

COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES AND COUNSELING CENTER

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COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES AND COUNSELING CENTER

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

justice.

empowerment.

hope.

2009



COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES  
AND COUNSELING CENTER

ANNUAL REPORT JULY 1, 2008 TO JUNE 30, 2009

Dear Friends,

We write this with great pride in CLSACC's accomplishments during the 2009 fiscal year. The agency provided legal and mental health services to over 1,200 community members. To meet client need, we launched several new programs including job coaching and a support group for women combining art and therapy. Our attorneys expanded the eviction defense project in response to the foreclosure crisis, and they represented some of the first domestic violence victims in the country to receive immigration relief under the "U Visa" program.

We faced setbacks as well. The economic downturn interrupted plans to seek larger, more adequate space for the agency which is literally bursting at the seams with our increased staff, volunteers, and clients, but we were able to end the year on budget and are indebted to each of our Friends who supported us with a gift.

CLSACC has been able to fulfill its mission through the dedicated efforts of our tireless staff, volunteers and Board of Directors, and our many funders and individual donors. Facing unprecedented funding cuts in fiscal year 2010, we have reduced the size and color of this year's Annual Report to minimize expenses, but the stories of our extraordinary volunteers and clients are no less powerful – please take a few minutes to read about the impact CLSACC has had in the community this past year.

With your help and the help of our many supporters, we will continue our fight to provide the highest quality legal and mental health services to those in need, ensuring equal access to justice and well being for all.

Sincerely,



APRIL ENGLISH  
President, Board of Directors




BARBARA MITCHELL  
Executive Director



# COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES AND COUNSELING CENTER

## MISSION STATEMENT

Community Legal Services And Counseling Center provides free civil legal aid and affordable psychological counseling to low-income people. Our services combat the effects of poverty and violence by helping clients and their children meet basic human needs for safety, income, health and housing. CLSACC draws on the expertise of dedicated volunteer professionals to provide direct services to our community's most vulnerable members.

Serving cities and towns in the Greater Boston area  
Providing immigration services statewide

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

CLSACC's **Legal Program** provides free civil legal assistance to clients whose incomes are at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (\$27,562 for a family of four). CLSACC handles cases in the areas of family law and domestic violence, housing and homelessness prevention, disability benefits, and immigration and refugee rights. Legal services are provided by a dedicated corps of volunteers and by the Center's two full-time and three part-time staff attorneys and one intake paralegal.

Legal assistance ranges from advice and referral to representation in complex litigation. CLSACC's legal work also includes training and education, collaboration with community partners, writing and distributing publications, and work on public policy issues that affect the lives of many people in our community.

In FY09, CLSACC's staff and volunteers handled **771** cases. **34** volunteer attorneys and **28** volunteer law students, interns, paralegals, and interpreters donated **6,399** hours of service. CLSACC's services focused on the most urgent problems facing our clients: domestic violence, lack of affordable housing, fear of deportation to face torture at home, and the economic crisis.

**LEGAL PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS**

CLSACC's Legal Director **Ellen Wilbur** participated in the development of the Domestic Violence High Risk Assessment and Response Team in Cambridge, Belmont, and Arlington and in Somerville. The Teams will work to ensure that there are coordinated prevention and response efforts for those victims of domestic violence who are in the most dangerous situations.



Housing Attorney **John Froio** was effective in preventing homelessness by defending tenants at risk of eviction in Cambridge District Court. His innovative project was expanded to Everett residents who were subject to losing their rental housing due to foreclosures.

CLSACC's immigration staff attorneys **Valerie Fisk**, **Deirdre Giblin**, and **Lisa Weinberg** worked with volunteers in a collaborative program with the PAIR Project to ensure representation for refugees and immigrants who fear persecution and torture in their home countries if deported. CLSACC represented immigrant survivors of domestic violence who were among the first in the country to obtain "U Visas," a relatively new federal program. CLSACC's work with asylum seekers was also featured in a recent Voice Of America video blog, "Ordeals in Seeking Asylum".

