

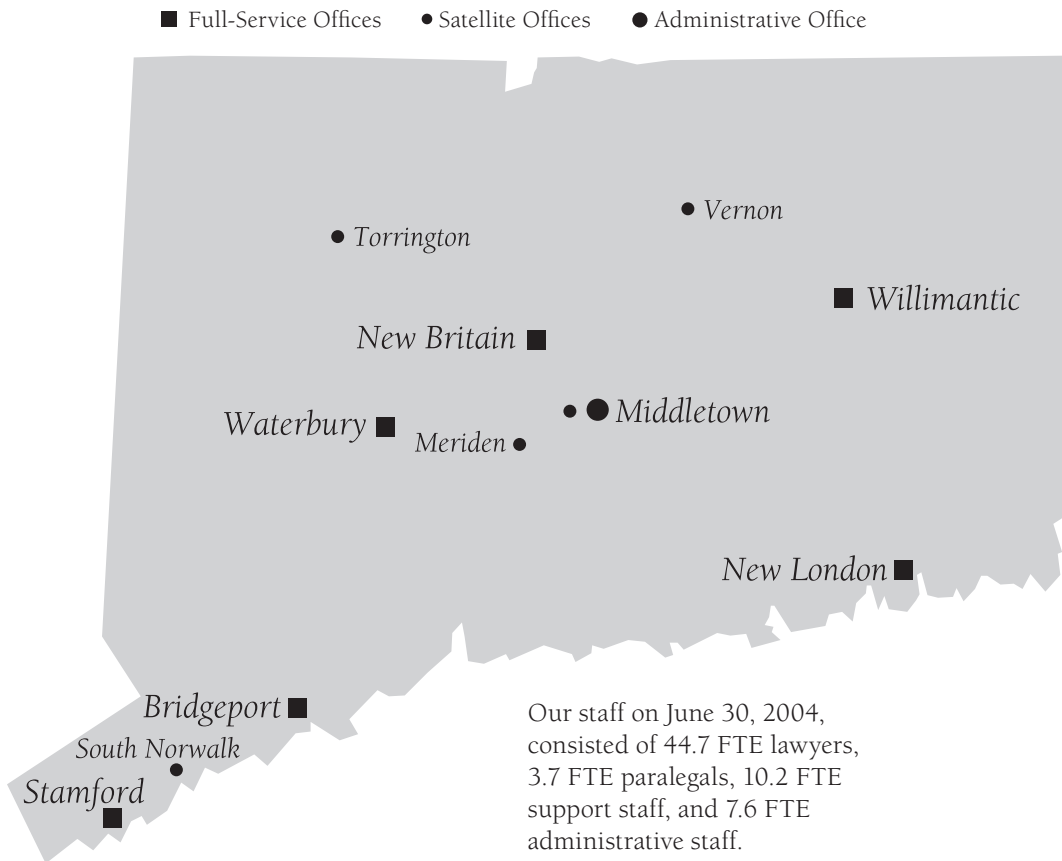
Helping People Survive and Overcome Poverty

Service Area, Offices, and Staff

Connecticut Legal Services is a private, non-profit law firm dedicated to helping low-income families and individuals obtain just solutions to serious civil law problems.

Our service area—all of Connecticut except the greater Hartford and New Haven areas—contains 180,000 people financially eligible for our services (2000 Census).

We work out of six full-service offices, five satellite offices, and one administrative office.



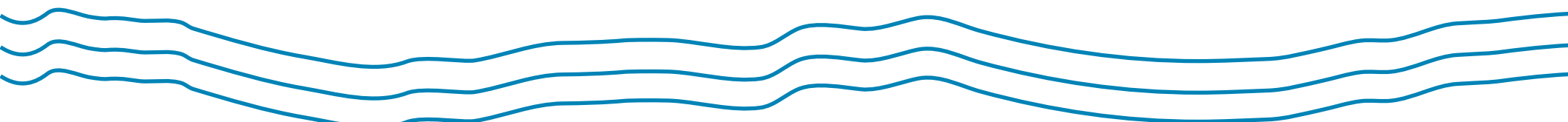
CLS helps disabled tenant extend special subsidy arrangement.

