Justice with Compassion

Casa Cornelia's Mission and Spirit are rooted in the tradition of service of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus which founded and sponsored the law center in 1993 to provide free legal services to indigent victims of human and civil rights violations.

Although U.S. immigration laws and policy offer safe haven for persons in perilous circumstances, eligibility for protection under the law is no guarantee of securing protection. Victims unfamiliar with the legal system, the language and culture rarely navigate the intricacies of the legal system successfully without the assistance of an attorney. Indigent persons fleeing persecution in their homelands, abused women, abandoned children and victims of human trafficking are especially vulnerable.
Dear Friends,

The year 2015 saw the intensification of many of the world’s ongoing conflicts around the figure of the migrant — humanitarian, environmental, and political. Casa Cornelia’s work, always connected to the changing needs of the times, was conducted in the penumbra of these contexts. Closer to home, we took note of debates about immigration reform issues impacting the southern border of the U.S. — should unaccompanied minors have the right to counsel? How should the U.S. cope with the continuing exodus of women and children fleeing violence and poverty in Central American countries? How would the Executive Order on DACA and DAPA fare?

Within our offices, our clients’ life-stories from around the world made a familiar and unthinkable pattern of hardship, triumphs and astonishing courage. The women who married and then became trapped in abuse; workers who escaped lives as modern-day slaves; children who trekked huge distances alone with just a phone number written on a piece of paper; individuals with special needs who could not speak for themselves in any court of law; so many seeking asylum and freedom from fear in this country.

No matter how the year unsettled the debates in the wider world, at Casa Cornelia we found the simplest rationale. We tried to help those who came to us, one at a time, the most vulnerable and those urgently in need of our legal help. And so, in 2015, we assisted, one at a time, 1,991 children, women and men, more than at any other point in our history. We were privileged to help 561 asylum seekers fleeing persecution and torture, 501 clients seeking relief from domestic violence and other serious crimes, sixty-one survivors of human trafficking, and 864 unaccompanied children fleeing violence, abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

We could not have achieved this without our benefactors, our volunteer attorneys, volunteer interpreters and translators, and all of our other supporters who have ensured that we are able to serve our clients zealously, courageously and compassionately. If our clients’ life-stories show us the conflicts and penury of contemporary history, your support of our work tells the world that there is hope. With compassion and courage we can restore dignity and freedom from fear to many of those who most need it. I thank you for joining us on our quest to ensure justice with compassion.

With every best wish and prayer, I am

Carmen M. Chávez, Esq.
Executive Director

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2760 Fifth Avenue, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92103-6330 ☎ 619-231-7788
Asylum Seekers

Since its founding Casa Cornelia has provided full legal representation to over 2,000 persons fleeing their homelands because of past persecution or because they have a well-founded fear of persecution or torture should they be returned to their homelands.

Casa Cornelia has successfully represented asylum seekers from around the globe. In 2015 Casa Cornelia screened 152 persons seeking asylum. It successfully represented fifty-three applicants for asylum and filed one appeal for a client who was denied relief. At the close of 2015, the law center had 140 open asylum cases. Eighty percent of the attorneys representing asylum applicants are volunteer attorneys from the private bar.

Auguste is currently living in New York having been graduated magna cum laude in Public Accounting. Now a U.S. citizen and father of two children, he recently wrote to thank Casa Cornelia for defending him in his asylum case. As a young ethnic Hutu he was detained and tortured in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With the assistance of a Catholic Priest, he escaped to Uganda and fled to the United States where he asked for asylum. He was detained and initially denied asylum. His case was finally resolved in his favor by the United States Federal Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit after seven years of litigation.
Abused and Abandoned Children

Since 2001, Casa Cornelia attorneys have been providing pro bono legal services for every unaccompanied child detained by immigration authorities in San Diego County. On average the law center represented one hundred children in deportation proceedings annually. In 2011 as the gang violence in Central America reached epidemic proportions the numbers doubled. In 2015, 864 children received assistance. The humanitarian crisis of refugee children at the Mexican-American Border is an area of major concern for Casa Cornelia, requiring continuous monitoring and restricting to meet the ever changing environment.

In addition to providing attorney screenings for every detained unaccompanied child in San Diego, Casa Cornelia provides legal representation for indigent families providing sponsorship for released children in San Diego County.

The story of four young Mexican female cousins (two sets of sisters) began with the tragic and violent loss of their fathers. Maria, Juana, Alejandra, and Gabriela fled to the United States with Maria and Juana's mother in search of safety. After about two years of living in the U.S., Maria and Juana's mother told the four girls she was going on vacation and never came back. Since this disappearance, the girls have been living with their grandmother in the U.S. One of Casa Cornelia's Volunteer Attorneys, Jennifer Best-Martin, secured Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (a form of protection for abused, abandoned, or neglected children) for all four girls. These young children are now able to live in the U.S. permanently . . . finally secure with their grandmother.
Victims of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking

Family Unity is a fundamental value that underlies the immigration law and policy of the United States. The law provides for US citizens and legal permanent residents to apply for immigrant visas on behalf of their spouses. Unfortunately, some spouses refuse to apply for these visas and use the undocumented status of a spouse as a means of abuse and control. These spouses are also frequently victims of severe physical abuse. Changes in immigration law now permit these abused spouses to apply for immigrant visas independently. In 2015 Casa Cornelia Law Center responded to 501 victims of domestic violence and sixty-one victims of human trafficking, and assisted those eligible in applying for visas. Applicants assist law enforcement in the investigation and prosecution of these crimes.

