

*Justice With
Compassion*

SAN DIEGO, CA

April 2017

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Casa Cornelia Law Center

April Newsletter

Dear Friend,

You have made it possible for so many to experience our mission of justice with compassion. In 2016, Casa Cornelia provided critical information, legal services, and access to hope for 2,280 men, women and children fleeing violence and seeking safe haven in the United States. This would not have been possible without your generous support. The needs of the most vulnerable continue to grow, and last year's numbers indicate we exceeded the total numbers from previous years. Specifically, we responded to:

- 610 asylum seekers fleeing persecution and torture
- 557 survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking seeking safety
- 999 unaccompanied children fleeing violence, abuse or abandonment
- 114 individuals seeking other forms of relief, including the DACA/Dreamer Program

Providing a bridge to humanitarian protection to those we serve would not be realized without our volunteers, who exponentially increase our impact. This last year, 542 dedicated volunteers, including attorneys from the private bar, interpreters, translators, students and others donated an astonishing 18,951 hours of their time to helping Casa Cornelia's clients.

This year we project the need for our services will be amplified as more individuals seek our help.

Given the current legal and policy landscape, which has dramatically shifted, Casa Cornelia's staff and volunteers mobilized swiftly to answer terrified client phone calls and accelerate our intake, screening, and case acceptance processes with new clients. Mothers who are victims of crime fear deportation and worry about the future of their children. Victims of persecution and torture from countries like Somalia are unsure what their futures hold. Children who are alone enter legal screenings with wide eyes and uncertainty in their hearts. Staff has dedicated themselves to ensuring the needs are met, clients receive necessary information and providing our expertise to the community at large as part of our commitment to education.

We thank you for your support last year and for your continued support this year as the months go on. We truly could not do this good work without you.

Warmly,
Carmen M. Chavez, Esq.

Casa Cornelia's Mission

Casa Cornelia Law Center is a public interest law firm providing quality *pro bono* legal services to victims of human and civil rights violations. The Center has a primary commitment to the indigent within the immigrant community in southern California. Casa Cornelia strives to educate others regarding the impact of immigration law and policy on society and the public good.

To ensure that we at Casa Cornelia can continue to provide access to justice with compassion, please consider [donating here](#).



Volunteer Victoria Hester of Best Best & Krieger LLP fought hard to win lawful immigration status for her client, a teenager who entered the United States as an unaccompanied minor fleeing his home country. Volunteer Attorney Molly Selway worked with Victoria on this case while she was working at Best Best & Krieger as well.

Volunteer Spotlight



Michael Sedio, Esq., Vice President of Operations & General Counsel at the Better Business Bureau serving San Diego Orange and Imperial Counties and Association of Corporate Counsel member, won the pro bono Children's Asylum case he took as a Volunteer Attorney through Casa Cornelia. His client was a boy from a small Central American country which had suffered decades of civil war, including oppression and violence against those of indigenous, and particularly Mayan ethnicity. Clients like his suffer unconscionable forms of abuse, ranging from beatings, torture, oppression, imprisonment or death because of their ethnicity, religion or even political opinion. The temporary safety they find in the United

States can only be made permanent through the work of lawyers willing to take on their cases. Access to law and justice for people without the means to afford legal services is made all the more vital in cases where the client's life or freedom are sometimes literally on the line. Michael urges all attorneys to consider becoming a volunteer: "I was intimidated at the idea of taking on a volunteer case at first because I knew nothing about immigration law, but Casa Cornelia provided training, support, sample materials, and was with me every step of the way. Of all the reasons I became a lawyer the chance to do work like this is the most meaningful."*

**Story re-printed with gratitude from the [Association of Corporate Counsel](#) newsletter.*

Asylum for Indigenous Clients

Mateo* - Sunny Chang and Nic Echevestre with Erin Trenda & Katherine Pine, Cooley LLP (Children's Asylum)

Volunteer Attorneys from Cooley LLP were successful in obtaining asylum for their young client of Mayan descent. Mateo fled his country of origin after being kidnapped and shot. Nic, Sunny, and their teammates from Cooley worked closely with the staff at Casa Cornelia to prepare the young client's application. The case was a special challenge as Mateo was interviewed twice at the asylum office, and had to testify on two different occasions. Thanks to Nic, Sunny, Erin, and Katherine's hard work, Mateo was granted asylum in the U.S.!