Millie suffers from multiple disabilities due to a traumatic brain injury and, as a result, needs the services of a specially trained dog. After a long period of homelessness, she obtained a rental assistance voucher from a housing authority that requires certain new voucher-holders to live within its jurisdiction for at least one year. The problem was that Millie was unable to find an apartment in this area that both allowed her to keep her specially trained dog and rented within the local rental payment standard.

The housing authority, with HUD's approval, accommodated Millie by providing her with an exception payment standard (a somewhat higher than normal subsidy) for one year to allow her to rent an apartment that she had found within the housing authority's town. This apartment not only allowed dogs but was also close to shopping and to medical providers that Millie was using. Once Millie moved in, local social service agencies rallied around her and, with the landlord's consent, built her a wheelchair ramp at no cost to her.

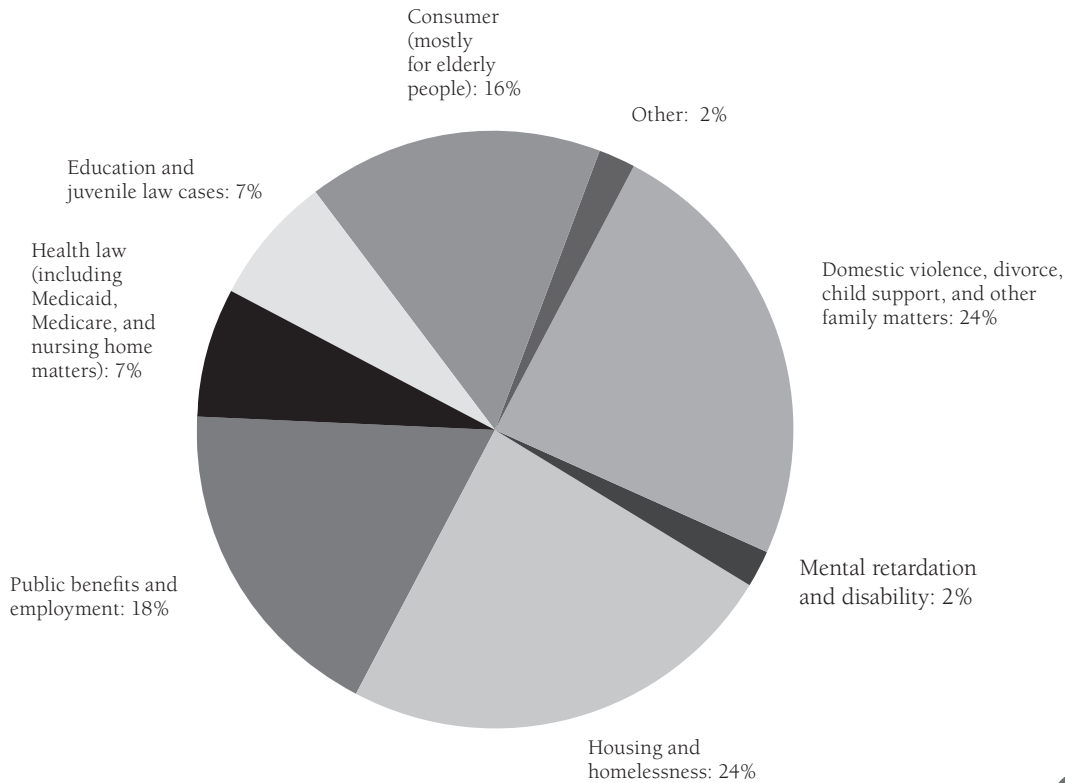
Millie called CLS for help when HUD informed her at the end of the first year of her lease that it was terminating the exception payment standard it had earlier approved, even though the housing authority wanted to continue it. Millie would now have to look for an apartment with a lower rent, but HUD pointed out that she was free to look beyond the boundaries of her new town. The social service organizations that were supporting Millie were dismayed. How could HUD force this formerly homeless woman to leave a situation in which she was doing so well?

Millie's CLS lawyer saved the day. Arguing that HUD had an obligation to continue to accommodate Millie's disabilities, he persuaded the agency to extend the exception rent for another year.



