



Children's Law Center fights



so **every child** in DC



can grow up  
with a  
**loving family,**



**good health  
and a quality  
education.**

Children's Law Center works hard to protect our clients' confidentiality.  
The Hernandez family's name has been changed.



Long Family



Nash Family



Hernandez Family

# We Accomplish More

## WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER

You are holding the lives of three children in your hands—children who are close to our hearts. Through this report, you will meet Keymonie, a toddler with a love of karaoke who was recently adopted by her great-aunt. You can read about Aiden, a boy who had terrifying asthma attacks caused by mold his landlord refused to remove. You will also learn about David, who acted out in class because his school wouldn't acknowledge his learning disability.

These three children—with stories of perseverance and resilience—are typical of the children we met and the issues we advocated for this year.

In 2017, Children's Law Center once again helped more than 5,000 children and families tackle seemingly insurmountable problems. We did this by standing shoulder-to-shoulder with people like you. Our remarkable impact is enabled by our pro bono attorneys, donors, advocacy and medical partners, as well as the government officials and judges with whom we work.



Laurie DeWitt/Pure Light Images

This year, many of our major accomplishments were in partnership with others. A few examples:

- Reforming the **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program** and protecting the cash assistance safety net for the city's poorest children by leading a coalition of advocates and providers working with the Mayor and DC Council.
- Winning the **BUILD Health Challenge**, a national program that supports community partnerships to improve health for everyone. Our focus is on eliminating dangerous housing conditions that harm the health of DC children with asthma.
- Moving to a new office that represents our commitment to our 100+ staff, our allies and our clients. Our offices include a playroom for children, meeting spaces for coalitions and technology to expedite our response to the urgent needs of DC kids.

This year has reaffirmed that our strength is our people—all of them. Our clients remain daily inspirations of tenacity. Our partners, like you, allow us to expand our reach and make us stronger. The creative problem-solving skills of our staff and boards and their ability to draw together the right team to find the right solutions is making the District a better place to live for all.

**Judith Sandalow**  
Executive Director

**Theodore D. Segal**  
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# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER 2017 Impact at a Glance

Children's Law Center fights so every child in DC can grow up with a loving family, good health and a quality education.

We reached

**1 of every 9 children**

living in DC's poorest neighborhoods.

Children's Law Center helped

**5,891 children and families**

in 2017.

**3,121**  
Family

We collaborated with pro bono attorneys on

**more than 500 cases** this year.

**1,708**  
Health

**2,256**  
Education

Our policy work delivered real results to protect

**more than 10,000 DC children**

who rely on the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program.

**We trained 1,627**

judges, pediatricians, parents, social workers, youth, pro bono lawyers and caregivers.



# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER'S Systemic Advocacy

Every day, our eight-person policy and communications team draws on the organization's 21 years of experience to improve DC laws, policies and practice. Our advocacy delivers real results that positively impact all DC children.



CLC attorneys Aubrey Edwards-Luce and Damon King at a meeting with advocates.

## Work in Progress

In 2014, as a result of Children's Law Center's (CLC) advocacy, the DC Council unanimously passed special education reform legislation. Unfortunately, some critical reforms remained unfunded and unimplemented—impacting more than 20,000 students in the past three years. In 2017, together with our special education coalition partners, we made significant strides toward securing funding for the reforms and won a commitment from the District to expand early intervention services to infants and toddlers. In 2018, we will work to ensure all the reforms are properly funded and implemented.

Every day we advocate for kids who are disproportionately harmed by school suspensions and expulsions—children of color, children with disabilities and children in foster care. In 2017, we fought to eliminate bias in school discipline and ensure all students have access to the supports they need—work we are continuing in 2018.

In 2016, Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), the government agency responsible for protecting abused and neglected children, announced the restructuring of its foster care program, reducing the number of private agencies that support foster families and children from seven to one. CLC has first-hand experience with the devastating impact a reorganization can have. Just a few years ago, the closure of a few private agencies led to children being moved from stable foster families and even to kids spending the night in CFSA's offices. That's why we are working closely with the government to minimize the number of children whose lives are disrupted and ensure that children's well-being takes priority over bureaucratic convenience.

