

Mark Your Calendars Now!

**5/23**

Seminar: Contempt
of Court
by Jerry Brown
CVLS Office
12:15 PM

6/7

New Volunteer
Orientation
CVLS Office
Noon

6/28

Seminar: Advanced
Guardian ad
litem Issues in
Adult Disabled
Guardianship Cases
by Paul
Franciszkowicz
CVLS Office
12:15 PM

7/12

New Volunteer
Orientation
CVLS Office
Noon

**Upcoming Events - Upcoming Events - Upcoming Events - Upcoming Events - Upcoming Events**

Oh for Pete's sake!

It all started, as these things often do, with a divorce. Griselda came to CVLS to finalize her separation from her no-good husband. Apart for two years, her soon-to-be-ex had already moved on, marrying a woman in Mexico. Griselda owned two homes. She lived in the one owned jointly with her husband. He lived in the other, a rental property that was titled in her name alone. Things progressed relatively smoothly until her husband stopped making the mortgage payments. Shortly after CVLS volunteer **Sharon Scott** filed the divorce petition, Griselda was served with a complaint for foreclosure on the rental property.

Griselda soon found out that her husband had moved out of the rental property, and had moved in three tenants. Not only had they not paid rent for six months, they were kind enough to inform her that they had no intention of paying rent - or moving for that matter. Since Griselda could not afford the rental property without the rent, she decided not to fight the foreclosure. But first, those tenants needed to go. Her CVLS attorney, Sharon, filed an eviction action. Then, Griselda was summoned to court for a laundry list of alleged ordinance violations. Apparently, her husband had worked on the property without a permit. The tenants had spilled the beans.

Sharon tried negotiating with the City Building Department by explaining that Griselda had not done the work, didn't know about the work, certainly didn't authorize the work, could not afford to have the work fixed and couldn't do it herself. How was Griselda supposed to fill out an application for a building permit when she didn't know what work was done? The city couldn't answer that question. Instead, they sent the case to building court at the Daley Center.

Around the time Griselda received the notice of building code violations, she also received a small claims summons and complaint for \$6000 initiated by one of the tenants. The tenant claimed that Griselda and Octavio worked on the roof together and, as a result, rain came in and ruined her furnishings. The tenant also filed a counterclaim to the eviction action, citing the numerous code violations and the damage to furnishings. Regardless of the fact that there was no evidence of damage and that Griselda doubted the tenant's trustworthiness, the point was moot. In refusing to pay any rent, the tenant had withheld funds in excess of the amount claimed.

Continued:

The tenants obtained their own attorney who went after Griselda's homeowner's insurance. The City then sent Griselda a SECOND notice of building code violations. Things were starting to get out of hand.

In the meantime, although Sharon got Griselda's marriage dissolved, she couldn't find Octavio and had to serve him by publication. As a result, Griselda could not get child support or title to her home. Griselda then went to Child Support Services so they could go after the ex-husband for child support, and Sharon filed a complaint for partition to get his name off the deed to Griselda's home. She successfully obtained a judge's deed for sole title to the home.

Later, Griselda received notice to appear for the first set of building code violations, and, months later, received notice for the second set. However, a judgment of foreclosure had been entered against that property and the sale had been approved, so Griselda no longer owned the home. The City dismissed both cases.

Now only the eviction and small claims cases remained. An attorney from Griselda's homeowner's insurance company represented her in the small claims case and advised the tenant's attorney that there was no case and, even if the tenant won a judgment, it would be more than offset by the back rent the tenant owed for withholding rent for more than a year. The tenant's lawyer dropped the case when it was apparent that they weren't going to receive any money.

Griselda was finally free of Octavio, bad tenants and useless real estate. Thank you Sharon for your amazing work on multiple cases.

Babies.



Luke Aleksander Groszek

Congratulations to **Robert Groszek**, Co-Chair of the CVLS Amicus Poloniae Legal Clinic, and his wife **Jennifer**, also a CVLS volunteer, on the birth of their baby boy Luke Aleksander Groszek. Luke was born on February 9th and was 9lbs 12oz. Mom, Dad and big brother Drake are doing just fine and can't be more excited about the new addition.

