

Thirty year trek ends with greencard.

Joy came to the United States almost thirty years ago from Korea to attend school. She came here legally with a student visa, but afterwards she had trouble becoming a legal resident. She married and had a child, but, unfortunately, her husband was abusive to her. After receiving a court order to stay away from her and their son, the husband kidnapped them and held them for a month. She was finally able to qualify for, and obtain "U visa" status - including employment authorization - an immigration class specifically created for victims of certain crimes. After living in the US legally for three years, she came to CVLS looking for help with obtaining her green card. CVLS volunteer, **Richard Hanus**, agreed to take the case. With his help, Joy soon received her green card and became a permanent legal resident. Congratulations Joy!



Jackson Martin Halvorsen

Babies.



Felix Leopold Foldenauer

Congratulations to **Rebekah Rashidfarokhi**, Director of CVLS' Guardian ad litem for Minors Program, and **Denis Foldenauer** on their new baby boy **Felix Leopold Foldenauer**. Born on December 19, Felix weighed in at 9lbs 6oz and was 22 inches long. Check out the bundle of joy sleeping on mom's desk as she fights for equal access to justice for those in need. What a cute paperweight!

CVLS would also like to congratulate CVLS' Junior Board Chair **Kim Halvorsen**, of **Clifford Law Offices**, and her husband **Matt** on the birth of their baby boy **Jackson Martin Halvorsen**. Jackson was born on November 9th weighing 7lbs 7oz and measuring 19 1/2 inches. We have been informed that Jackson is enjoying life outside the womb and has discovered that he is a huge bears fan.

Confusing paperwork leads to close call.

Lenora has been a participant in the Chicago Housing Authority's (CHA) Housing Choice Voucher (HVC) Program since 2003, with social security disability benefits her main source of income. In 2009 her rent drastically increased and she contacted the CHA to inquire why and to explain to them that she could not afford the increase. Shortly after, she received an Intent to Terminate (ITT) notice in the mail stating that she lied on her application. Distraught, she turned to CVLS for help. CVLS volunteer **Robert Bressler** of **Foley and Lardner LLP** agreed to take the case.

A review of the paperwork turned up some strange inconsistencies. Although Lenora supplied birth certificates for herself and her two children, social security cards, social security award letters, and three months of bank statements to the CHA and always worked with a CHA employee when she had to filled out her applications, the form listed only Lenora's SSI income and not her children's as well. At the hearing, Robert examined the CHA employee in charge of the case and asked him about the applications that they accused Lenora of intentionally filling out incorrectly. The employee admitted that the forms were very confusing and they did not clearly state where Lenora should have listed her children's SSI income. Robert also pointed out that the CHA's administration plan clearly stated that bank statements and social security award letters were acceptable forms of income verification. Since Lenora supplied the appropriate documentation multiple times for all three residents of the apartment, Robert argued that she was clearly not trying to hide any sources of income.

After careful review of all the evidence, the Judge agreed that while the applications were technically filled out incorrectly, Robert showed that by Lenora's testimony and evidence that she was not willfully misleading the CHA. He also stated that since she worked with a CHA employee each time to fill out the forms, and the CHA's own counsel admitted that the forms were very confusing, Lenora had good reason to believe that all documentation was in order. In the end, he ordered that her HVC be reinstated. Thanks to Robert and a long trail of documentation, Lenora is now able to stay in her apartment and live without the fear of being homeless. Thank you Robert for your hard work.

Thank you Jerry Brown.

CVLS would like thank Jerry Brown for presenting at our latest seminar "TRO's, Preliminary Injunctions & Declaratory Judgments." Thanks to his help, CVLS volunteers who attended now know the "whys" and "hows" of these extraordinary remedies that most attorneys who litigate run into from time to time. In addition to summarizing the law, Jerry focused on specific procedural issues for Cook County practitioners.

If you were unable to attend, this seminar has been archived at <http://cvls.org/archived-seminars>. All archived seminars qualify for the ammount of MCLE credit listed in the description.