**PROVIDING A SAFE HAVEN**



**Kemoh Salia Bao** was a high ranking government official in Sierra Leone and a former ambassador to Liberia who was arbitrarily and repeatedly imprisoned for his political activities throughout the long civil war in his country. Passionate about his political work but fearing for his safety, he came to the U.S. in 2006. He knew he needed to obtain legal asylum in the U.S. to ensure the safety of himself and his family. When he began searching

for a lawyer, he was referred to a very high priced attorney whom he couldn't afford. Luckily, he found CLSACC.

At CLSACC, volunteer attorney **Scott Edmiston** represented him in his petition for asylum in the U.S. Working with the Boston Center for Refugee Health & Human Rights at the Boston Medical Center to corroborate his claims of persecution, CLSACC was able to represent Mr. Bao, his wife, and son in a successful application for political asylum. He is now an Associate Professor in the Cambridge College School of Education, and is applying for permanent residence, the next step towards citizenship in the U.S.



**VOLUNTEERISM AT ITS FINEST**



**Beverly Rich**, a long-time supporter of CLSACC, has "always been well aware of the good work CLSACC does." Beverly first volunteered with CLSACC in 1985, but left CLSACC to work at the Massachusetts Board of Bar Overseers. After her retirement from the Board, Beverly contacted CLSACC to inquire about volunteering. Attorney **John Froio**, Assistant Legal Director, discussed options for getting involved with the agency again and invited her to work in the housing and homelessness unit. Beverly began working with John and

represented low-income clients with their cases. Although Beverly didn't have a lot of experience with housing law, she found John Froio to be "the perfect mentor – knowledgeable, clear, patient, helpful, respectful and appreciative." Beverly worked on a variety of housing cases, ranging from ensuring that low-income clients could keep their homes to helping those in poor housing conditions find safe and healthy alternatives. Beverly said that the overall experience was "extremely positive and rewarding" and believes that whatever she chooses to do next "will be influenced by the wonderful experience I had at CLSACC."

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

**CLSACC's Counseling Program** offers counseling to low-income people, with or without health insurance, who have difficulty gaining access to affordable mental health services in the community, filling critical gaps in services for our clients. We assist clients who are burdened by emotional conditions which negatively affect their work, relationships, and family life, and assist them to make positive changes that improve how they function and cope.

The Center provides weekly short-term, long-term, or intermittent counseling for individuals and couples, and also runs groups. Clients work on overcoming the effects of violence, torture, sexual abuse, and incest; most grapple with poverty, social isolation, depression, anxiety, or substance abuse. The Center's approach to working with clients is collaborative, seeking to build upon and maximize client strengths.



In the past two years, CLSACC has expanded its counseling and social support services to immigrants and refugees. These individuals are new to this country, and often have complex medical and psychiatric needs resulting from torture or other forms of violence faced in their home countries. Our experienced staff are able to sensitively work with these clients for whom cultural barriers, culture shock, and sometimes language barriers complicate access to mental health services.

## REWARDING WORK, INSPIRING CLIENTS

Though she enjoyed her job as a case manager in the Adult Partial Hospital Division at Westwood Lodge Hospital, **Laura Zimmerman** felt that something was missing. She missed the direct, personal connection that accompanied individual client care. In the spring of 2007, Laura was chatting with a friend, the wife of CLSACC's clinical director **Dr. Paul Goldmuntz**. Her friend suggested CLSACC as a way for Laura to get involved with clinical practice again. Laura took her suggestion and began working with three clients at CLSACC in May 2007.



Laura describes her time at CLSACC as extremely interesting and rewarding, especially working with her particular group of clients. "I'm really lucky," she says. "I have great clients. I've learned so much from them." Laura continues to see the same three clients she had when she started at CLSACC and feels that the most rewarding part of her work is when those clients have a real success in their treatment. Laura is also very impressed with CLSACC's staff and host of volunteer counselors. "People have expertise in so many areas. It does so much good for the clients here." As Laura pursues her candidacy at the C.G. Jung Institute, she looks forward to maintaining her work at CLSACC and continuing to learn from the staff, her fellow volunteers, and most of all, her clients.