CVLS partner has new location.

On March 1, the Branch Family Institute, a subsidiary of E.M. Branch & Associates, Inc., moved to:

1111 S. Western Avenue
Chicago, IL 60643
Phone: 773-238-1100
Fax: 773-238-4095

The Institute provides supervised visitation for CVLS' GAL for Minor's cases.

Phone

Volunteer awarded for excellence.



Travis Moore and Hon. Sebastian T. Patti

Congratulations to CVLS student volunteer **Travis Moore** for being honored with the "Liberty Bell Award." The Young Lawyers Division of the CBA presents this award to a non-attorney who "epitomizes individual and community responsibility while honoring the ideals of American justice and freedom".

Danielle Elyce Hirsch, Director of Advocacy for the Chicago Bar Foundation, expressed strong support for Travis when she heard about the nomination. "We have interviewed more than 150 students, but we have never recruited someone so singularly focused to make a difference as Travis. Travis was then, and remains now, extremely impressive. Based on our initial interactions with Travis, we are not surprised that Travis has been such a strong, capable, committed volunteer for CVLS."

Margaret Benson, executive director of CVLS, agreed. "Travis's passion for social justice allows him to blend his grasp of the law with his humanity and sensitivity, allowing him to truly communicate with struggling clients."

Congratulations Travis, you deserve it.

A little help goes a long way.

Daniel Santrella, paralegal for CVLS foreclosure mediation program, received the following note from a grateful client who simply needed a little extra help for his loan modification:

"I have had a very hard time getting this modification completed with my housing counselor. I received a letter from Daniel Santrella to submit the package for my modification. I took it upon myself to see Daniel and he gave me instructions on how to proceed. My housing counselor refused to follow the instructions that the judge gave me. Daniel took it on himself to take care of my situation and said he would follow up with my housing counselor and my lender. He followed up and did a wonderful job. He was very concerned and took this matter very professionally. I want to commend his actions and hope you will tell him what a great job he did for me. I appreciated everything he did for me. I hope you will recognize everything he did for me."

-LUIS

Great job Daniel.

CVLS Honor Roll



*Christopher Clark, Visitation Church
Legal Clinic*

Chris began volunteering at the Visitation Clinic in 2007 when he was a student at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota. In 2010 he passed the Illinois Bar and became a volunteer attorney. In many ways, Chris is a typical Visitation volunteer—law is a second career for him, he always shows up when he’s scheduled, he’ll take almost any kind of case, and he almost never says no. He does it so well and so willingly and is a pleasure to have as a volunteer. He is a real asset to the clinic.



*Jeffery Esser, ThunderDome Divorce
Clinic*

Jeffery joined this unique family law training and practice clinic with purpose. He clearly wanted to learn a new area of law and he wanted to assist needy family law clients at the same time. Jeff was not only an enthusiastic and quick student, but he handled multiple cases, representing several clients at the same time. Upon his completion of the training, Jeffery has continued to be an active family law volunteer that we, and our clients, can count on.



*Shauna Prewitt, Guardian Ad Litem for
Minors Program*

Shauna served as GAL for Nicole, a troubled 15-year old girl with a child of her own. When it became obvious that no relative could or would care for these two children, Shauna worked with DCFS to get the case screened into juvenile court so that Nicole could parent her child in a group home. For more than a year, Shauna was a tireless advocate for Nicole, and was the only consistent and encouraging presence in the girl’s unhappy life. She was not willing to let Nicole just fall off the map and employed every strategy that she could come up with in order to ensure that Nicole had a safe place to live.

CVLS Seminar Registration

May 23 "Contempt of Court" by Jerry Brown

Contempt of court! A phrase that strikes terror into the hearts of litigators? Not really, except when they are asked to define it and use it appropriately in court. Then they tremble.