Distribution of Cases

In 2003–2004, we received approximately 21,281 requests for service. We responded by opening 5,172 new cases for legal representation and counseling. We also worked on 3,726 cases opened in previous years. Our services in these 8,898 cases benefited approximately 19,901 household members.



In addition to our work on these individual cases, we conducted 412 community legal education events attended by 10,870 people, provided 200 instances of advice to human service agencies and other professionals serving poor people, and litigated eight class action lawsuits seeking solutions to widespread problems.

CLS obtains needed Medicaid coverage for suicidal youth's essential hospital stay.

Robby is a 13-year-old child who was hospitalized after he attempted to kill himself and burn down his mother's home. The child guidance clinic through which he and his mother had been receiving therapy called CLS with a plea for help. Robby's hospital, following instructions from his Medicaid insurance company, was preparing to discharge him after only a one-week stay. His therapist at the clinic, however, believed that Robby was nowhere near ready to be discharged.

A CLS lawyer intervened on Robby's behalf. She convinced the insurance company and the hospital that federal and state law required them not to discharge Robby until he was stabilized, properly evaluated, and set up with a discharge plan responsive to his mental health and educational needs. Further, she persuaded Robby's school that it was obligated under federal law to provide him with educational services geared to meet these needs.

The upshot was that Robby was able to obtain in-patient treatment for several more weeks. When he was discharged, he was ready to participate in a hospital day program, which he did for several weeks until his school arranged a placement for him at a residential high school equipped to provide him with the supervision, educational programs, and medical care that he needs. He was, at last report, doing very well in this new school.



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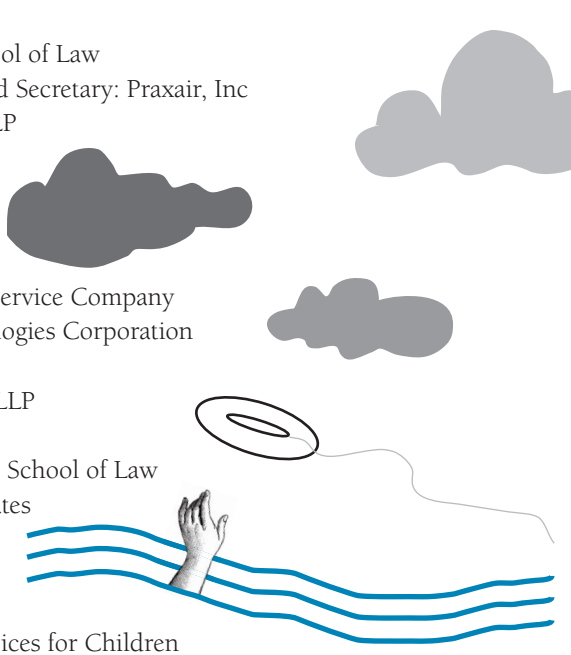
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OUTREACH



A number of CLS lawyers regularly interview potential clients at offices operated by battered women's shelters. Many of these domestic violence victims have critical needs for legal assistance. One recent applicant for services was a woman who, after many years of marriage to an extremely abusive man, decided to flee to the shelter after he tried to kill her with his truck, almost killing their nearby child at the same time. CLS helped this woman obtain court orders to protect her and her child.

Two CLS attorneys visited a soup kitchen where they spent the lunch hour interviewing people who had legal problems. Some needed help obtaining government benefits. Some needed to find safety from domestic violence. One needed advice on how to deal with a crucial probate court issue.

A CLS lawyer sent a letter to a long list of non-profit agencies serving low-income people in the area. The letter described ways in which low-income people were not fully utilizing Medicaid and offered help to clients with Medicaid access problems. Follow-up calls resulted in the CLS lawyer's providing a number of these agencies with in-service trainings on Medicaid under-utilization.

A CLS lawyer met with representatives from 30 or so agencies to inform them about the wide set of legal problems—including education, employment, health, and public benefits problems—that homeless people often face. These meetings have resulted in these agencies' increasing their referrals of homeless people to CLS.

