



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF CLEVELAND



*Hold Fast to Dreams*

*-Langston Hughes*



# Executive Director's Note

Our dreams are what keep us inspired and give us hope. But for some, dreams can feel like a luxury. When you are fighting to avoid eviction, escape domestic violence, access much-needed benefits, or protect your job, there is little room to focus on anything but your immediate needs.

Legal Aid helps people overcome pivotal challenges to ensure that everyone has the chance to dream and that they can take real steps toward achieving those dreams. That is justice.

Through Legal Aid's collaborative work, we learn from our clients, we hear their voices, and together, we pursue those things that our clients need and deserve.

In 2023, Legal Aid continued to support community goals by:

- Partnering with our clients to provide impactful testimony to the Ohio Senate for legislation limiting debt-related driver's license suspensions, which trap people in cycles of debt and create barriers to stable employment.
- Guiding community-based organizations and entrepreneurs through the legal aspects of creating non-profits and small businesses, helping local residents harness their own power to create community change.
- Advocating with organized groups of tenants to address defective conditions in large apartment complexes that threaten the health and safety of residents.

And every day, Legal Aid works to guard the individual dreams of people like Bonnie (*alias for privacy*). Bonnie was excited to start her new business and bought lots of supplies to get started. Boxes of supplies were delivered to her home just before she was scheduled to go out of town, so she left them to deal with upon her return. Unfortunately, Bonnie's landlord did a surprise inspection while she was gone and found the boxes blocking the furnace and water heater – a violation of Bonnie's lease. When Bonnie came home, she found a summons telling her that she was being evicted.

Determined to fight for her home and all the dreams she planned to pursue there, Bonnie called Legal Aid. One of our attorneys represented Bonnie in housing court, arguing that the landlord did not follow proper procedures. Eventually, the landlord agreed to drop the eviction if Bonnie passed a new inspection. She passed without problem, and the eviction was dropped. With help from Legal Aid, Bonnie protected her home and her dreams of becoming an entrepreneur.

It was Langston Hughes who penned the poem with the line, "*Hold fast to dreams.*" Legal Aid protects the rights and basic needs of our clients so they can pursue their dreams - those highest ambitions that keep people moving forward and communities growing stronger.

Hughes also wrote, "*The only way to get a thing done is to start to do it, then keep on doing it.*" Your support has allowed Legal Aid to take meaningful strides in our work, and together, we will continue extending justice in Northeast Ohio. There is much more work to do, and we are grateful to have such a dedicated community to join us on this journey.

With sincere gratitude,

Colleen M. Cotter, Esq.  
Executive Director

*Legal Aid uses the power of the law to ensure access to basic needs and lift people out of poverty. Thanks to thousands of supporters and community partners, Legal Aid provides services that improve safety and health; promote education and economic stability; secure decent, affordable housing; and ensure the justice system and government entities are accountable and accessible.*

Legal Aid's mission is to secure justice, equity, and access to opportunity for and with people who have low incomes through passionate legal representation and advocacy for systemic change.

## 2023 Finances

<b>REVENUE AND OTHER SUPPORT</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Legal Services Corporation (LSC)	\$3,598,535	\$2,983,635
Ohio Access to Justice Foundation	\$6,586,109	\$4,346,517
Donations and Private Grants	\$3,766,923	\$4,890,891
Donated Services	\$1,413,579	\$1,052,794
Other Government Grants	\$2,925,765	\$1,668,936
United Ways	\$1,030,426	\$1,057,692
Partner Agencies (contracts for legal services with partner agencies)	\$902,106	\$926,414
Other Income [including investment income (loss), net]	\$1,233,610	(\$1,106,959)
Special One-Time Philanthropic Gift	\$2,500,000	\$0
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$23,957,053</b>	<b>\$15,819,920</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Program Services	\$17,439,984	\$15,022,204
Support Services (administration & development)	\$3,305,563	\$2,764,088
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$20,745,547</b>	<b>\$17,786,292</b>
Excess of Revenue over Expenditures	\$3,211,506	(\$1,966,372)
Beginning Net Assets	\$14,107,257	\$16,073,629
<b>NET ASSETS as of year end</b>	<b>\$17,318,763</b>	<b>\$14,107,257</b>
<b>BREAKDOWN OF NET ASSETS</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Without donor restrictions		
-Undesignated	\$0	\$99,085
-Net Investment in Property	\$2,980,746	\$2,992,518
-Board Designated Endowment	\$36,214	\$30,821
-Board Designated Reserve Fund	\$9,726,374	\$9,384,765
-Board Designated - LLC Capital Reserve	\$355,138	\$0
-Board Designated - Foundation Supplemental	\$2,500,000	\$0
	<b>\$15,598,472</b>	<b>\$12,507,189</b>
Temporarily Restricted	\$1,014,104	\$1,054,640
Permanently Restricted	\$706,187	\$545,428
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$17,318,763</b>	<b>\$14,107,257</b>