## 2017 Policy Victories

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) provides children with stability and the necessities most take for granted—such as diapers and medicine for a fever. Through our work with the *TANF is a Lifeline* coalition and generous support from the Bainum Family Foundation, we ensured DC children would not lose this critical resource. Successful TANF reform has already protected more than 10,000 children.

Until last year, child survivors of domestic sex trafficking could only get support if they were charged with a juvenile offense or put into foster care. Because of our advocacy, the law now requires the government to provide services to all children who have been trafficked.

“Children's Law Center is a lead advocate for children living in poverty who are disproportionately impacted by suspensions and expulsions every day—a shared priority of ours to ensure all students have access to the supports they need to stay engaged and learn in the classroom.”

**Councilmember David Grosso**  
Chairperson of the Committee on Education,  
Council of the District of Columbia



Councilmember David Grosso, Children's Law Center staff and other child advocates during the Student Fair Access to School Act of 2017 press conference.

# Golden Shoes, Golden Hearts

## AN ADOPTION DAY STORY

Denise Long's eyes sparkled—just like Keymonie's gold glittering shoes did—as they prepared for Adoption Day 2017.

Keymonie is a happy, active 2-year-old, and, as her Children's Law Center Guardian *ad litem* attorney Jess Sucherman describes her, quite the fashionista. From singing to putting on her great-aunt's makeup and "working" on a toy laptop, she's a bundle of energy. However, she wasn't always such a secure, happy child.

Rewind to two years ago when Keymonie's mom—Ms. Long's niece—was a teenager, running away from home and struggling both academically and with her personal life. Keymonie was placed in foster care as a baby.

That's when Sucherman became Keymonie's lawyer. Her goal was to make sure Keymonie had a stable, loving home as soon as possible.

Ms. Long knew bouncing from home to home and a life with strangers wasn't the childhood she wanted for Keymonie. That's when she decided to foster her grandniece herself, originally setting out to foster Keymonie for only a few months until her niece got back on her feet.

"Ms. Long's story is such a good example of family stepping in," Sucherman remembers. "She truly fell in love with Keymonie."

CLC attorneys like Sucherman work closely with our staff of investigators, social workers and education attorneys



**Keymonie** surrounded by family, friends, WilmerHale attorneys **Renita Khanduja** and **Nana Wilberforce** and CLC attorney **Jess Sucherman**.



Lisa Helfert/Lisa Helfert Photography

to truly understand each child and what's best for them. While the initial goal was to reunite Keymonie with her mom, it became clear that this simply wasn't a safe option for her.

That's when Ms. Long decided to adopt. After spending so much time watching their love grow, Sucherman knew Keymonie and Ms. Long belonged together, so she advocated for the adoption. Through its pro bono program, CLC secured two lawyers from WilmerHale to represent Ms. Long. Sucherman worked closely with them to ensure a successful adoption.

"Jess got the adoption started and was one of our strongest allies," Ms. Long remembers. "Even when I was working with the pro bono attorneys, she would still call to ask how I was doing and Keymonie was doing. She listened when others wouldn't—she understood."

Sucherman never lost sight of her priorities: Keymonie's safety, happiness and well-being.

On a cold November day, frost on the ground glistened under Keymonie's golden shoes—but nothing was as bright as Ms. Long's face. Holding hands with Keymonie, they headed into the courthouse to sign papers making official what they already knew—they are a forever family.

# Healthy Together

## OUR MEDICAL-LEGAL PARTNERSHIP

Children's Law Center's (CLC) medical-legal partnership removes non-medical barriers to children's health and well-being—barriers such as poor housing conditions and lack of appropriate special education. Children's Law Center attorneys work from offices located inside clinics across DC, adding a lawyer to the health care team. The program's fully integrated reach expanded to two new locations in 2017. Our team members work in Children's National Health System, Mary's Center and Unity Health Care centers in Wards 1, 5, 7 and 8—and positively impacted more than 1,000 DC children in 2017.