Letter from Executive Director and Board Chair

Poverty, although often a temporary condition for particular families or individuals, persists as a major social challenge in Connecticut and the country as a whole. In the CLS service area alone, the 2000 Census counted 146,000 people below the federal poverty level and many more near it.

The legal problems of the poor and near poor often seriously threaten fundamental needs. Solving such critical problems and helping families and individuals climb out of poverty is at the core of CLS's work.

Poverty comes with dangers:

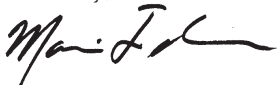
- **Hunger**—230,000 people in Connecticut lack assured access to food they need to be healthy and active. CLS helps many households stabilize their income through asserting their employment and/or welfare rights, including their right to food stamps.
- **Homelessness**—the number of homelessness people in Connecticut was up by 23 percent in 2003. CLS helps many households solve problems that threaten them with the loss of decent and affordable housing and/or the trauma of eviction or displacement. We also help homeless families assert their rights to continuity of education for their children.
- **Poor health**—31 percent of the people who are poor in Connecticut lack health insurance. CLS helps many adults and children obtain medical care to which they are entitled.
- **Violence**—domestic violence prosecutions in Connecticut range from 15,000 to 20,000 cases a year. CLS helps many adults and children use the law to obtain court orders and legal statuses that afford them important protections against abusive spouses or others.
- **Educational failure**—the number of poor children who are at risk of educational failure is very high. CLS helps many of these children obtain the diagnoses, medical treatment, and tailored-to-their-disabilities schooling that they require.

The stories we present in this annual report demonstrate our success in helping people avoid these dangers and others as they struggle to overcome their economic circumstances.

However, the hard fact is that, among poor people in our service area, the overall need for help solving gravely critical legal problems, more than 160,000 cases per year, far surpasses our service capacity of 8,000 cases per year. Making matters worse, flat funding in the face of rising costs over the past several years has been forcing us to slowly reduce our staffing.

We have redoubled our efforts to raise new funds to stop this shrinkage and begin growing again so we can help more families and individuals in critical need. Your assistance in this effort, both your financial gifts and your membership in our constituency of supporters, is crucial and greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Marvin Farbman
Executive Director



Robert Dolian
Board Chair

CLS helps client obtain needed SSI disability benefits.

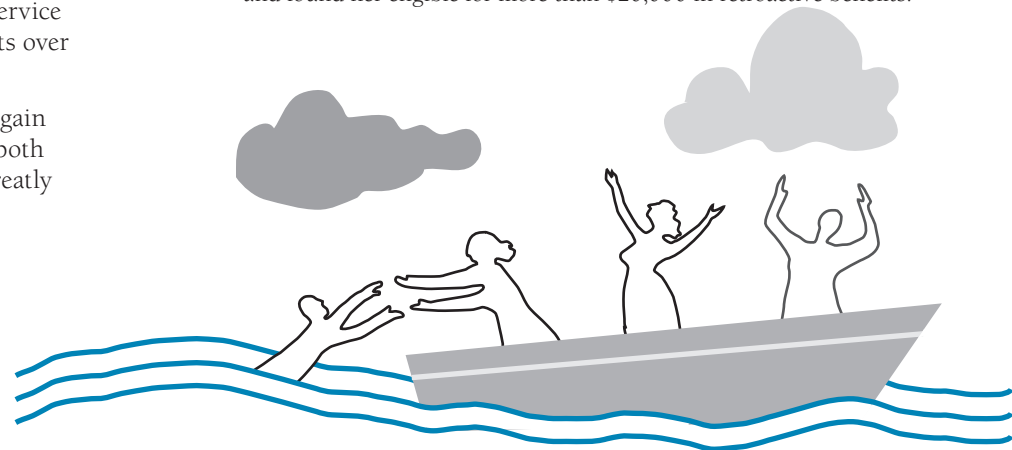
When Florence suffered severe neck and back injuries in an automobile accident five years ago, she applied for SSI disability benefits but was turned down. Her aunt hired a lawyer to help Florence appeal the decision, which she did through three levels of administrative review but without success. The lawyer was not willing to represent Florence in a further appeal to Federal District Court.