# IN 2023, LEGAL AID SERVED 24,419 PEOPLE + GROUPS THROUGH 9,079 CASES

**DURING 2023, LEGAL AID** increased assets and income and reduced debt for our clients by more than **\$10.47 million**

**100%**  safety **SECURED**

**83%**  evictions or involuntary moves **PREVENTED**

**75%**  rent assistance **SECURED**

**96%**  **REMOVED** barriers to education

**83%**  **REDUCED** debt



## CASES BY COUNTY

**86%** Cuyahoga


**7%** Lorain

**3%** Lake


**3%** Ashtabula


**1%** Geauga


## 2023 CASES BY INITIAL CONTACT (INTAKE METHOD)

**59%**  client completed intake over the **PHONE**

**22%**  client completed intake **ONLINE**

**11%**  outreach **CLINICS**


**3%**  **ONLINE REFERRAL** (partner portal)

**5%**  **OTHER** (Walk-Ins & Callback Cards)

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

 **164** legal advice clinics

 participated in **106** community resource fairs + provided **82** community presentations

 provided **48** legal education trainings for attorneys + **128** training events for non-attorneys

## CASES BY PRACTICE AREA

**4%** **OTHER:** legal assistance to groups, wills & estates, advance directives


**12%** **FAMILY:** divorce / separation, custody, domestic violence

**16%** **HEALTH & OPPORTUNITY:** education, immigration, health & income benefits

**30%** **ECONOMIC JUSTICE:** taxes, bankruptcy, debt, expungements & record sealing, foreclosure, employment discrimination

**38%** **HOUSING:** landlord / tenant disputes, evictions, defective housing conditions

## OUR PEOPLE

 **2023 Staff**  
**144** total staff, including **73** attorneys

 **2023 Supporters**  
**1,708** Total Donors **1,480** Individuals **107** Law Firms/Corporations  
**71** Foundations **9** United Ways **41** Partner Agencies

Each year, Legal Aid helps thousands more through community legal education, information, and advocacy.

## CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS



**72%** of households served **MAKE LESS THAN \$25,000/year**



**438** cases involved **U.S. VETERANS** or **ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY MEMBERS**, impacting **970 PEOPLE**



**39** clients were **COMMUNITY GROUPS, NONPROFITS** or **BUSINESSES** represented by Legal Aid's growing community engagement practice



**58%** of all households helped included **CHILDREN**



**56%** of all cases involved clients who identify as **BLACK**

**(60+)**

**18%** of all cases involved clients who are **OLDER ADULTS**



**73%** of all cases involved clients who identify as **FEMALE**

## Celebrating 20 years of Medical-Legal Partnerships



The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland created the first Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) in Ohio when we formalized our program with MetroHealth in 2003. At the time, it was only the fourth MLP in the United States. Today, MLPs exist in 450 health organizations across the country. Through these partnerships Legal Aid works together with healthcare providers to address civil legal issues that interfere with patient health.

Legal Aid's Medical-Legal Partnerships include MetroHealth (est. 2003), St. Vincent Charity Medical Center (est. 2017), University Hospitals (est. 2018), and Cleveland Clinic (est. 2022).

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## VOLUNTEERS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN HELPING LEGAL AID CLOSE THE JUSTICE GAP.

Annually, up to 20% of Legal Aid's matters are handled by *pro bono* attorneys.



In 2023 more than **800** volunteers were active with Legal Aid. Volunteers reported more than **11,907** hours for the year.