### BUILD Health

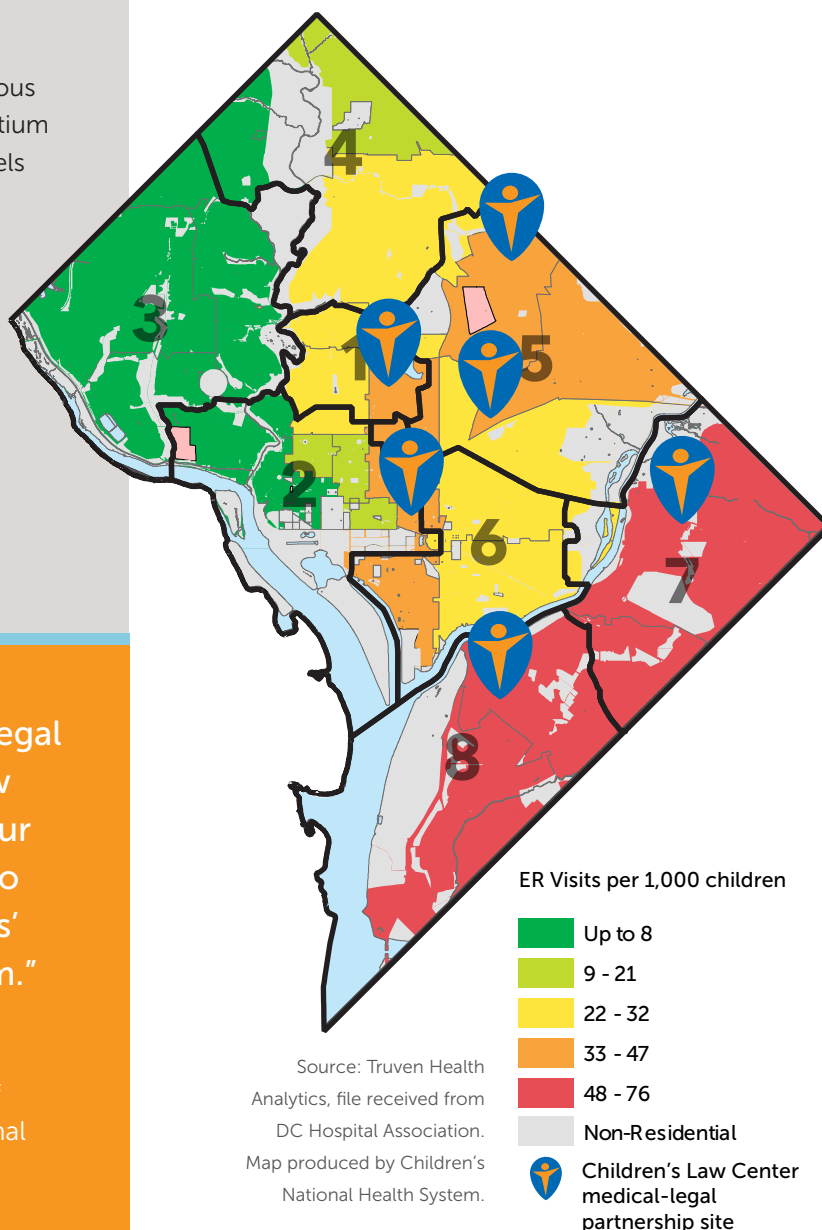
In 2017, Children's Law Center received a prestigious grant from the BUILD Health Challenge, a consortium of national funders that is working to create models of multi-sector, community-driven partnerships to reduce health disparities caused by social inequity. Children's Law Center is collaborating with the Department of Health and IMPACT DC (Children's National Health System's asthma program) to improve asthma outcomes for DC's poorest children.

“ Our groundbreaking medical-legal partnership with Children's Law Center has become a core part of our daily operations and empowers us to solve the root causes of our patients' health issues outside the exam room.”

#### Dr. Stephen Teach

Chair, Department of Pediatrics and Director of IMPACT DC Asthma Program, Children's National Health System

### Asthma-Related Emergency Room Visits by DC Children





# More than Mold

## THE MATTHEWS FAMILY'S FIGHT FOR A HEALTHY HOME



The pleas went unanswered. Sisson and Healthy Together, CLC's medical-legal partnership program, were the solution.

Healthy Together removes non-medical barriers—ones like poor housing conditions and lack of appropriate special education measures—to children's health and well-being. Attorneys like Sisson are embedded in clinics and hospitals across DC, expanding health care for low-income families to include legal assistance.