Ikal* - Tom Laube with Jessica Kondrick, Sandler, Lasry, Laube, Byer & Valdez LLP (Children's Asylum)

Volunteer Attorney Tom Laube agreed to take one children's asylum case. Soon after he started working on the case, we heard that the client's younger brother had entered the U.S. and was also in need of legal services. As soon as Tom learned of this need, he offered to take the younger brother's case. He worked very closely with both brothers and their mother who are also of Mayan descent and have faced persecution in their country of origin. He met many times with each client, and he represented both cases individually. The younger brother's case was recently granted. The older brother's case continues with Tom as a Volunteer Attorney, with his Associate, Jessica, and we know that he is in very good hands.

Former Clients Winning Asylum in New York



Rosa* - (Asylum)

Rosa was recently granted asylum in New York. She is a transgender woman who fled a lifetime of persecution and abuse in her home in Honduras. Despite overwhelming evidence, she was denied asylum by the Immigration Judge in San Diego. Undeterred, former Casa Cornelia Asylum Program Director Adela Mason litigated

the case, appealed it to the Board of Immigration Appeals, and won, causing the case to be sent back for re-adjudication. Meanwhile, former Volunteer Attorney Kara Persson, formerly of Gordon & Rees, helped Casa Cornelia secure funds to get Rosa out of the detention facility. As she moved to New York, Casa Cornelia arranged for another pro bono organization to assume representation of Rosa. Rosa's new attorney recently informed us that Rosa was granted asylum. We are so thrilled that Rosa will be able to live a life safely and securely in New York.

Salim* - (Asylum)

Our Associate Director, Elizabeth Camarena, received an elated call from a former client who also lives in New York. While detained in San Diego, Salim worked very

closely with his Casa Cornelia Volunteer Attorney, Michelle A. Leffew. He tried to move forward with this case while in detention because once he was released, his case would be significantly delayed. This was an issue as he has a wife and child abroad who he needed to bring to the U.S. for safety. However, unable to endure the conditions of the detention facility in San Diego, he decided to ask to be released on bond. Once released, he moved to New York, and his family there was able to support him through the process. When Salim called earlier this year with good news, he said, "I have just won my asylum today. That is why I called. I am very, very happy... and I am very, very grateful." Anyone listening could hear the sheer joy in his voice. Salim and his new attorney believe he won the case due to the incredible case preparation Michelle did. We are so happy for this courageous man, who has found peace with his family here in the U.S.

**Client names changed to protect confidentiality.*

Community Know Your Rights Presentations



Casa Cornelia Staff members Carolina Martin Ramos, Arwa Zakir, and Elizabeth Camarena (the fourth, third, and second from the right) together with colleagues from The Center and Alliance San Diego before giving a presentation on immigration at the San Diego LGBT Community Center

As anxiety spread following recent Executive Orders and memos on immigration, Casa Cornelia received an increase in presentation requests from community organizations, colleges, religious communities, corporations, and others. Associate Director Elizabeth Camarena has lead Casa Cornelia's effort to keep up with this great demand and has dedicated herself, along with many other staff members, to educating interested individuals regarding the impact of changing immigration policy on the immigrant and refugee community as well as on the larger society. In March of 2017 alone, Elizabeth made thirteen presentations, six of those to college students, informing her audiences about immigration law, humanitarian protection for those who qualify, and the constitutional and basic rights we all have. Elizabeth also gave a presentation to the Kitchenistas, a group of women who learn how to make healthier meals for their families at Olivewood Gardens and Learning Center.

Attorneys Who Care Campaign

The first quarter of 2017 also brought Casa Cornelia's inaugural [Attorneys Who Care Campaign](#). In total, thirteen San Diego firms and organizations participated in the campaign, which raised funds that are necessary, now more than ever, to provide humanitarian protection to immigrant victims of human and civil rights violations. Together, they raised over \$12,000! With no lack of creativity, firms participated by holding inter-office Penny Wars (pictured, right, at Latham & Watkins LLP), bingo games, a Cornhole Competition, and Jeans Days to name just a few. We are deeply grateful to all those who participated and for their support of justice with compassion during this time of anxiety for our clients and potential clients:

- Association of Corporate Counsel
- Best Best & Krieger LLP
- Dentons US LLP
- Dinsmore & Shohl LLP
- DLA Piper LLP
- Foley & Lardner LLP
- Jones Day LLP
- Klinedinst PC
- Latham & Watkins LLP
- Paul Hastings LLP
- Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP
- Qualcomm Pro Bono Committee
- Sandler, Lasry, Laube, Byer & Valdez LLP

We are pleased to announce that **Latham & Watkins LLP** (large firm category), and **Dinsmore & Shohl LLP** (small firm category) raised the most per attorney. Congratulations!