Florence, with mounting bills and a large rent arrearage, sought help from a social service agency. The agency referred her to CLS.

Our lawyer, after reviewing the records of Florence's appeals, noted two significant things: (1) Because doctors had performed surgery three times in failed attempts to repair the damage to Florence's neck, her impairment from this damage qualified her, according to SSA regulations, as presumptively eligible for benefits, and (2) none of the decisions in the records addressed this question of presumptive eligibility.

Florence's CLS attorney advised her to reapply for benefits and to point out to SSA the rule that made her presumptively eligible for them. When SSA denied her again, CLS appealed, asking an Administrative Law Judge to find her eligible for benefits retroactive to her original application four and a half years earlier. Florence's CLS attorney argued that an earlier brief describing Florence's three surgeries must never have reached the Social Security appeals council because if it had, the council would have certainly addressed the question of her presumptive eligibility.

The Administrative Law Judge agreed with Florence's CLS lawyer and found her eligible for more than \$20,000 in retroactive benefits.



Financial Supporters and Other Income Sources for 2003–2004 Expenditures

Government-Based Grants

Agency on Aging, Senior Resources (Eastern Connecticut)	\$	46,134
Agency on Aging, Southwestern Connecticut Area		48,418
Agency on Aging, Western Connecticut Area		60,478
City of Middletown		10,000
Connecticut Department of Social Services		599,874
Connecticut Judicial Branch		4,232
Connecticut Office of Protection and Advocacy		93,630
Department of Health and Human Services—Administration on Aging		138,914
Town of Ashford		1,000
Town of Coventry		750
Town of Darien		2,500
Town of Ellington		1,200
Town of Greenwich		1,000
Town of Groton		8,250
Town of Mansfield		4,500
Town of Tolland		500
U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs		146,356
Total Government-Based Grants	\$	1,167,735

Private Grants

American Bar Association	\$	1,500
Anthem Foundation of Connecticut		65,602
Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut		6,349
Connecticut Bar Foundation		4,255,089
Connecticut Health Foundation		10,000
Connecticut Law Firms Fellowship (<i>one year of two-year program</i>)		15,313
(program funded by two-year grants from Silver, Golub, & Teitell LLP —\$22,000; Pullman & Comley, LLC —\$8,000; and Shipman & Goodwin LLP —\$7,000)		
Equal Justice Works		36,151
(includes matching grants from Day, Berry & Howard LLP—\$11,000 Cummings & Lockwood LLC—\$11,000)		
Estate of Ruth I. Krauss		5,000
Family Services Woodfield		5,000

Saint Francis Episcopal Church		3,500
Impact Fund		9,000
Melville Charitable Trust		91,082
SBC SNET Employees Community Service Fund — Central Region		1000
Seaman Family Foundation		43,750
United Way, Greater Waterbury		21,894
United Way, Eastern Fairfield County		20,000
United Way, Meriden and Wallingford		12,000
United Way, New Britain and Berlin		22,000
United Way, Northern Fairfield County		5,000
United Way, Northwest Connecticut		7,297
United Way, Norwalk and Wilton		8,169
United Way, Southeastern Connecticut		46,841
United Way, Southington		2,500
United Way, Stamford		19,550
United Way, Capital Area		38,000
United Way, West Central Connecticut		3,000
United Way, Housatonic/Shepaug		3,500
United Way, Middlesex		43,000
United Way, Windham Region		8,461
University of Minnesota		821

Total Private Grants **\$** **4,810,369**

Donations and Other Income

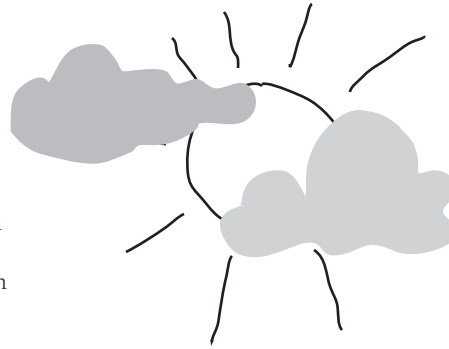
Attorney Fees	\$	231,148
Campaign for Justice		166,621
Donated Goods and Services		91,824
United Way Donor Designations		12,946
Interest/Dividends Earned		8,653
Quinnipiac Law School (for provision of clinical instructor)		90,068
Miscellaneous		249
Total Donations and Other Income	\$	601,509

Total CLS Income **\$** **6,579,614**

CLS persuades burglar alarm company to void contract with elderly widow for a non-functioning system.

