Community Law Project (Downtown / Lemon Grove)
2012 Year in Review

The Community Law Project (Downtown / Lemon Grove) has continued to grow throughout the 2012 calendar year. We have increased the number of students participating in the legal clinic (10 students participated during 2012, most staying involved for two or three trimesters) and doubled our clinic sites (with a new site in Lemon Grove, also partnered with UCSD's student-run medical clinic). Our growth has allowed us to increase the number of clients that we serve (over 575 client visits in 2012), as well as expand the range of specialties in which we offer assistance (now 10 separate legal areas).

This growth has improved the experiences of both our clients and our students. Perhaps our most significant accomplishment continues to be the impact that our program has had on our students. Our students have consistently stated how much they enjoy their work at CLP and how much it has influenced their career goals. Below are some of their comments.

> "Not only has my participation in the Community Law Project introduced me to various areas of the law, it has also given me the opportunity to work on a one-on-one basis with individuals from many different walks of life. Our clients have made me realize the complications that all people, regardless of income, face when attempting to maneuver the legal system. The experiences I have encountered as a volunteer law student with the Community Law Project have only reinforced my belief in the importance of pro bono legal work and the beneficial outcomes that result from it." – Jillian Tarabocchia, CLP Legal Intern, Summer 2011 – Fall 2012

> "My experience working at the Community Law Project has been invaluable. The clinic allowed me to observe the inner workings of multiple different areas of law, and this experience completely changed my goals as far as realizing what type of law I want to practice, as well as what types of clients I wish to work with. If I had not had this experience, it is possible that I might have aimed my academic and career pursuits in the wrong direction, and ended up practicing law in an area for which I was not happy." Leah Reeves, CLP Legal Intern, Fall 2012

To further enhance and complement students' clinical experience, this spring we added a required one-unit academic component to the clinic, taught by the clinic's Executive Director, Dana Sisitsky. Our hope is that this class component will build upon students' experiences in the clinic, and truly cement their desire to engage in public interest work after graduation.

The good news is that our growth has simultaneously improved the quality of our client's experiences. Over 90% of our clients gave us the highest grade possible, stating in a survey we conducted this past year that they were "extremely satisfied with our services." A typical client comment was, "Your support and help were very good. I wish lots more people of San Diego would come to you. Your staff gets all "A"'s for serving people. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

Another highpoint of the year was the creation and launch of the Community Law Project website at cwclp.org. Our website allows interested law students to learn more about pro bono opportunities at CLP. It has also has generated increased publicity for CLP among the San Diego legal community and area residents in need. Many organizations in San Diego now refer the public to our site in order for potential clients to understand the services we offer.

During 2012, we continued our fundraising efforts, focusing primarily on solicitations from private donors. We successfully collected over $26,000 in private donations through our efforts. We have realigned our board responsibilities, creating among other things, a fundraising chairperson. Since our opening in 2005, we continue to work hard to meet our obligations as a self-supported legal clinic for our students and for the community we serve.

Dana Sisitsky, Executive Director and Linda Morton, President of Advisory Board
Community Law Project, Downtown / Lemon Grove