» Volunteers recorded **over 5,700** hours working on cases, and **over 2,450** hours providing service at advice clinics



# 2023 Legal Aid Supporters

## BARRISTER SOCIETY Individual Gifts: \$20,000+

Anonymous %  
Charles and Charlotte Fowler +  
Holley Fowler Martens and  
Rob Martens #  
Chann Fowler-Spellman  
Calvin Griffith %  
*Thomas Piraino* and  
Barbara McWilliams +  
Joyce Snow

## SOLICITOR SOCIETY Individual Gifts: \$10,000 - \$19,999

Anonymous (1) + (1)  
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Dianne Foley  
Richard Freeman #  
Paul and Michelle Harris  
Michael Anne Johnson  
David and Martha Kutik %  
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Richard Pogue  
Ronald and Deborah Ratner  
Susan and James Ratner #  
Douglas and Holly Wang \*

## JUSTICE LEADERS Individual Gifts: \$2,500 - \$9,999.99

Julie Adler Raskind and  
Peter Raskind +  
Atossa Alavi and Bahman Taheri  
Joan U. Allgood +  
Stephen and Amanda Anway  
Brent and Ann Ballard +  
Brian and Megan Bash \*  
Richard Bedell and Elizabeth Grove  
Kip and Catherine Bollin \*  
Jeff and Elaine Bomberger %  
James and Mary Bright +  
Sylvester and Semanthie Brooks  
Senator Sherrod Brown and  
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Dr. John F. Burke, Jr. %  
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Stephanie and Bruce Hearey %  
Lee and Candace Hutton @  
Helen Jarem and Taras Szmagala  
Joseph and Anne Juster  
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Dena Kobasic \*  
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Richard and Polly Legenza \*  
John and Cassandra Lewis \*  
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E. Sean Medina \*  
Carrie Moore  
Kenneth Moore and  
Cynthia Holland %

John Moran +  
Hugh Morgan +  
Peter and Kristin Morrison \*  
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Robert Needlman and Carol Farver +  
Nicholas Noyes  
Ann and Robert O'Brien  
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Rachel McQuade Oliss +  
R. Jeffrey Pollock and  
Martha Brandt Pollock %  
Sarah Rathke %  
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Eric Salzberg +  
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Marilyn Shea-Stonum and  
Gary Stonum #  
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Roger Synenberg %

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Shelley Kazan-Wilcox %  
Margaret Wong %  
J. Adam Zangerle III  
Dan and Ellen Zelman +  
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Jill Miller Zimon and Jeffrey Zimon +

## CHAMPIONS OF JUSTICE Individual Gifts: \$1,000 - \$2,499.99

Anonymous (2) % (4) \* (4) + (8)  
Daniel Abrams +  
Joanie and Tom Adler +  
Edward and Kathryn Akucewich #  
David and Phyllis Alden %  
Jason and Shruti Aring %  
Kemper and Julianne Arnold +  
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Albert Leonetti +  
Maria Carr +  
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Jennie Church %  
Thomas and Victoria Collin \*  
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Alfred Cowger and Anthony Wesley  
Andrew Cox and Michelle Dietz +  
Gail Cudak

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LeAnn Davis  
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Catherine and Bruce Fallick +  
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Gloria Fine  
Mark Fischer +  
Sarah Flannery and Philip Slaght \*  
Robert and Laura Fogarty \*  
Adam Fried +  
Steven and Lisa Friedman +  
Richard and Robbin Garcia \*  
Teresan Gilbert +  
Steven and Gail Goldfarb %  
Leslie Greenhalgh and Kurt Miller +  
Cathryn Greenwald \*  
Peggy Gries Wager and  
*Michael Wager* +  
Richard and Jessica Gurbst %  
Arthur Hall III +  
Patricia and William Hanavan +  
Gregory Harvey +  
Susan and Jeffery Hastings +  
R. Scott Heasley +  
John and Susan Hersch  
Kevin and Luann Hinkel  
Stephen and Amy Hoffman  
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David and Nancy Hooker %  
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Susan and Stanley Jaros +  
Linda Johnson and R. Mark Jones %  
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Ronald and Susan Kahn +  
Sanjiv and Anju Kapur  
Bernard Karr +  
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Elizabeth Kimmel \*  
Heather and Michael Kimmel  
Gayle Koch #  
James and Sandra Koenig %  
Ellen and John Kramer  
Marie Kuban  
Samuel and Deborah Laferty \*  
Dennis and Kim Lansdowne \*  
Paul Lauritzen  
Wilbur Leatherberry and  
Diane Phillips-Leatherberry @  
Nathan and Ashley Leber  
David and Jennifer Lenz %

We are grateful to members of our  
twenty-year giving society (“@”), fifteen-year giving society (“%”),  
ten-year giving society (“\*”), five-year giving society (“+”).  
We welcome our first-time donors (“#”).  
We honor the memory of deceased donors in *italics*.