Contempt of court comes in various forms—direct and indirect, criminal and civil. Each should be in a litigators' arsenal. Jerry Brown, who teaches remedies at John Marshall Law School, will discuss what contempt is, what the differences are between the various forms and how and when you can use them. While most attorneys don't use or need to know contempt rules often, from time to time this extraordinary remedy comes in handy. Get them into your arsenal now.

June 28 "Advanced Guardian ad litem Issues in Adult Disabled Guardianship Cases" by Paul Franciszkowicz

We've all had that case; the one that just didn't go as smoothly as we expected. In fact, sometimes cases can get downright thorny. Join staunch volunteer and experienced Probate practitioner Paul Franciszkowicz of Peter J. Latz & Associates LLC as he explores both the expected and unforeseen situations GAL's encounter and offers tools to assist in addressing them.

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 cvls.org/archived-seminars.

Volunteer named "Attorney of the Month"



Michael Toogun, CVLS volunteer and 3L law student at John Marshall Law School

Congratulations to **Michael Toogun**, Illinois Legal Aid Online's April 2012 Pro Bono Volunteer of the Month. Each month IllinoisLegalAdvocate.org and IllinoisProBono.org highlights a member of the legal aid community for exemplary work. Michael, a 3L law student completing his final semester at John Marshall Law School, has done exceptional work helping homeowners navigate the difficult process of mortgage foreclosure.

Michael volunteers with the Circuit Court of Cook County Foreclosure Mediation Program at CVLS, representing homeowners in foreclosure mediation. Michael says he went into law because it is "a profession dedicated to the public service."

On a lighter note:

Stuff People Say When They Hear You Work for a Nonprofit:

So, do you get paid for that?

I work for a nonprofit too . . . United Airlines . . . ha ha!

The problem I have with nonprofits is that not everybody deserves to be helped.

You know I've always wondered: why do nonprofit people get paid so much?

Are there any nonprofits here in Chicago?

Yeah, you know, I volunteered once at a nonprofit, but they were really screwed up.

I have a great idea for a nonprofit I'm going to start someday!

The problem with nonprofits is that they don't run themselves like businesses . . . where do I work? Oh, at Exxon (or Bain Capital, or Solyndra, or . . .)

I wish I had your job . . . I work too hard.

I have a friend who works for a nonprofit in San Diego! Maybe you know her!

So . . . do you get paid for that?

I could never ask anybody for money. Hey, can you help me move on Saturday?

A thank you from those you have helped.

With a constant demand for help, pro bono may seem like a never ending chore. As your workload increases with no end in sight, it can be easy to forget that each victory changed someone's life for the better. We would like to share with you some of the heartfelt "thank yous" that we have received from the people you are fighting for.

To Mr. Feldman,

My "thanks" to you. Seems so small compared to all you've done. But it comes from my heart.

-Carmen

Thank you for helping me. I am blessed by your services. Neil Goldsmith is a wonderful man. He did a great job of taking care of my divorce. I hope one day soon I can "pay it forward", the kindness you have given me.

-Robin

Dear Attorney Sutton,

I want to thank you for helping me to work with PNC/BSI/Metlife to keep my home. I am so grateful that the court recommended CVLS to me. As my attorney, you had the steady calmness and the right sense of urgency to get me through this very difficult process. I can't thank you enough.

Very Truly Yours,
Jone

I would like to commend you on the great service that Chicago Volunteer Legal Services provided in helping with the process of gaining legal custody of my grandson Keon. It is with great appreciation for the transition to be quick and easy. I would also like to extend great thanks to Mr. David White. His is a sincere and knowledgeable person. I would recommend you to anyone who doesn't know how to go about this process.

Sincerely, God Bless You
Kevin

Dear David,

I would like to take this opportunity to show my appreciation for your outstanding services. Thank you for all the help you have provided me in my recent legal matter. Your professional services were excellent. I have already recommended your outstanding services to several friends of mine.

Sincerely,
Caeslowa

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VOLUNTEER
LEGAL
SERVICES**

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Chicago, IL 60602

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