Eva was employed by a gentleman in Mexico as a housekeeper. In time, he persuaded her to come to the United States with the promise of increased wages which would significantly improve her ability to support her family. When she arrived in the United States, however, her employer stole her travel and identity documents and she was compelled to work long hours without compensation. For two years Eva was virtually enslaved. Then she found a flyer in Spanish at a grocery store that provided her with a hotline telephone number. The organization secretly rescued Eva and referred her to Casa Cornelia which submitted her application for a Trafficking Visa.
2015 In a Nutshell

In 2015 Casa Cornelia responded to 1,991 total requests for services; 40% of these were unaccompanied children, fleeing violence and abuse. The law center accepted full cases for eighty-five asylum seekers from around the world, bringing the number of open cases to 140. At year’s end, the total number of open cases serving victims of serious crime was 394.

Volunteers

Without the generous commitment of volunteer attorneys, interpreters, law students and interns, the staff of Casa Cornelia would have been unable to achieve these results. In 2015 the total number of volunteer hours exceeded 25,000 with a monetary value estimated by auditors at $480,000.

Casa Cornelia 2015 Donors

$100,000 +

- Price Philanthropies
- Society of the Holy Child Jesus, U.S. Province
- State Bar of California
- Vera Institute of Justice

$10,000 +

- Bravo Foundation
- Terrence & Barbara Caster
- Center for Community Solutions
- Julie & Thomas Condon
- Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters
- Dalebrook Fund
- Department of Justice – Office of Victims of Crime
- Farrell Family Foundation
- Hand to Hand Fund
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- justice AmeriCorps
- Old Mission Rotary Art Pratt Foundation
- Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities
- San Diego County Bar Foundation
- Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Sisters of Charity of Nazareth
- Sisters of St. Joseph Healthcare Foundation
- St. Augustine Foundation
- United Methodist Committee on Refugees
- United Nations
- Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture
- Weingart Foundation

$2,500 - $9,999

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- Caster Family Foundation
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- Christie’s Place
- Laura Coats & Thom Shulz
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- Thomas & Margaret Healey
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- California Western School of Law
- Margie Carroll
- Hector & Ariana Chavez-Rochin
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- Molly Gavin
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- Rodrigo Guevara
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- Higgs Fletcher & Mack LLP
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- Karla Kraus
- Philip & Madeline Lacovara
- Law Offices of Francisco Javier Aldana
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- George Longstreth
- Mary McCrann
- Mayfield Junior School of the Holy Child Jesus
- William F. O’Meara
- Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters
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- AFT Guild, Local 1931
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- Thomas F. Bumol
- Carol Carvajal
- Manuel Cisneros
- Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement
- James D. Crosby
- Charles H. Dick, Jr. Peter Farrell
- Khahn Glatzel
- Daniel Gonzalez
- Joan Helland
- Robert Howe
- Jesuit Community of San Diego
- Walter & Rosemary Johnston
- Brooke Killian Kim
- Phillip & Jane Lacovara
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- Monica Mier
- Robert Nadalin
- Anne Otterson Sacred Heart Catholic Church
- William R. Salisbury
- Marilies Schoepflin
- Joseph Secker
- University of San Diego School of Law
- Lilia Velasquez
- Walmart
- Michael Webster

$100 - $499

- Academic Pediatric Association
- Sabel & Ruby Aguiar
- Daniel Aguilar
- Veronica Ahern
- Anna Alexander
- Linda Altes
- Javier A. Angulo
- Jean Baksic
- Juliannne Barber
- Phyllis Barkus
- Barrett Bateman Foundation
- Barbara Bartlett, SHCJ
- Dory Beatrice
- Staci Beavers
And I know, if I'll only be true
To this glorious Quest...
That the world will be better for this...

Don Quixote
Man of La Mancha
## Profit and Loss January through December 2015

### ORDINARY INCOME:

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<th>Source</th>
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**TOTAL INCOME:** $1,983,796

### DIRECT PROGRAM EXPENSES:

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**TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES:** $1,522,379

### ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES:

**TOTAL ORGANIZATION EXPENSES:** $1,849,750

### NET INCOME:

**NET INCOME:** $134,046

### NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR:

**NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR:** $1,057,583

### NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR:

**NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR:** $1,191,629

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Please accept our apologies if there is an error in this list. We would appreciate it if you would notify our Development Office of any necessary changes.

(619) 231-7788 ext. 324