

Community Law Project (Downtown / Lemon Grove)

2013 Year in Review

The Community Law Project (Downtown / Lemon Grove) has had a year full of growth and change. We have drastically increased the number of students participating in the legal clinic, with a record 22 California Western students enjoying the clinical experience in 2013. Together our 30 volunteer attorneys and staff members, along with our committed students, have served 467 clients during 765 visits this past calendar year.

Our students often count the Community Law Project experience as one of the most valuable aspects of their law school years. With the addition of the clinical course in 2013, the Community Law Project experience has become even more valuable.

“I was able to gain valuable legal and social interaction experience by working with such a diverse group of clients and attorneys and I believe that having had such an experience will make me a more well-rounded lawyer. Additionally, I enjoyed seeing clients have access to legal assistance that they could not otherwise obtain. Seeing the relieved faces of clients in need allowed me to appreciate the importance of the pro bono hour clause in the model rules of professional conduct...” – Ryan Kudelka, CLP Legal Intern, Fall 2013

“CLP was one of the most valuable experiences of my law school career to date. As a student, I was able to learn about so many different areas of law from a practical standpoint, rather than through textbooks. As a future attorney, I was reminded of the responsibility I will have to ensure everyone’s rights are protected and everyone has a chance to be heard. The experience of interning with CLP will always remind me to keep myself rooted in my ethical responsibilities as an attorney. I am so grateful I had the opportunity to work with such an amazing project.” – Alexa Leibl, CLP Legal Intern, Summer 2013

Equally as important as our commitment to providing students with an enriching learning experience, is our dedication to the provision of top-notch legal services for clients in the greater San Diego community. To this end, our clients have continued to sing our praises noting that the “staff is very respectful and knowledgeable” and that “everyone is very polite and understanding of my needs”. One client notes that “the whole team is awesome” and almost all clients surveyed expressed appreciation for the excellent service that we provide to the community.

In addition to maintaining high levels of satisfaction amongst our student participants and clients, 2013 was a year of many other accomplishments. We are excited to now have a Community Law Project Facebook page (please like us at <https://www.facebook.com/CommunityLawProject>) to keep the public and our students updated on CLP developments. We successfully created and entered several years of information into a database. This allows us to easily track which legal specialties our clients need most, exactly how many clients we assist, and how many hours our wonderful volunteers and students have donated to CLP.

We have begun to include regular community education presentations for clients amongst the repertoire of services we offer to the community. Throughout the year, we conducted 7 community education presentations in areas ranging from bankruptcy law to immigration law. These presentations have been a valuable resource in providing clients with self-help skills they need in order to address their legal issues.

Finally, we have been lucky enough to receive generous financial and in-kind contributions this past calendar year. The generosity of Cal Western staff and community members guided us in hosting a successful fundraiser, revising our brochures, and producing a wonderful video that beautifully illustrates the work of CLP! Take a look at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYyPUc06iQY&feature=youtu.be>.

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