Edna, a 65-year-old widow with poverty-level income, purchased a burglar alarm system that she could not afford. Shortly after the installation of the system, the alarm-monitoring company informed Edna that it was going out of business. Edna mistakenly assumed that her system was no longer connected to emergency responders. When she continued to receive bills from the alarm company, she called them but found their account of where things stood confusing. When the local fire and police department appeared at her home on several occasions responding to false alarms generated from her system, she wrote to the alarm company asking that it cut off the service. The company refused her request and continued to bill her. Edna was shaken. She was afraid she would have to pay all these bills and would not have enough money to make ends meet.

A CLS advocate entered into extended negotiations with the alarm company on Edna's behalf. Finally, the company agreed to a settlement under which it (1) voided the alarm system contract retroactively to the date that Edna had requested that it be terminated and (2) wrote off as invalid two years worth of bills. Edna was greatly relieved and can now focus her extremely limited income on such essentials as food, medicine, and housing.



CLS helps domestic violence victim obtain rental assistance.

Carol and her two young children lived with Bob, the father of one of the children. Carol was desperate to move out of Bob's apartment because he was physically abusing her.

She contacted a domestic violence shelter, which helped her obtain a rental assistance voucher from her local housing authority. Without the voucher, she could not afford to move away from Bob. When Carol located an apartment for which she could use the voucher, the housing authority, without warning, informed her that it was terminating the voucher. The housing authority took this action because it learned that Carol had been arrested the previous year for alleged violent criminal activity. Unable to persuade the housing authority to change its decision, the domestic violence shelter referred Carol to CLS.

Carol described to her CLS lawyer the circumstances of her arrest. The police, responding to her 911 call, arrived at Bob's apartment after he had assaulted her with a broomstick and, in the ensuing scuffle, badly bruised her but also had his nose bloodied. One of the officers at the scene, who happened to be a friend of Bob's, believed Bob when he falsely accused Carol of being the aggressor. The officer then convinced his partner that they should arrest Carol, not Bob. The officers did, but no charges were ever brought against Carol.

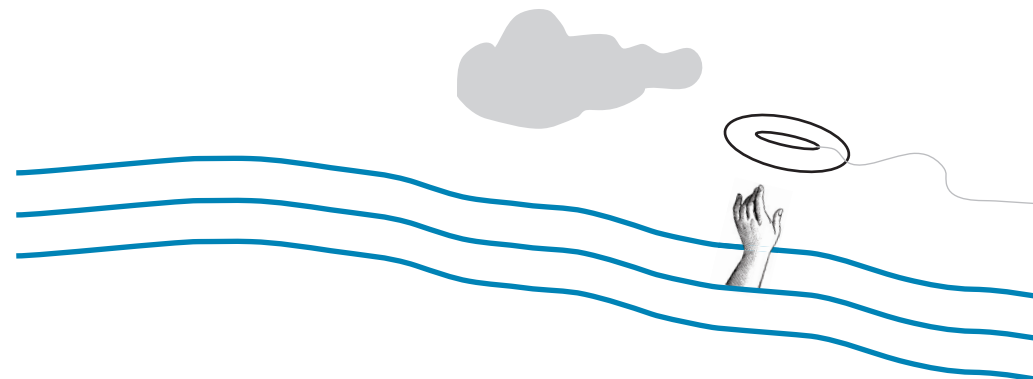
Carol's CLS lawyer contacted the housing authority. She argued that the authority's termination of Carol's voucher was illegal under fair housing law and HUD policy because it amounted to penalizing her for defending herself against domestic violence. The housing authority's lawyer agreed and, on his advice, the housing authority reinstated Carol's voucher. This enabled Carol and her children to move out of Bob's apartment and into the new one she had found.

