



Who will speak for me?™

**serious
challenges,
exciting
accomplishments**

Dear Friend,

Our 12th year has been one of our most demanding years. We grappled with serious financial challenges, yet celebrated exciting and far-reaching accomplishments.

In this challenging economy, when increasing numbers of children need our help, we were hit hardest by serious cuts in Connecticut Bar Foundation grants. The JEHT Foundation, which supported our juvenile justice work, closed as a result of the Madoff scandal. We made cutbacks in staffing and squeezed an already tight budget – and then moved on with our work and commitment to the children.

While our attorneys worked with hundreds of individual children in Greater Hartford and Fairfield counties, our legal trainings and systemic and legislative advocacy benefitted thousands of poor and vulnerable children throughout the state. Some of our recent accomplishments include:

- We were instrumental in the passage of legislation that improves DCF services for children “stuck” in the system and legislation that creates a pilot project to open juvenile court proceedings.
- CCA’s State Department of Education Complaint against Hartford’s special education program resulted in improvements for youth who deserve a fair and equal education.
- CCA successfully stopped illegal “exclusions” of students at Bridgeport’s Harding High School.

As always, our focus is to give voice to increasing numbers of children who depend on our legal expertise to help them lead better lives. Look inside to read about some of the children we helped this year.

You help make the difference in these children’s lives. As you read about the work we have accomplished, know that you stand beside these kids and we all move forward together.

We speak for the children when we say thank you.

Martha Stone

Martha Stone
Executive Director



**Teen
Legal
Advocacy
Clinic**

Resolves the legal aspects of problems that cause poor school attendance.

Established statewide runaway and homeless youth task force to access housing, medical and mental health services. Secured enhanced speech, language and tutoring services to support academic success.

**Medical
Legal
Partnership
Project**

Improves child health by addressing the legal aspects of medical problems caused by poverty.

Offices throughout Greater Hartford provide access to the area's low-income population. Hartford public schools now provide educational support for children suffering from sickle cell medical issues.

**New Arrivals
Advocacy
Project**

Improves healthcare and educational access for immigrant and refugee children.

New legislation preserves HUSKY health coverage for children. Changes in communications from public schools help new arrival families enroll children in appropriate programs.

**Truancy
Court
Prevention
Project**

Coordinates support services for youth who are at risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system.

On-site "court" sessions and support services have helped over 200 children improve school attendance and academic performance.

**TeamChild
Juvenile
Justice
Project**

Better educational and social outcomes for children involved in the juvenile justice system.

Legal rights publications help youth understand entitlements to services available upon re-entry to the community and their schools.

**Child
Abuse
Project**

Supports Connecticut's most vulnerable abused and neglected children.

Youth over 18 benefit from improved administrative review process to continue necessary supports.

**Systemic and
Legislative
Advocacy**

Class action representation and systemic involvement broaden reach to help thousands of children.

Ongoing implementation of the Sheff agreement secures improved educational opportunities for Hartford students. Expanded programs for status offenders. New legislation bolsters oversight for children "stuck" in state care.

**KidsCounsel
Training
Program**

Training and resources for Connecticut attorneys who represent children improves quality of legal representation beyond staff capacity.

E-news publications extend reach to larger audience. Established mentoring program for new attorneys.

**program
and
project
successes**

improving the life of one vulnerable child

Marco eyed the pile of rocks just down the road. With the bravado only an eleven year old can muster, he decided his wheels could navigate the obstacle and he sped up as he approached. Careening forward, Marco's wheels flew out from under him when he hit the rocks and he was dumped onto the roadway.

The story would have a simpler resolution if Marco had been on a bicycle, but Marco navigates in a power wheel chair. He suffers from Spinal Muscular Atrophy Type II – he has no lower body strength and only limited motion in the top half of his body. A broken wheelchair was only the latest problem for Marco and his mother Millie.

Marco's medical problems meant that Millie had to carry him when he had to use the bathroom or the shower. While not a perfect system, this worked when Marco was little, but he now weighs almost 100 pounds. This past summer, Millie fell when lifting Marco and they both wound up in the emergency room.

Based on his medical needs, Marco receives ongoing care and support from the Connecticut Children's Medical Center Orthopedic Department. Clinicians determined that installation of a lift system in the house – a track installed on the ceiling that allows the user to sit in a sling and navigate through relevant rooms – would prevent further danger to Marco and Millie.