## COUNSELING PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

**50** devoted volunteer counselors, supervisors, students and the Center's staff provided services to **438** people this year, ranging from advice and referrals, to full psychotherapy services. Counseling clients visited the center a total of **2,672** times this year for treatment. Volunteers donated **4,314** hours to CLSACC's clients. Program staff and volunteers also conducted **24** forensic psychological evaluations for immigrants seeking legal status. For these clients, documentation of the psychological impact of trauma and violence is often key to the success of their legal cases.

CLSACC's new social worker, **Lauren Shebairo**, together with Board member **Julia Byers** of Lesley University, started a group for socially isolated immigrants that brings women together through therapy and art.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT** ♦ July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009

<b>REVENUES</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation	191,313	197,805
United Way of Massachusetts Bay & Merrimack Valley	78,068	75,482
Foundations and Corporations	341,004	297,144
Government Grants and Sub-Contracts	198,571	48,500
Friends of CLSACC, Board of Directors, and Other Contributions	115,519	147,466
Counseling Client Fees	22,782	26,995
Investment and Miscellaneous Income	11,878	33,868
Transfer from Equipment Reserve	542	12,582
<b>Total Revenues Before Donated Services, Facilities, and Supplies</b>	<b>959,677</b>	<b>839,842</b>
<b>Donated Services, Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies</b>	<b>415,042</b>	<b>482,386</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>1,374,719</b>	<b>1,322,228</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Salaries	627,512	533,180
Fringe Benefits	186,554	169,852
Professional and Consulting Services	58,302	46,158
<b>Total Personnel Before Volunteer Services</b>	<b>872,368</b>	<b>749,190</b>
<b>Volunteer Lawyers and Counselors</b>	<b>375,954</b>	<b>441,933</b>
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>1,248,322</b>	<b>1,191,123</b>
Contract Services	9,130	10,562
Office and Related Expenses	36,814	32,646
Library, Training, and Travel	17,335	18,502
Other Direct Program Expenses	17,634	15,581
Acquisition Office Equipment	542	14,042
<b>Total Non-Personnel Expenses Before Other Donated Services, Facilities, and Supplies</b>	<b>81,455</b>	<b>91,333</b>
<b>Other Donated Services, Facilities, and Supplies</b>	<b>39,088</b>	<b>40,453</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,368,865</b>	<b>1,322,909</b>
<b>EXCESS/DEFICIENCY OF REVENUE</b>	<b>5,854</b>	<b>(681)</b>

Note: These figures are derived from CLSACC's unaudited financial statements.

**LEGAL VOLUNTEERS**

*The following 62 attorneys, translators, law students, and paralegals participated in CLSACC's pro bono program:*

**ATTORNEYS**

- |                |                   |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Dawn Ash       | Catherine Kligler | Cindy Palmquist   |
| David Bander   | David Lantz       | Laura Pooler      |
| Steven Bander  | Mary Lee          | John Puricelli    |
| Hodges Brown   | Emily Leung       | Beverly Rich      |
| Susan Corcoran | Elizabeth Loukas  | Robert Ricles     |
| Andrew Cornell | Sara McKenna      | Lesley Rosenbloom |
| Scott Edmiston | Kimberly Morrill  | Louise Saunders   |
| Herb Epstein   | Dennis O'Malley   | Robert Trant      |



**LAW STUDENTS & OTHER VOLUNTEERS**

- |                    |                  |                   |                     |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Milton Fatt        | Halima Ali       | Joanne Dottin     | Dennis Ready        |
| Daniel Finn        | Todd Ames        | Ellen Fisher      | Katherine Robertson |
| Kristina Gasson    | Kristen Antolini | Janet Ghattas     | Monika W. Robbell   |
| Doris Gelbman      | Rachel Bernfeld  | Michael Greenberg | Margaret Rohman     |
| Mary Alana Gleason | Darren Braham    | Andree Grenier    | Abigail Ross        |
| Elizabeth Grimes   | Lucy Candib      | Jack Guthrie      | Fatima Sillah       |
| John Hand          | Erin Cox         | Colette Hendricks | Bobby Vilinsky      |
| Kimberly Kelly     | Julie Dahlstrom  | Nina Huynh        | Jonathan Vogeler    |
| Leslee Klein       | Petra Denison    | Jana Katz         |                     |
|                    | Lea DiPetrillo   | Eva Millona       |                     |