Sisson represented Ms. Matthews as she sued for repairs—repairs that were critical to the family's health and safety.

Source: Storyblocks

Four-year-old Aiden wakes up night after night in a panic. He feels like there's a truck parked on his tiny chest. He wheezes, coughs, his throat hurts and he can't breathe. Aiden is having an asthma attack, and his landlord doesn't care.

When Children's Law Center (CLC) met them, Ms. Matthews and her two young children were living in an apartment reeking of mold and infested with rats and mice. The landlord refused to fix these issues. These living conditions exasperated Aiden's asthma.

Because there is a Children's Law Center lawyer embedded in Children's Health Center – Anacostia, Aiden's doctor referred Ms. Matthews on site. That's how attorney Diana Sisson began her advocacy for the family of three.

"Ms. Matthews was a relentless advocate for her family," Sisson said. "She sent the landlord photographs of the damaged apartment, made many phone calls pleading for repairs and even requested an inspection from DCRA, all in the hopes that her landlord would fix the root causes of Aiden's health issues."

"Before Diana came into the picture, the landlord and the agency didn't even pretend they cared," Ms. Matthews said. "I even shared a letter from the doctor saying Aiden couldn't live in these conditions. He missed probably half the school year because he was sick. Nothing happened until Children's Law Center became involved."

Through Ms. Matthews' hard work and Sisson's advocacy, the family won the case.

The court ordered the landlord to make the repairs. Now, the Matthews family lives in a mold-free apartment. They no longer fear coming across rats and mice daily. The holes in the wall are fixed, as are the carpets.

Most importantly, while Aiden still has the occasional flare up, he feels much better. The truck parked on his chest is gone and he can go to school again.

Children's Law Center works hard to protect our clients' confidentiality. Aiden's name and image have been changed. All other details are true.

# 2017 Pro Bono Partners

Children's Law Center partners with hundreds of attorneys from the District's top law firms and corporations, as well as with lawyers from government agencies and solo practice—extending high-quality legal advocacy to more District children and families. Our pro bono program provides world-class mentorship, training and materials so attorneys can be successful in their legal advocacy. In addition to gaining valuable professional skills, our pro bono partners are deeply touched by their experience with us—because our cases are life-changing.

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“Children's Law Center provides high-quality services to the children of DC and multiplies its impact through relationships with law firms, corporations and government agencies. We are proud to be part of this extensive pro bono network that works to change children's lives.”

**Tamika Tremaglio**  
Greater Washington Managing  
Principal, Deloitte

# The Education David Deserves

## THE ZANDERS FAMILY'S FIGHT FOR LEARNING

Imagine sitting in a classroom day after day, month after month, struggling to catch up. You are behind, frustrated and don't know what's going on. This was 15-year-old David's reality for years.

Like more than 12,000 DC children, David has special needs—needs his school ignored.

"I knew an individualized education program (IEP) would help David," his mom Keltisha Zanders remembers. "All I wanted was for David to be in an environment where he could truly learn. Instead, his school was throwing him out of the classroom every chance they got."

Though Ms. Zanders requested an IEP multiple times, school officials failed to provide one. In the meantime, David was suffering at school, being suspended and falling behind.

That's why Children's Law Center (CLC) and pro bono lawyers at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP joined the team—David's team.

CLC mentors, including Healthy Together program director Tracy Goodman, worked closely with Paul, Weiss pro bono lawyers to help David.

Together, the team refused to accept anything short of the right result. They initially helped get David an IEP and the necessary evaluations. When the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) failed to implement any of the educational services outlined in his IEP, the team fought to make sure DCPS complied. From securing counseling, extra hours in the classroom and individualized instruction to contesting unfair suspensions, they never gave up on David's right to learn.



Source: Storyblocks

"Tracy was a great guide and was there for our team every step of the way," Paul, Weiss associate Sarah Ripa says, reflecting on her work on the case. "We consulted with her about each strategy and every new development. We couldn't have done it without her."

The team finally achieved its biggest victory for the Zanders family—securing an order requiring DCPS to fund David's placement in a full-time therapeutic school that truly meets his needs.

David now attends class regularly, truly learning for the first time.