To the dismay of the family and CCMC's Orthopedic Department, the request for the lift system (durable medical equipment) was denied by Millie's Medicaid/HMO insurance carrier.

Marco's orthopedist called CCA's Medical-Legal Partnership Attorney Bonnie Roswig for guidance. Attorney Roswig spoke extensively with the clinicians and the family to assess the insurance denial and secure this important equipment for the family. Connecticut's legal standard for such equipment is medical necessity, which is defined as "health care provided to correct or diminish the adverse effects of a medical condition."

A picture is worth a thousand words.

Assisted by law student Jennifer Pomales, Attorney Roswig visited Marco at home. After taking pictures, making diagrams and gaining a new appreciation for the practical as well as legal definition of medical necessity, Attorney Roswig filed an Appeal of Denial with the State of Connecticut Department of Social Services. Within days, an attorney from the Medicaid HMO called Attorney Roswig and agreed to discuss a resolution for the family.

Marco has many hurdles to face, including a spinal fusion in the very near future. Some challenges will be eased with the installation of the newly approved lift equipment that will make his life, and his mother's, easier and much safer.



Elena's parents left one at a time.

Challenged by developmental delays, neurological problems and constant anxiety, Elena grew up in foster homes and group homes all over Connecticut. When one living situation didn't work out, the state moved her to another. Elena never had a family she could think of as her own.

When Elena turned eighteen, DCF transferred her care to Connecticut's adult mental health system. Elena had no place to live, had not finished school, and had no practical skills that would help her find a job. Clearly, she needed a support network to help her become self sufficient.

Elena is a very sweet and bright young woman. She told CCA Child Abuse Attorney Sarah Eagan that she has just three wishes in life: to be a better person, to find out where her mother is and know she is okay, and to have a friend so she'd always have someone to talk to.

Attorney Eagan worked with Elena to request continued support from DCF through their young adult program. Together, Attorney Eagan and DCF staff created a plan that would address Elena's needs: continuing education, job skills training, housing, mental health services and community support.

As a result of CCA's intervention, Elena receives supportive services. She finished high school in June and has a mentor who is carefully monitoring her progress. Living in a supervised apartment, Elena is continuing with her vocational tutoring and is enrolled in a culinary arts program for young adults with learning disabilities, working toward her goal of a job in the food service industry.

Elena is a determined young woman. With Attorney Eagan's support, she is becoming an independent, self-sufficient adult.

**improving
the life
of one
vulnerable
child**

You gave me hope to believe that I can succeed
no matter how difficult things are around me.

Thank you for always being in my life.
Your caring makes me stonger.

– Elena



changing
the system
to help
thousands of
vulnerable
children

Representation of students at Hartford Transitional Learning Academy for special education students (HTLA) uncovered systemic problems. CCA's education consultant watched students playing cards or wandering hallways during class, constant noise in classrooms and classes staffed only by aides. In addition, the building was inappropriate for children with behavioral health needs. Connecticut law requires schools to determine whether behavior is caused by emotional disability; HTLA students with behavior problems were sent home after four hours of school. CCA **filed a complaint with the State Department of Education and won. Corrective action includes assessments, planning and compensatory education** services for all students. Hartford Public Schools has shut down the HTLA program and CCA continues to monitor the newly-created alternative.

CCA **continued legal representation of the plaintiff class of Hartford children in the Sheff v. O'Neill educational equity** lawsuit, working toward a goal of increasing the percent of Hartford students who attend integrated schools to 27% in 2009-2010. The State expanded existing programs and created new magnet and charter schools.

CCA continued to **co-chair the Connecticut Legislature's Families with Service Needs (FWSN) Advisory Board**, advising the Legislature about services for runaways, truants and other status offenders. The Board's recommendations resulted in statewide services including Family Support Centers and FWSN respite centers for runaway and truant youth. A 2008 review of 80 youth served by new Family Support Centers - all high-need children likely to end up in juvenile detention - found that 94% were successfully diverted through community-based services. This work was highlighted in a publication by the Vera Institute of Justice, "Making Court the Last Resort: A New Focus for Supporting Families in Crisis."