Alan and Barbara Lepene \*  
Scott Lepene \*  
Raymond and Wendy Ling \*  
Ronald Lisan  
Janet Lowder and David Kinkaid \*  
Michael Mackay  
Colleen Mahoney  
Rita and Charles Maimbourg %  
Raymond and Nancy Malone %  
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Dr. Mary Beth Manning and  
Cormac Somerville +  
Kevin and Sheila Margolis \*  
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Stephen and Nancy Markus \*  
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John and Mary McGowan \*  
Sean McGrane +  
Hugh and L. Sue McKay %  
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Molly McNally +  
Douglas and Jani McWilliams %  
Thomas and Anne Merriman +  
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Trent and Irene Meyerhoefer  
Jennifer Mills #  
Robyn Minter Smyers and  
Bertrand Smyers \*  
Leslee and David Miraldi %  
Amy and Marc Morgenstern +  
Patti and Hadley Morgenstern-Clarren +  
Robert Morvillo  
Amy and Larrie Nadler  
Jakki and Fred Nance  
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Jacqueline Pasek and Michael Quinlan \*  
Stacey Picard and Mark Maus \*  
William Plesec and Susan Stechschulte  
Steven Pockrass #  
Geraldyn Presti and John Sedor +  
Roslyn Quarto and Gail Palmer  
Robert and Judith Rawson %  
Carole and Michael Rendon  
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Richard Selby II \*  
Michael and Andrea Sharb +  
Charna Sherman @

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Bernard and Mary Smith +  
Maria A. Smith and  
Rev. Charlie Hurst +  
Jeffrey Sobieski +  
Steve and Laura Sozio  
Kathleen St. John \*  
R. Thomas and Meg Harris Stanton +  
Philip Star and Jane Peterson %  
Justice Melody Stewart %  
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Jennifer Sullivan \*  
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Christopher Williams and  
Cynthia Mog %  
Brad Wolfe  
Robert Wolff and Paula Silverman %  
James and Kathleen Young %  
Robert and Eva Zunic \*  
Tom and Beth Zych \*

## BENEFACTORS OF JUSTICE Individual Gifts: \$500 - \$999.99

Anonymous (7) @ (1) \* (2) + (4) # (2)  
Mary and Drew Adams  
Nancy Adams +  
Anne Adamson +  
Jonathan H. Adler  
Martha Allee and Jonah Grabelsky  
The Honorable Dick Ambrose and  
Mary Beth Ambrose  
Arthur Anton  
Chad and Lisa Arfons  
Clifford and Monica Babcock \*  
Thomas Baker  
Lynn Ballard \*  
Mary Catherine Barrett  
Susan Beck %  
Todd and Stacey Behrens %  
Daniel and Mary Berick  
Karl Beus +  
William and Ann Beyer +  
Paul and Paula Binder  
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Barton Bixenstine \*  
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Suzanne and Adam Blum %  
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Chet Bonner +  
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Alexander and Jennifer Burlingame +

Judge Janet Burnside %  
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Christopher Carney  
Matt Carroll and  
Laura Kleinman +  
Kristen Cavin  
Subodh Chandra and  
Meena Morey Chandra +  
Michael Cicero  
Magistrate Gregory Clifford and  
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George Coakley \*  
John Cole  
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Anthony Coyne  
Manohar and Chandra Daga  
Eric and Jacquelyn Daniel \*  
Dominic and Julie DiPuccio \*  
Emily Drake +  
Carl Draucker and  
Claire Burke Draucker %  
Michael Elliott %  
Stephen Ellis  
Frank and Wendy Esposito  
Andrew and Leigh Fabens \*  
Bryan Falk  
Mary and Warren Farr #  
Tom and Brooke Feher \*  
Sally Feldman +  
Nancy Fioritto +  
Barry and Karen Freeman +  
Heidi and Will Friedman \*  
Steven Friedman  
Robert Fuerst and Louise Abrams



Destiny worked hard to provide for her children. When Destiny fell ill, she took medical leave from her first job and was terminated from her second job. Destiny fell behind in her rent. Eventually, she received a notice for eviction. Destiny contacted Legal Aid. Destiny’s attorney negotiated with the landlord to allow Destiny to stay in the property and dismiss the case pending the approval of her rent assistance application. When Destiny’s application was approved, she was able to pay her back rent and the case was dismissed. With the help of her Legal Aid attorney, Destiny was able to avoid homelessness.