Thank you to all who participated!





Attorneys at Dinsmore & Shohl participate in a Cornhole Competition to raise funds for Casa Cornelia during the Attorneys Who Care Campaign

Mother and Son Volunteerism

Monica Rozen has been an active Volunteer Interpreter and Translator at Casa Cornelia for many years and continues to generously volunteer her time for the benefit of our clients. Professionally, she is a medical interpreter and owns her own travel agency, Rozen Travel. Her son, Alan Rozen, works for Latham & Watkins LLP in New York City and recently volunteered to conduct a special research project. We were so touched by this mother-son volunteerism and thank them both for their meaningful contributions to Casa Cornelia!

Volunteer Interpreter and Translator (VIT) Corner

VIT PRACTICE POINTERS

Without Volunteers Interpreters and Translators who give voice to our clients, our Volunteer Attorneys, most of whom do not speak a second language, could not represent the interests of Casa Cornelia clients. It is not asked of community volunteers to be certified professionals but they are asked to observe concepts that guarantee the rights of the individuals they are assisting.

Four concepts are key in providing the quality representation we promise. They are:

CONFIDENTIALITY - The volunteer language provider does not disclose information learned during the execution of his or her duties



ACCURACY - The volunteer language provider strives to interpret every message without omissions, additions, distortions or any other changes to the original message.

IMPARTIALITY - The volunteer language provider refrains from allowing personal beliefs to manifest in his or her conduct, especially when rendering the content and tone of the message.

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES - The volunteer language provider maintains professional boundaries with the client as well as the attorney, both during and outside the interpreted encounter.

Thank you for your service, Volunteer Interpreters and Translators!

New Frequently Asked Questions for Volunteers

Calling all Volunteer Interpreters and Translators and Volunteer Attorneys! Casa Cornelia is always on the look-out for volunteers to represent and provide language services for clients in need, and currently has cases in the following areas available for placement: (1) Asylum; (2) Children; and (3) Victims of Crime (including domestic violence). Indeed, we have an ongoing need for Volunteer Interpreters and Translators and Volunteer Attorneys who are passionate about the mission of Casa Cornelia.

Those who are interested in language services are invited to visit our [Volunteer Interpreters and Translators page here](#). For potential Volunteer Attorneys who are interested in learning more, please see our new [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Upcoming Trainings for Volunteer Attorneys

Asylum Law and Procedure Training

Tuesday, April 18, 2017, 2:00-4:15pm, (2.0 hours of MCLE credit available, with a 15 minute break)

Casa Cornelia Law Center, 2760 Fifth Ave. Ste. 200, San Diego CA 92103

Learning objectives for the Asylum training:

While representing a client assigned by CCLC:

1. Identify the statutorily-required elements for Asylum (and related protection) and legally-sufficient evidence to support the claim;
2. Timely prepare a complete application for Asylum (and related protection) and competently represent the client before the Immigration Court and/or the Asylum Office; and

3. Represent the client in a trauma-informed, age-appropriate manner.

RSVPs are required, as space is limited. If you are a licensed Attorney and would like to participate in this training, please contact Pro Bono Program Director Katherine Paculba, at kpaculba@casacornelia.org, or 619-231-7788, x304.

SIJS (Special Immigrant Juvenile Status) training, to represent children eligible for immigration relief who have been abused, abandoned or neglected

Thursday, April 20, 2017, 2:00-4:15pm, (2.0 MCLE credits are available, with a 15 minute break)

Casa Cornelia Law Center, 2760 Fifth Ave. Ste. 200, San Diego CA 92103

Learning objectives for the SIJS training:

While representing a client assigned by CCLC:

- 1) Identify the statutorily-required elements for SIJS and legally-sufficient evidence to support the claim
- 2) Timely prepare a complete petition for findings regarding SIJS and competently represent the minor client in state court;
- 3) Timely prepare a complete application for SIJS and competently represent the minor client before the USCIS and the immigration court;
- 4) Represent the client in a trauma-informed, age-appropriate manner.

RSVPs are required, as space is limited. If you are a licensed Attorney and would like to participate in this training, please contact Pro Bono Program Director Katherine Paculba, at kpaculba@casacornelia.org, or 619-231-7788, x304.

