>$255,133</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donated Goods &amp; Services</td>
<td>$229,555</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Way Donor Designations</td>
<td>$17,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest/Dividends Earned &amp; Unrealized Gain/(Loss) on Investments</td>
<td>$2,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>$4,498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Donations and Other Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$718,919</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total CLS Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$13,045,629</strong></td>
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### ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Assets</th>
<th>June 30, 2015</th>
<th>June 30, 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and Cash Equivalents—Operating Funds</td>
<td>$2,186,490</td>
<td>$1,546,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash in Escrow—Client Funds</td>
<td>9,236</td>
<td>2,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash—Insurance Escrow</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receivables</td>
<td>35,927</td>
<td>103,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promises to Give</td>
<td>1,247,485</td>
<td>654,884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Receivables</td>
<td>35,031</td>
<td>51,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid Expenses</td>
<td>133,903</td>
<td>188,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Current Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,648,072</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,547,316</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Fixed Assets | | |
| Property and Equipment | 504,458 | 504,458 |
| Leasehold Improvements | 792,020 | 776,457 |
| **Total Fixed Assets Before Depreciation** | **$1,296,478** | **$1,280,915** |
| Less Accumulated Depreciation | (1,014,690) | (970,742) |
| **Total Fixed Assets** | **281,788** | **310,173** |

| Other Assets | | |
| Security Deposits | 21,382 | 21,382 |
| **Total Other Assets** | **21,382** | **21,382** |

| **Total Assets** | **$3,951,242** | **$2,878,871** |

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liabilities</th>
<th>June 30, 2015</th>
<th>June 30, 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accrued Pension Liability</td>
<td>$4,314,744</td>
<td>$3,521,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable</td>
<td>58,088</td>
<td>203,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accrued Expenses</td>
<td>31,848</td>
<td>32,891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refundable Advances</td>
<td>60,120</td>
<td>36,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accrued Annual Leave</td>
<td>501,543</td>
<td>497,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client Trust Deposits</td>
<td>9,236</td>
<td>2,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,975,579</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,293,352</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Net Assets | | |
| Unrestricted | | |
| Undesignated - attributable to operations | 795,445 | 1,029,336 |
| Undesignated - attributable to pension liability | (2,977,608) | (3,549,389) |
| **Designated** | | |
| Insurance Escrow | 0 | 0 |
| Fixed Assets | 281,788 | 310,173 |
| **Total Unrestricted Net Assets** | **($1,900,375)** | **($2,209,880)** |

| Temporarily Restricted Net Assets | | |
| 876,038 | 795,399 |
| **Total Net Assets** | **($1,024,337)** | **($1,414,481)** |

| **Total Liabilities And Net Assets** | **$3,951,242** | **$2,878,871** |

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### 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.
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, so 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.

Eder Family Foundation
Farrell, Geenty, Sheeley, Boccalatte & Guarino, P.C.
Ross Garber
Gary Gold
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.
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 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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Priscilla Cuttino
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Donald J. Defronzo
Jackie DeLeo
Sonja M. Devitt
Suzanne S. Dickson
Bruce E. Dillingham
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Whit Freer
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Eleanor F. Kostic
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Polina Kutaeva
Anita LaFond
Janis Laliberte
Aleksander Lamvol
Andrea F. Levy
Denise Lewis
SHERI F. London
Pamela Longwell
Julie Loughran and Brendan Foulois
Avery R. Lupia
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Margaret Mangum
Peter Marcuse
Philip Marella
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Sandra E. Martino
James McEwen
Catherine Menningen
James H. Middleton
Jeffrey Morey
Margaret E. Moriarty
James J. Murphy
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Lily Nevins-Perle
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Stephanie Nickse and Adam Swanson
Susan Baltimore Nobleman
Susan Ochman
Maureen O’Connor
Douglas H. Olin
OneCause
Valerie A. O’Rourke
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Daniel Portanova
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Esther and Ronald Rada
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Catherine Rivard
Suzy Rivera
Cindy L. Robinson
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Heidi Roos
Margaret P. Roraback
Ellen Rosenthal
Larissa Ross
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William Ryan
Howard V. Sann
George Scharpf
Jill Schoenfuss
Steven Schwane
Richard Selman
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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.

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.