

## Mark Your Calendars Now!

**5/13**

GAL for Minors  
Seminar:  
Impact of Parent-  
Child Separation  
12:15 PM

**5/14**

New Volunteer  
Orientation  
12:15 PM

**6/10**

GAL for Minors  
Seminar:  
Impact of Court  
Involvement on  
Children and  
Families  
12:15 PM

**6/11**

New Volunteer  
Orientation  
12:15 PM

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

## Case of Canine Confusion Volunteer Saves Client from Massive Expenses in Dog Bite Case

Volunteer **William Jones** met Rhonda when she came in to CVLS' Visitation Church Legal Clinic as a defendant in a personal injury lawsuit. The suit alleged that Rhonda's dog, a one-year-old pit bull named Blue, attacked and seriously injured the plaintiff, Louis. Rhonda, sure that her dog was innocent, was determined to fight the suit. Not only did the Louis describe the attack dog as female (Blue is male), he described a dog with different coloring than Blue!

After appearing in court pro se unsuccessfully, Rhonda knew she needed her own attorney in order to win her case against Louis' insurance company's law firm. William stepped in, explaining that even if Rhonda were liable, she was judgment proof. He suggested a voluntary dismissal, but the opposing team refused, arguing that Rhonda owed \$40,000 in medical expenses.

William persevered, taking depositions from the parties and a reporting police officer, and showing that Rhonda's liability was minimal, under both common law negligence and the Illinois Animal Control Act. As it turned out, Louis' story didn't hold up so well. Now Rhonda has been reunited with a blameless Blue, and is not on the hook for any of Louis' medical expenses.

## Volunteer Secures Modification - Terms More Favorable than Expected!

James knew his family's finances would take a hit when he sustained an on-the-job injury and had to stop working for a time. What he didn't foresee, however, was his injury coinciding with his wife, Gloria, losing her job in a round of layoffs. James and Gloria, unable to keep up with their mortgage payments, applied for a modification of their monthly payments in order to avoid foreclosure.

At a mediation session with their mortgage servicer, James and Gloria were told they had been approved for the loan modification and were given the specific modification terms. But, when they received the written documents, the payments were higher and other terms differed from than what they had been promised in mediation.

Despite both James and Gloria working full-time jobs again, their legal and financial troubles had become too much to handle on their own. They entered the Circuit Court of Cook County Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program, and were relieved when CVLS volunteer Sameen Zia of Zia Illic, Ltd. agreed to represent them. After much back and forth between Sameen and the servicer's attorneys, the servicer agreed to the original terms proposed at mediation, but still refused to put them in writing.

This new wrinkle didn't even slow Sameen down. She convinced the servicer to re-review James and Gloria's case from scratch - and this time obtained an even more favorable modification for them! Their home was saved.

## Volunteer Justin Wins Sidley's Highest Pro Bono Honor

At its recent Pro Bono Awards Recognition ceremony, Sidley Austin recognized CVLS volunteer and Junior Board member **Justin From** with its highest pro bono honor, the Thomas H. Morsch Award for Pro Bono Achievement!

Another friend of CVLS, former Board of Directors member **Kevin Fee**, presented Justin with the award, earned for his work on a case with our Sidley Austin Salvation Army Legal Clinic. Justin's work on a complicated social security disability benefits matter for his quadriplegic client resulted in a "fully favorable" decision.

Two years after taking on her current position and informing Social Security that her salary would be increasing, Justin's client was told that she had to repay all the disability benefits she had received since the position began. Thanks to Justin, the SSA Hearing Officer reversed that decision and she did not have to repay any disability benefits she had previously received. Additionally, she received her back benefits and had her all benefits reinstated going forward. To date, these benefits total more than \$140,000.

Thrilled with her case's outcome, his client wrote a moving note about her experience working with Justin:

*"There are many things that I could write in terms of the professionalism, empathy, incredible competency, and diligent efforts that Justin put forth on my behalf. However, suffice to say that he was able to win the Social Security overpayment dispute with simply writing a brief that was so complete, eloquent, and persuasive that the overpayment issue was overturned by a judge without the necessity of a hearing!*

*"I am so grateful to him and to Sidley Austin for their generous opportunity that they provide by offering outstanding employees as individuals to work on pro bono cases! You are to be applauded and Justin should get a promotion!"*

We echo her enthusiasm. Thank you, Justin, for your dedication - and congratulations on this incredibly well-deserved recognition for your hard work!



