



## California Western Community Law Project 2018 Year in Review

*"I found the Community Law Project clinic very helpful. I received a lot of information to navigate my way through my legal issues and concerns. I really appreciate the care, kindness and knowledge I received from the clinic."* Community Law Project Client

An immigrant woman desperate to gain entry into the U.S. in order to say goodbye to her dying husband. Two recent refugees from Syria who had paid security deposits to their landlords using incomplete money orders and were now being told that their deposits were lost. A senior who had recently taken over as the primary caretaker for her grandson and was facing severe anxiety due to her overwhelming debt. These are the stories of our clients at the Community Law Project (CLP). Over the last year, CLP's staff, volunteers and students were able to make a tangible difference in the lives of these clients by reuniting the husband and wife during the last few days of the husband's life, securing reimbursement of the refugees' security deposits, and filing a bankruptcy case for the low-income, distressed grandmother to help alleviate her debt. During 2018, our **140 volunteer attorneys and students** served approximately **1,300 individuals** through one-on-one legal services and regular community education presentations.

The Community Law Project continues to support the clinical education and growth of dozens of California Western School of Law students each year. The thirty-five law students who worked with CLP this year honed their interviewing skills by working with non-English speaking clients, homeless clients, emotionally distraught clients, clients with mental illness, high school aged clients and more. They shadowed attorneys from 15 legal specialty areas including immigration law, family law, and estate law. They created and successfully executed community legal education presentations across San Diego County for a huge variety of audiences, including everything from an intimate group of senior citizens to an energetic group of 100 high school students. Our CLP students struggled through their first real client interview and succeeded through their twentieth. They fought back tears as they listened to a fearful wife describe the actions of her abusive spouse and laughed as they shared a light-hearted moment with a client who reminded them of their grandfather. They grew angry when they discovered that there was no legal remedy for the undocumented immigrant whose whole family resided in the U.S. and rejoiced when a returning client reported that the letter CLP had helped write to her landlord had remedied her legal issue.

*"What CLP provides is the opportunity to use the law as a tool to help those in need, in a manner which could never be scripted in a classroom setting. Not only did CLP meet [my] goals, but the program greatly exceeded my expectations. In one trimester alone, I could see a total transformation in how I interacted with and subsequently assisted clients. My favorite aspect of CLP was the vastly different interactions one would have on any given night. I learned to take a deep breath, and treat each client as a unique experience."* - Trevor Moran, CLP Student, Fall 2018

The Community Law Project continues to address the most pressing legal issues for low income individuals in San Diego County. Throughout 2018, CLP partnered with organizations across the region in an effort to combat the harsh immigration policies that have been implemented by the federal government. CLP staff and volunteers have been able to provide educational programs for families affected by immigration raids and deportations. CLP has also begun tackling issues affecting low income renters through its two-year Tenant Rights and Responsibilities Initiative. This project will provide in depth training to tenant leaders and others, particularly those within the most vulnerable of refugee and immigrant communities.



The 2018 year brought some internal changes to the Community Law Project as we welcomed Lizeth Cervantes as our new Community Education and Outreach Coordinator. In the six short months that Lizeth has been with our program, she has already made a tremendous impact in reaching out to new cultural groups and neighborhoods across San Diego. Lizeth is working hard to ensure that CLP services are accessible for all those in need across the county.

Thanks to the support of California Western School of Law, our amazing volunteers, our generous funders, and our dedicated law students, the Community Law Project has truly made a difference in the lives of hundreds of low-income San Diegans over the last year. The Community Law Project has ignited a passion for access to justice and equality under the law within our students which they surely will carry forward into their own practices after graduation. CLP has offered our volunteer attorneys an opportunity to give back in a very meaningful way to the most vulnerable individuals in our society. Clients have told us that they feel “blessed” to have CLP services; and that our students are “clear and concise”, “communicate trust”, and “explain things very well”. We have accomplished so much. And we remain determined to continue providing critical legal services and education to those most in need throughout our County.

To learn more about the Community Law Project, our services, and our clinics, please visit our website ([www.cwclp.org](http://www.cwclp.org)) or Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/CommunityLawProject>). To make a donation to CLP, please visit <https://cosmos.cwsl.edu/giving/communitylawproject/>.

Thank you for your continued support!

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