Shortly after this, another CLS lawyer helped Carol obtain a court order prohibiting Bob from any contact with Carol and the children.



Statement of Financial Position—June 30, 2004, and June 30, 2003

<i>ASSETS</i>	June 30, 2004	June 30, 2003	<i>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</i>	June 30, 2004	June 30, 2003
Current Assets			Current Liabilities		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 1,486,020	\$ 1,251,137	Accounts Payable	\$ 191,054	\$ 139,416
Cash in Escrow—Client Funds	12,094	9,760	Accrued Expenses	1,389,522	1,264,589
Cash—Insurance Escrow	23,097	20,027	Refundable Advances	7,545	7,068
Receivables			Accrued Annual Leave	205,930	211,033
Grants and Contracts	276,613	569,508	Client Trust Deposits	12,094	9,760
Promises to Give	2,281,572	2,076,447			
Other	25,861	58,648	Total Current Liabilities	\$ 1,806,145	\$ 1,631,866
Prepaid Expenses	106,319	295,841			
			Net Assets		
Total Current Assets	\$ 4,211,576	\$ 4,281,368	<i>Unrestricted</i>		
Fixed Assets			Operations	\$ 160,765	\$ 286,338
Property and Equipment	\$ 1,024,925	\$ 1,016,338	Insurance Escrow	23,097	20,027
Leasehold Improvements	355,550	355,550	Fixed Assets	161,096	215,851
Law Library	54,659	54,659	Total Unrestricted	\$ 344,958	\$ 522,216
			<i>Temporarily Restricted</i>		
Total Fixed Assets Before Depreciation	\$ 1,435,134	\$ 1,426,547		\$ 2,245,522	\$ 2,367,119
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(1,274,038)	(1,210,696)	Total Net Assets	\$ 2,590,480	\$ 2,889,335
			Total Liabilities and Net Assets		
Total Fixed Assets	\$ 161,096	\$ 215,851		\$ 4,396,625	\$ 4,521,201
Other Assets					
Security Deposits	\$ 23,445	\$ 23,445			
Donated Common Stock	508	537			
Total Other Assets	\$ 23,953	\$ 23,982			
Total Assets	\$ 4,396,625	\$ 4,521,201			



CLS helps psychiatric patient retain essential medical transportation services.

Rachel is a woman with a very serious psychiatric illness who has been seeing the same psychologist for 12 years. Only the constancy of her therapeutic treatment has enabled her to function outside a hospital.

Rachel's treatment continuity was threatened when DSS determined that it would stop paying for transportation to her twice-a-week treatment sessions. Without transportation assistance, Rachel would find it next to impossible to get to her psychologist's office.

A CLS lawyer represented Rachel in a fair hearing appeal of DSS's decision but failed to persuade the fair hearing officer to overturn it. Rachel's CLS lawyer then appealed to the Superior Court.

The technical issue before the court was whether DSS was right in saying it no longer had to cover Rachel's transportation costs because Connecticut Medicaid, under a recent change in state law, no longer covered transportation to psychiatric services that were not provided under the auspices of a clinic.

The superior court judge determined that DSS was mistaken. The judge noted that Rachel's sessions with her psychologist were ongoing and medically necessary. He agreed with Rachel's CLS attorney that because this continuing therapy would be covered by Connecticut's Medicaid program if it was provided through a clinic, DSS's Medicaid regulations require the agency to pay for transportation even though the therapy was being provided by an independent psychologist.