# 2023 Legal Aid Supporters



Jada was a foster parent to her four great nieces. When she was granted permanent custody, she had no idea that she would lose the foster care stipends that she once received. She needed the additional money to help care for them. Jada called Legal Aid. Her attorney helped her get financial assistance from the Kinship Permanency Incentive Program (KPIP), a program to support kinship caregivers. She received \$1,575 for her first payment and \$900 six months later. Thanks to her Legal Aid attorney, Jada was able to receive the monetary assistance that she needed to provide for her great nieces.



## BENEFACTORS OF JUSTICE Individual Gifts: \$500 - \$999.99 (continued)

William Fulton and Jeffrey Duber %  
Michael Gall +  
Mark Gardner \*  
Mary Anne Garvey and  
A.J. Cianflocco +  
Michael and Kathryn Garvey \*  
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Eric and Dawn Gordon  
Susan Gragel #  
Paul Grieco  
Judge Burt Griffin and  
Bunny Griffin @  
Marc and Nadia Groedel +  
Brian Grube %  
William and Lynn Gruber  
Michael and Gloria Gruhin +  
Eleanor Hagan  
Councilperson Kris Harsh  
Daniel Haymond %  
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Ronald Mills  
Howard and Jane Mishkind  
John and Ann Mitchell  
Ed and Kim Moore \*  
Joseph Morford \*  
Karen and John Moss  
Bert and Marjorie Moyer  
Adrienne and Ryan Mueller  
Adam Munson +  
Judge John Musson and  
Maureen Musson  
Charlotte and Jack Newman +  
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Gregory and Vicki Nolfi +  
Judge Solomon Oliver and  
Louisa Oliver +  
Susan Pardee +  
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Geoffrey and Molly Ritts %  
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Sharmon Sollitto and  
Michael Lederman  
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Emily Spivack +  
Kristofer Spreen +  
Sara Stauffer  
Adrienne Stemen +  
Robert and Juanita Storey \*  
K. James Sullivan and Gabrielle Brett \*  
Judge Kristin Sweeney and  
Peter Sweeney  
Joseph Tabacco and Peggy Schmidt  
Victoria Thomas #  
Heather Tonsing Volosin and  
Matt Volosin



We are grateful to members of our  
 twenty-year giving society (“@”), fifteen-year giving society (“%”),  
 ten-year giving society (“\*”), five-year giving society (“+”).  
 We welcome our first-time donors (“#”).  
 We honor the memory of deceased donors in *italics*.

Brian Toohey and  
 M. Elizabeth Monihan %  
 Roy and Deborah Turnell \*  
 Daniel and Kristine Urban  
 Thomas C. Wagner +  
 Daniel and Judy Weidenthal  
 Mayor David E. Weiss %  
 Jerome Weiss and Judith Salomon @  
 Charles and Lucy Weller  
 Robert Weltman  
 Karey Werner +  
 Christopher Wick \*  
 Donna Williams-Alexander  
 Cheryl Wills %  
 Nicole Wilson %  
 Michael Yaksic and  
 Barbara Friedman Yaksic \*  
 Gregory York and Kelly McMann +  
 Jennie Zamberlan  
 Ted and Diane Zawadski \*