## Volunteer Tejas is ISBA's Young Lawyer of the Year!

Huge congratulations are in order for CVLS volunteer **Tejas Shah** - ISBA's 2015 Young Lawyer of the Year for Cook County!

Each year, the Young Lawyers Division of the ISBA recognizes two outstanding young lawyers under the age of 36 - one practicing outside Cook County and one within - for their particular achievements in the field of law.

Tejas, former chair of our Indo-American Legal Clinic, remains integral to the clinic as an advisor on immigration-related issues. He also served as the 2014 president of the Indo-American Bar Association of Chicago.

Currently, Tejas is Immigration Counsel at Franczek Radelet, leading the firm's immigration practice.



## Volunteer Honor Roll: Olivia Cheng, CASL



**Olivia Cheng**, an attorney at the Law Offices of Peter Y. Qiu, has worked on a number of Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program cases in addition to volunteering consistently at CVLS' Chinese American Service League Chinatown Legal Clinic on Saturdays.

Olivia's regular practice focuses on business and real estate transactions, immigration matters and familial cases including divorces. Her passion and deep respect for Chicago's Chinese communities shine through in her efforts with CVLS; the clinic's chair says of Olivia, "CASL feels very lucky to have her as a volunteer."

## Amber Coisman, Tressler



**Amber Coisman** has been an active volunteer with CVLS' LaGrange Legal Clinic since clinic sponsor Tressler LLP initially became involved. As a partner at Tressler LLP focusing on insurance

coverage counseling and litigation, Amber advises insurers on coverage issues. As a clinic volunteer, she takes on a wide variety of cases from Disability to Consumer Finance.

Amber frequently takes on more shifts than required, and is always willing to take on additional dates as needed to ensure the clinic has full coverage.

She is very supportive of the clinic's growth, often encouraging new and different attorneys to get involved and volunteer their time.

## Mother on Fixed Income, Supportive Son Keep Home

Valerie's income is fixed—she gets social security retirement income. Her son, Jason, lives with her and contributes to household expenses. So, when Jason's work hours were reduced, they tried to stretch Valerie's social security to meet all of their expenses. It wasn't enough; Jason and Valerie fell into foreclosure.

Faced with losing their home, Jason and Valerie entered the Circuit Court of Cook County Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program, where a judge appointed CVLS and volunteer attorney **Bryan Bach** stepped in to help.

After Jason found a new job with a steady stream of income, Bryan was able to establish that his clients' financial situation had changed and that they were working toward getting back on their feet. Jason and Valerie were able to get a modified mortgage payment! Valerie and her son are now able to stay in their home, with a mortgage they can afford.

## Another Home Saved!

When one of her children was diagnosed with a chronic medical condition, Ursula was devastated, both emotionally and financially. Sky high medical expenses caused her to default on her mortgage. Determined not to let the possibility of losing her home interfere with her child's treatment, Ursula turned to the Circuit Court of Cook County Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program - where CVLS volunteer **Lisa Copland** dove in to help.

Lisa navigated the complicated process of applying for a loan modification and ensuring that the bank reviewed Ursula's application properly.

Lisa's advocacy on Ursula's behalf culminated in a success! She was able to obtain a lower, modified mortgage payment. Now Ursula and her children do not have to worry about finding a new place to live.

## Spotlight On: Agostino Filippone, JEP



The entrepreneurial spirit runs in **Agostino Filippone's** family. With two small business owner parents and a passion for the law and business, Augie knew he wanted to give back to people in situations similar to his own.

When he found the Chicago Bar Foundation's **Justice Entrepreneurs Project**, he "finally got enough courage to make the leap."

Augie works in CVLS' offices as a part of his participation in the JEP, a socially conscious law firm incubator providing him not only the tools he needs to launch his own practice, but also a culture of young lawyers with aims similar to his own. At CVLS, Augie says, he gains critical hands-on experience in litigation and courtroom tactics.