**COUNSELING VOLUNTEERS**

*The following 50 psychologists, social workers, social work interns and other mental health professionals volunteered their time and talents:*

**COUNSELORS**

- |                  |                     |                  |
|------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Margery Altman   | Judith Masters      | Susan Strang     |
| Barry Blesser    | Martha Older        | Penny Tyson      |
| Geraldine Brehm  | Kathryn Portnow     | Judith Ullman    |
| Frances Garfield | Shirley Reiss       | Jo-Ann Vaughn    |
| Samara Grossman  | Paula Sacks         | Dale Walsh       |
| Susie Kaim       | Billie Sue Sawyer   | Muriel Weckstein |
| Deborah Lochrie  | Michelle Seligson   | Kimberlee Worth  |
| Sandra Lovell    | Stephanie Skavenski | Laura Zimmerman  |

**SUPERVISORS**

- Vera Spohr Cohen  
Charlotte Diamond  
Debra Filiurin  
Hope Haff  
Patricia Hunt  
Nancy Johnson  
Maureen Reed-Cunningham  
Caroline Strout  
Penny Tyson  
Holly Zeeb

**ASYLUM EVALUATORS**

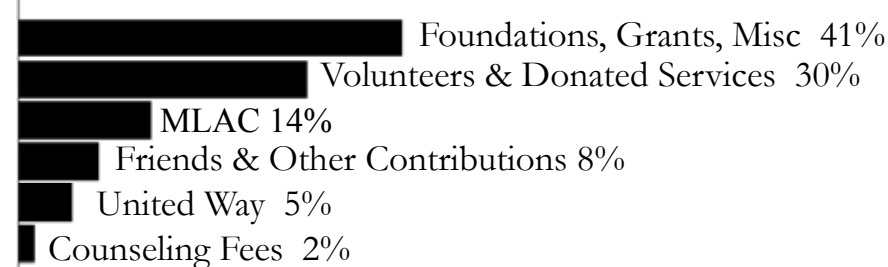
- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Suzanne Artemieff | Martha Older     |
| Kathleen Flinton  | Maria-Jose Perez |
| Edward Fontenot   | Aparna Rao       |
| Susan Gere        | Shirley Reiss    |
| Susie Kaim        | Tobin Rodriguez  |
| Cynthia Kennedy   | Muriel Weckstein |
| Sarah LeVine      |                  |
| Naomi Leavitt     |                  |
| Alice LoCicero    |                  |
| Maureen McCormick |                  |

**INTERNS**

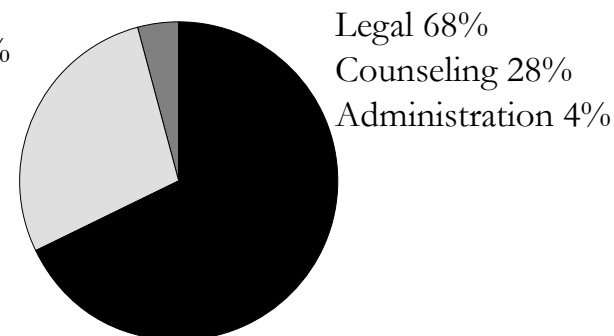
- Alicia Abell  
Robert Greenebaum  
Francine Lorimer  
Melissa Marquez



**WHERE THE DOLLARS COME FROM**



**WHERE YOUR DOLLARS GO**



**2009 DR. JOSEPH H. BRENNER AWARD**

*The Political Asylum/Immigration Representation Project*



Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray, Sarah Ignatius, Executive Director of PAIR, with CLSACC Board President Anthony Miranda

CLSACC is pleased to honor the **Political Asylum/Immigration Representation (PAIR) Project** with the 2009 Dr. Joseph H. Brenner Award.