Thank you once again Jerry for sharing your knowledge on this interesting subject.

How a laid-off lawyer found meaning doing pro-bono work.

For as long as he can remember, **Harold Meerbaum** has had a compassion for people and their problems. A patent lawyer by profession, Meerbaum was laid off from his firm in late 2009 and had been looking for work. In the meantime, however, he decided he would try to make a difference in the lives of people in his local community. "I wanted to do volunteer work in an area where there is a need, and where I could learn some new and marketable skills," he said.

He found his calling through the Jewish United Fund (JUF) Community Legal Services, which works in partnership with CVLS to provide free legal services to individuals and families who need it but can't afford it. There may not have been a need for patent lawyers, but at the time, there was a shortage of bankruptcy lawyers. Determined to do good and explore a new area of law, Meerbaum decided to volunteer and take on a bankruptcy cases.

Meerbaum knew that he would be helping people solve personal and financial problems in order to regain control of their lives. What he didn't foresee was how much of an emotional impact this would have on his own life. "It's like being half-lawyer and half-psychologist," he said. "You're there to support these clients ... I just didn't realize that [before I started], but as soon as I went to my first meeting [with a client] and saw that person breaking down right in front of me, it was so hard I had to take a break."

There is an abundance of cases in the turbulent economy, as well as immense gratitude for lawyers like Meerbaum that are volunteering their time and heart by

doing pro bono work. Before Meerbaum has even suggested any legal advice, clients often thank him just for being there to work with them. "Some have said, 'I want you to know you're the first person who knows about this,' and in a lot of instances, even their families don't know [about their financial difficulties]," he said. "I haven't even done anything yet, just taken notes, and they'll say, 'I feel so much better that someone is listening to my story and am so thankful there is someone who is willing to help.'"

Seeing how much his clients value his work makes it all worthwhile for Meerbaum. "I just like the fact that I can be there for someone in their time of need," he said. "They put their trust and confidence in you and that's what makes it all worthwhile."

Meerbaum hopes his work will inspire other attorneys to get involved and do pro bono work for people in need. And while he's still searching for employment, he is emotionally compensated with knowing he is making a difference in our community.

JUF Community Legal Services provides legal assistance in civil cases and does not handle criminal cases. Some of the common practice areas include bankruptcy, housing and family law. JUF Community Legal Services works in partnership with Chicago Volunteer Legal Services. For more information, call Lindsay Yaffa at (312) 444-2933.

Written by Karina Grudnikov, staff writer at JUF News and posted at <http://www.juf.org/news/local.aspx?id=413908>

CVLS Seminar Registration

March 20 "Electronic Discovery"

by Alex Buck of Bartlit Beck and Tiffany Ferguson of Pugh Jones

The panel, all members of the Seventh Circuit E-Discovery Pilot Program, will introduce key topics related to Electronically Stored Information (ESI) and litigation. The explosion of ESI in our technologically-advanced world requires that lawyers familiarize themselves with their obligation to preserve, search and eventually produce electronic information relevant to issues in the litigation. Lawyers should understand the feasibility, reasonableness, costs, and benefits of various aspects of electronic discovery in order to provide for the just, speedy, and inexpensive determination of each case. This CLE opportunity will provide some basics on electronic discovery in litigation and an introduction to the Seventh Circuit E-Discovery Pilot Program.

April 25 "Adoption"

by Adoption GALs

CVLS is thankful to have the Adoption GALs themselves on hand to discuss basic adoption practice. Our goal will be to provide information to assist you in making sure your adoption case keeps moving along smoothly and efficiently. They will also discuss updates and changes in the practice in Cook County and give you best practices advice on this hot topic. This is a don't miss program for any volunteer who handles adoption cases.

Please visit www.cvls.org/seminars to register

All seminars are held from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. at 100 North LaSalle, Suite 900.

Archived seminars can be found at www.illinoisprobono.org.

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