

Community Law Project

2015 Year in Review

To paraphrase a famous San Diego resident, “Oh the places we’ve gone”. 2015 has been the most influential year for the Community Law Project to date. This year alone, we have celebrated 10 successful years in our original Downtown site and seen the opening of a new site in Solana Beach, witnessed significant growth in the number of clients we have served, expanded the scope and breadth of our community education component, and received a record number of donations from individuals and foundations. The Community Law Project was fortunate to have 30 California Western students working with our clients during the 2015 calendar year. Over 50 volunteer attorneys, along with our staff, undergraduate administrators, and dedicated law students worked together to serve over 900 individuals through one-on-one legal services and regular community education presentations.

Throughout the past several years, the legal community as a whole has grown to see experiential learning as a key facet of a legal education. The Community Law Project is one of several programs at California Western that work to provide students with real world legal experience. We are proud to have provided our clinical students with the opportunity to help clients through one-on-one interactions, as well as educate low-income individuals on their rights through the implementation and presentation of a community education program. Our students have described their CLP experience as second to none and one of the highlights of their law school careers.

“CLP has been transformative for me. Not only am I now positive that I can serve my community regardless of what area of law I end up in, I am keenly aware of every lawyer’s duty to help their community. CLP has taught me that I need both the ideological and practical sides of public-interest lawyering in my career, not only to more efficiently serve that public interest, but also to be a happier and more fulfilled lawyer.” – Laura Goolsby, CLP Legal Intern, Fall 2015

During the 2015 calendar year, our students have helped clients on a regular basis in five clinic sites across San Diego County. CLP has hosted 17 community education presentations, ten of which were led by our California Western students, on issues such as dealing with negative credit reports, clearing one’s criminal record, and collecting child support. Our clients continue to express a great appreciation for the services we provide, as well as the professionalism of our students and staff. Clients have recently noted that they were “very happy and satisfied with the services provided and the help [we] give to the community”; that CLP “provided [them] with a guide to help resolve [their] problem”; and that “the two students were very patient and listened...showing a sincere interest in [the client’s] legal matters.”

The Community Law Project has been fortunate to be the recipient of several generous contributions from a great variety of individuals and foundations throughout the past year. This financial and in-kind support is truly a testament to the impact we are making in the community.

Finally, in December, the Community Law Project commemorated ten years of serving our community and our students with a wonderful evening full of inspirational stories, friends and visions of our future. Our tenth anniversary was also recently highlighted in a segment on NPR (<http://www.kpbs.org/news/2015/dec/01/california-western-celebrates-10-years-community-1/>), as well as in an article in the Union Tribune (<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2016/jan/10/community-law-project-tenth-anniversary/>). With ten years of achievements behind us, we continue ever inspired in our mission and are “oh, so excited to see the places we’ll go!”

To learn more about the Community Law Project and our services, please view our website (www.cwclp.org) or our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/CommunityLawProject>).

Dana Sisitsky, Esq.
Executive Director, California Western Community Law Project