Founded in 1989, The PAIR Project is a nationally recognized model that works to secure safety and freedom for asylum seekers who have fled from persecution throughout the world, and to promote the rights of immigrants unjustly detained. PAIR has a similar *pro bono* model to CLSACC, and like CLSACC, has recently expanded to meet the growing need for services statewide. The two agencies work collaboratively, and the partnership is invaluable in providing access to justice for asylum seekers and their families.

The PAIR Project's outstanding work and exceptional contributions to the community honor CLSACC's founder, Dr. Joseph Brenner, for his vision that volunteer professionals can provide critical services to low-income people in need.

**COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

- Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights
- Boston College Law School
- Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee
- Cambridge Health Alliance Political Trauma Services Network
- Catholic Charities of Boston
- Fielding Graduate University
- Finex House
- Greater Boston Legal Services
- Irish Immigration Center
- Legal Advocacy & Resource Center
- Lutheran Social Services
- MetroWest Legal Services
- New England School of Law
- Northeastern University
- Physicians for Human Rights
- Political Asylum/Immigration Representation (PAIR) Project
- Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Center (RIAC)
- Refugee Immigration Ministry
- RESPOND, Inc.

- Simmons College School of Social Work
- Suffolk Law School
- Suffolk University, Department of Psychology
- Transition House
- Volunteer Lawyers Project
- Women's Bar Association

The following local businesses made generous donations to our Annual Volunteer Appreciation event:

- Carberry's Bakery & Coffee House
- Central Square Florist
- Hi-Fi Pizza & Subs
- The Middle East Restaurant
- Petsi Pies
- Picante Mexican Grill
- Tavern in the Square
- Trader Joe's

**FOUNDATIONS AND CORPORATIONS**

- The Walter and Alice Abrams Family Fund at the Boston Foundation
- The Annenberg Foundation
- Deborah Munroe Noonan Memorial Fund, Bank of America, Trustee
- The Barrington Foundation, Inc.
- Boston Bar Foundation
- Boston Evening Clinic Foundation
- Boston Private Bank & Trust Company
- Cambridge Community Foundation
- Cambridge Savings Charitable Foundation
- Citizens Bank Foundation
- Clipper Ship Foundation, Inc.
- The Clowes Fund
- Cogan Family Foundation
- The Deirdre M. Giblin and David B. DuBard Charitable Foundation
- Fish Family Foundation
- Fisher Family Foundation

- Fresh Pond Trust
- Charles & Sara Goldberg Charitable Trust
- Florence & Richard Koplow Charitable Foundation
- The N and M Lazarus Fund
- Massachusetts Bar Foundation
- George H. and Jane A. Mifflin Memorial Fund
- Shapiro Foundation Trust
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- Sun Hill Foundation
- Target
- Top of the Hill Fund
- Verizon Wireless
- Carol M. and Louis J. Volpe Foundation
- Wainwright Bank
- Charles O. Wood, III and Miriam M. Wood Foundation

**PUBLIC SUPPORT**

- City of Cambridge
- Mass. Dept. of Public Health
- Mass. Executive Office of Public Safety
- Mass. Legal Assistance Corporation
- Mass. Office of Victim Assistance
- U.N. Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture
- United Way of Mass. Bay & Merrimack Valley

**CORPORATE MATCHING GIFTS**

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- Citizens Financial Group, Inc.
- FM Global Foundation
- Mead Witter Foundation, Inc.

**PRO BONO AND IN KIND SUPPORT**

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- Julia Byers
- Susan Ellerin
- Sarah Evans
- Bill Hodgetts
- Foley Hoag LLP
- Jill Friedlander
- Goulston & Storrs
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- Robert Greenebaum
- IBM
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- Leslee Klein
- Lesley University
- Ken Martin
- Marshall's
- Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education, Inc.
- Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corp.

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- Foley Hoag LLP
- Goodwin Procter LLP
- Goulston & Storrs
- Law Offices of Milton Fatt
- Law Offices of Nelson Brill
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- McCue, Lee & Greene LLP
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