The Center advocated with Hartford Public Schools to address failure to provide assessment materials, notices to parents and **information about school choice to English Language Learners** in their own language. The school district agreed to provide these items translated into the native language of English Language Learners. CCA learned that English Language Learners were not provided with accurate information about summer school services. Systemic advocacy ensured that schools now identify these students and enroll them in the English Language Learner summer program.

CCA **successfully advocated with the Connecticut Department of Social Services** to ensure that state Medicaid services to immigrant families who have resided in the United States for less than five years is continued.



The American Bar Association Commission on Homelessness & Poverty and the National Network for Youth asked CCA to create a **Team for Runaway and Homeless Youth**, including representatives from DCF, the Department of Education, Court Support Services, faith communities, child advocacy groups and homeless shelters. The Team is identifying needed services and will engage in legislative and administrative advocacy to improve responses to needs of homeless youth.

The Center advocated with DCF regarding its failure to ensure that abused and neglected youth who are undocumented immigrants can exercise their rights to seek Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) status. This resulted in a streamlined **process for undocumented immigrant youth to access legal counsel to seek SIJ status**. CCA successfully opposed legislation that would end private guardianship of abused and neglected youth at age 18, forcing undocumented immigrant youth who have been abused or neglected to enter state care or forego the opportunity to seek SIJ status.

CCA continued advocacy regarding a pending complaint filed with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR) regarding Hartford Schools' **treatment of immigrant and refugee children**. The OCR is expected to issue a report this year.

Representation of one child at a Bridgeport school led to CCA's investigation of the school's **provision of speech and language services**. The investigation revealed that the school was not providing services to any of the 40 students whose individual education plans included speech and language therapy. CCA's systemic advocacy resulted in provision of appropriate services.

Representation of a child at a Bridgeport school **revealed that the school was not counting "exclusions" from school as suspensions**. CCA's systemic advocacy addressed the problem and the school stopped the practice.

CCA wrote and successfully advocated passage of **legislation that addresses the issues confronted by children without a permanent place to live**. "Stuck Kids" includes children who are in out-of-state placements, psychiatric hospitals or residential treatment centers beyond their planned discharge date. Public Act 09-96 requires DCF to conduct case and service reviews for each "stuck kid" in DCF care and to prepare an annual review and assessment of the issues that contribute to their lack of a permanent home.

CCA wrote and successfully advocated passage of legislation that makes significant improvements to the child welfare system. Public Act 09-194 includes a pilot program that increases public access to juvenile proceedings. "Open Courts" enables **oversight of proceedings that have not been transparent**.

CCA **advocated with Hartford Police Department regarding their failure to conduct a timely search for youth reported as runaways** from DCF care. The Police Department agreed to implement new procedures to actively search for vulnerable youth.

**changing
the system
to help
thousands of
vulnerable
children**



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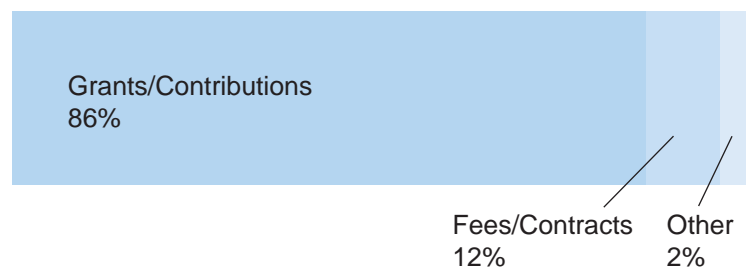
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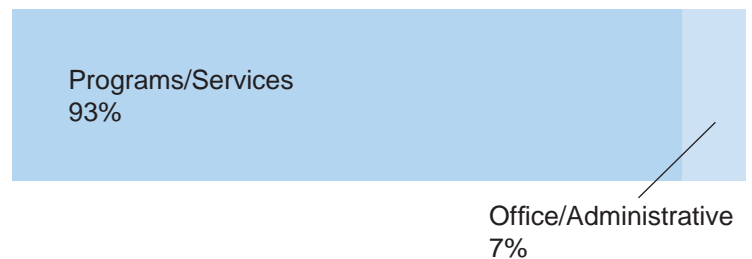
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Grants/Contributions	1,136,759
Fees/Contracts	158,428
Other	32,592
Total Income	1,327,779



Expenses

Programs/Services	1,256,864
Office/Administrative	96,587
Total Expense	1,353,451



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