His solo practice, Filippone Law, focuses on small business, consumer, bankruptcy and credit is-

sues, as well as some personal injury and workers' compensation matters. "When you're a solo practitioner, you need to be consumer oriented," he says of his decision to focus on consumer law.

He puts his MBA and his interest in business strategy to good use on what he calls "walk-in issues," helping middle-class people who fall into the justice gap, unable to qualify for legal aid but equally unable to afford a lawyer at a larger firm.

In addition to Augie's extensive experience with corporate law - he's worked with a national insurance company and a legal funding provider - he wrote and illustrated his own children's book, "There's an Orange Tree Growing in My Tummy!"

He draws an unexpected parallel between writing for kids and practicing the law; each requires an ability to simplify potentially complicated issues into easily understandable, common language.

Augie's experience with CVLS and the Justice Entrepreneurs Project has been very positive, he says, partially because of his strong support of community service and involvement.

"It's an honor and a privilege to be able to represent people," he says. The more experience he gains, the more he realizes he wants to use that experience to hold himself to a higher standard by helping people in need.

Simply put, "it feels good, and it is good."

## Volunteer Anne Wins Outstanding Pro Bono Award

IIT-Kent College of Law recently recognized alumna **Anne Shaw**, a longtime CVLS volunteer who helped found our Chinatown Legal Clinic, with its Outstanding Pro Bono Service Award! Kent's annual Public Interest Awards celebrate alumni who devote their careers to the public good and demonstrate outstanding public service leadership.

The founding officer and shareholder of Shaw Legal Services, Ltd., Anne's practice focuses on civil litigation in the areas of commercial, civil rights and personal injury law.

After developing our Chinatown Legal Clinic, Anne was asked to assist in forming similar clinics in other communities.

Throughout her career, she has fought to expand access to the law and the legal profession for not only Asian American communities, but to low-income Chicagoans at large.

Her efforts have also earned her honors from the Chicago Bar Association and the Asian American Bar Association.

Congratulations, Anne!



# SPONSORSHIP FORM

**2015**

Questions? 312.332.3319 or [mnp@cvls.org](mailto:mnp@cvls.org)

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# Upcoming CVLS Events

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## **IDA | Power of Attorney**

*Now Available Online!*

## **IDA | Special Needs Trusts**

*Now Available Online!*

## **IDA | Closer Look at GAL**

*Now Available Online!*

## **IDA | Role of a Care Manager**

*Now Available Online!*

**All CVLS / IDA Collaboration Seminars are now available for online viewing and CLE credit! Visit [CVLS.ORG/ONLINECLE](http://CVLS.ORG/ONLINECLE) to view a seminar.**

*CVLS is proud to partner with the **Illinois Disability Association** (IDA) in offering a series of CLE seminars on guardianships, particularly as they pertain to persons with disabilities. This series is part of a new collaboration between CVLS and the IDA to expand and enhance pro bono services to low-income persons with disabilities and their guardians.*

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*CVLS is proud to present a **GAL for Minors seminar series** in conjunction with the **Chicago School of Professional Psychology!** Masters and doctoral students from the Chicago School will present on a variety of mental health topics as they relate to Guardian ad Litem cases.*

## **GAL for Minors | Parent-Child Separation**

*CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM*

**Wednesday, May 13**

- Presented by Whitney Zweifel,  
The Chicago School

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Impact of parent-child separation: poor parental functioning and its effect on guardianship cases

## **GAL for Minors | Court Involvement**

*CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM*

**Wednesday, June 10**

- Presented by Sunshine Collins,  
The Chicago School

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Impact of court involvement on children and families

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## **TRAININGS**

### **New Volunteer Orientations**

*CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM*

- Thursday, June 11  
- Thursday, July 9

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We'll cover the skills required to be a successful volunteer attorney, as well as the issues that may come up during cases. Training is for new volunteers working with CVLS.

Please visit [www.cvls.org/cle](http://www.cvls.org/cle) to register for a seminar!

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