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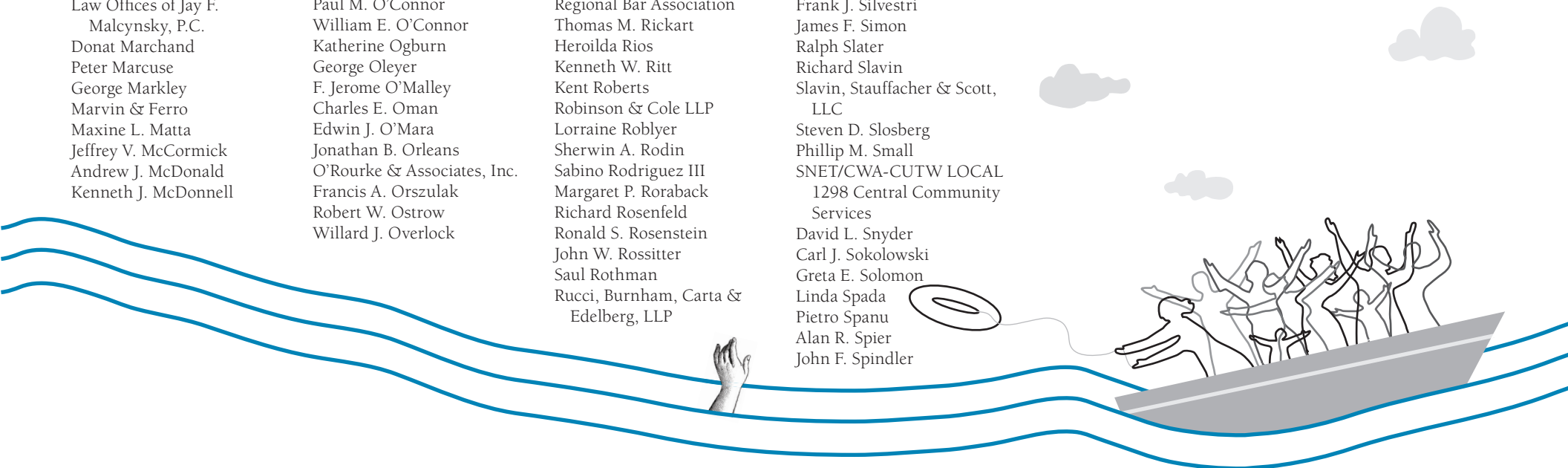
CLS helps mother who fled her public housing apartment to escape further physical abuse from her husband.

Teresa and her three young children fled from the public housing apartment they shared with Teresa's husband, Ralph, when Ralph, after a drinking binge, beat up Teresa quite seriously. Teresa and the children escaped to a friend's small apartment where they lived in cramped conditions for several months. Teresa called CLS when Ralph showed up at the friend's apartment and threatened to beat her up again if she did not return home.

Teresa's CLS lawyer immediately obtained a restraining order against Ralph that barred him from any contact with her or the children. The lawyer also started a divorce action for her.

What the court would not do, because Teresa had left the family apartment several months earlier, was enjoin Ralph to vacate this apartment and give it to her.

Our lawyer was able, however, to persuade the very helpful housing authority to (1) provide Teresa with a new apartment, (2) carry over the security deposit she had paid on the old one, and (3) help her move most of the furniture from the old apartment to the new one.



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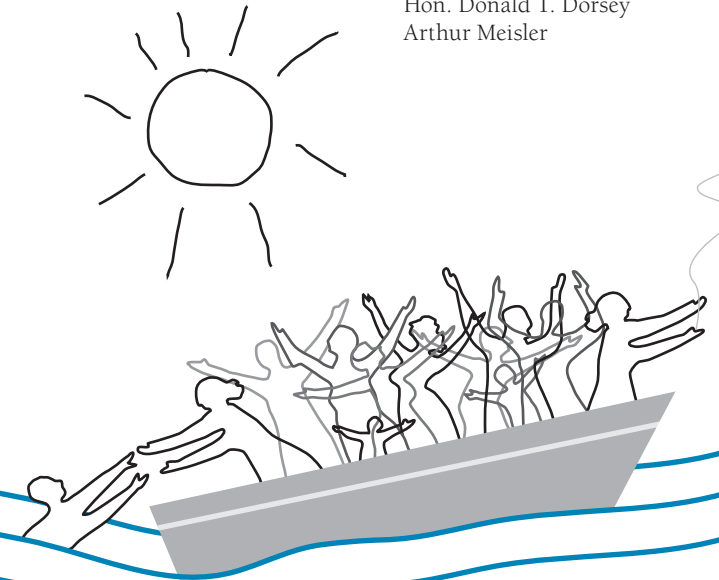
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