**ADVOCATES OF  
 JUSTICE  
 Individual Gifts:  
 \$250 - \$499.99**

Anonymous (10) \* (2) + (5)  
 Harlin and Laura Adelman +  
 Raj Adlakha  
 Robert Anderle  
 Jeffrey and Debra Appelbaum  
 Richard Bamberger  
 Kevin Barnes %  
 John Batt and Mara Cushwa +  
 Craig Beazer and Alicia Cintron +  
 Karl and Amanda Bekeny \*  
 Lee Belardo  
 Virginia Benjamin +  
 Mark and Rebecca Bennett  
 Aaron Berg #  
 Bill and Ellen Berglund  
 Neil and Kavitha Bhagat \*  
 Elizabeth and Joseph Boatwright  
 Gilbert and Darcy Brosky  
 Daniel Brown #  
 Daniel Bryan +  
 Robert Burger  
 Thomas Butchko \*  
 Jeremy and Brooke Campana \*  
 Alexander Campbell +  
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 Diana Centeno-Gomez and Luis Gomez  
 Henry Chamberlain  
 Stephen Chavez  
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Valda and Marcus Christian  
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 Diane Citrino @  
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 Alex and Michelle Constable +  
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 Steven Cook +  
 Benjamin Cooper  
 Richard Cooper  
 John Corlett and Doug Van Auken \*  
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Tricia’s son, Parker, was struggling with undiagnosed learning disabilities. Tricia requested an individualized education plan (IEP), but the school was not initiating the evaluation. Parker was eventually suspended from school. Tricia mentioned this to her healthcare provider. Through the Medical-Legal Partnership, she was referred to Legal Aid. Tricia’s Legal Aid attorney was able to get the school to implement an IEP evaluation and plan for Parker. Tricia’s attorney helped her get an education plan in place for her son that ensured his needs were being accommodated, and he could return to school.



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Tara welcomed another child to her family. She reapplied for SNAP so that her newborn was added to her benefits. She was never contacted by JFS for her benefits interview. Tara told her physician. Because of the hospital's Medical-Legal Partnership with Legal Aid, she was connected with a Legal Aid attorney. Her attorney was able to get JFS to complete Tara's interview. When Tara provided JFS with the requested documentation, her benefits were approved. Tara's Legal Aid attorney was able to help her ensure that her children would not experience food insecurity.

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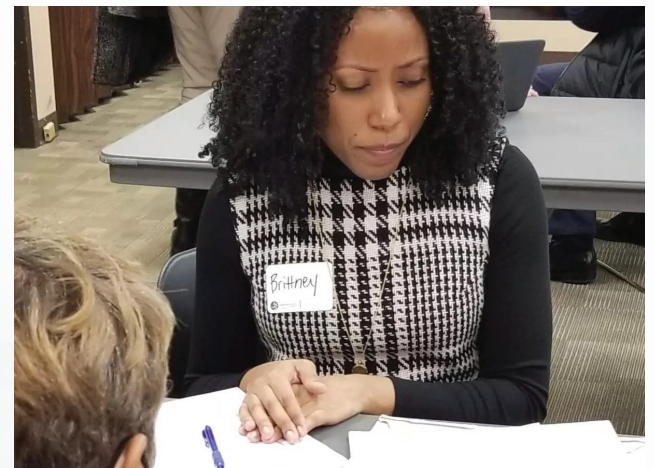
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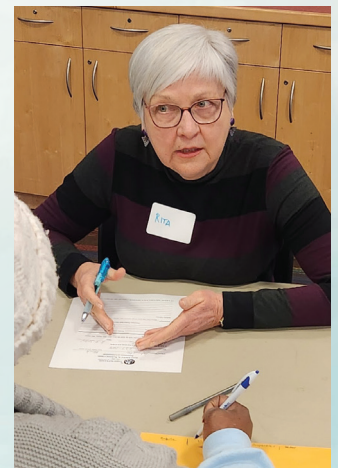
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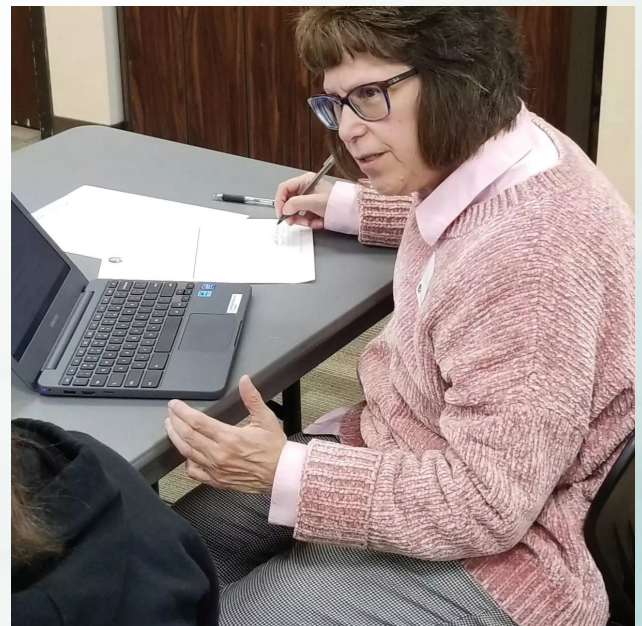
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