"David is doing great now," Ms. Zanders shares. "He hasn't been suspended since Paul, Weiss got him the services he needed. I'm no longer getting calls from the school every day. He's not getting kicked out of class. He's getting the education he deserves."

Children's Law Center works hard to protect our clients' confidentiality. David's image has been changed. All other details are true.

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Special thanks to Alexis DeBernardis (Crowell & Moring LLP), Shira M. Helstrom (Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP), Maureen C. Hughes (Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP) and Nikki McArthur (Jones Day) for their assistance with the advisory board this year.



# 2017 Champions for Children

ACCOMPLISH MORE THAN EVER TOGETHER!

The Champions for Children campaign is organized by our advisory board to promote critical annual support that directly helps children and families. This year \$1.1 million was raised from firms, corporate connections, associates, partners and staff—all to make sure that vulnerable kids have legal advocates in their corner. DC's children are the real winners, but our 2017 competition was led by:



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**Dan Masur**

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Equal Justice Works fellows **Mackenzie Becker** (left), sponsored by Greenberg Traurig LLP and Steptoe & Johnson LLP, advocates for LGBTQ foster youth and **Diana Sisson** (right), sponsored by The Morrison & Foerster Foundation, works with homeless youth.

Pete Duvall/Anything Photo

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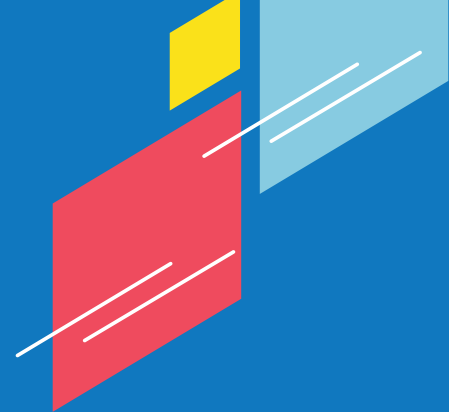
“For nearly two decades, we’ve had a rotation for Covington lawyers and paralegals to work with Children’s Law Center because it allows us to contribute to the outstanding legal service the organization provides to Washington’s children and families.”

**Timothy C. Hester**  
Partner, Covington & Burling LLP



**Jazzirelle Sepulveda** (left) and **Daniel Arevalo** (right), Covington’s loaned associate and paralegal.

Laura Meyer/Laura D. Meyer Photography



“ No group is more deeply embedded in the work of standing up for kids in DC than Children’s Law Center.”

Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT)

Senator Chris Murphy and Catherine Holahan accepting our Distinguished Child Advocate Award at this year’s Helping Children Soar Benefit.

Laurie DeWitt/Pure Light Images

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Thank you to the 2017 members of our Kite Club, Children's Law Center's most generous individual and family foundation donors, who give \$1,500 or more each year to support our work with DC's most vulnerable children.

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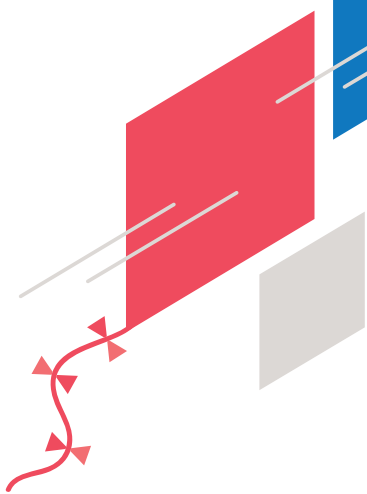
Gerald Boyd, Jr.

 When I heard about CLC's recent work on behalf of a child who was being bullied repeatedly by her classmates, I was reminded how important our work is in kids' lives—not just CLC's advocacy for individual children, but its work to address the ways in which the system can fail them."

**Allison L. Alexander**

Vice President and Chief Corporate Counsel,  
Clark Enterprises, Inc.





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Judith Sandalow and Judge Robert Leon Wilkins during this year's Thought Leadership Series book event discussion.

Stephen Voss/Stephen Voss Photography

“ Building healthy communities requires knowing and honoring diverse facets of our history. For the children of DC, that means understanding the important history and contributions of African Americans that are the foundation of our own community.”

**The Honorable Robert Leon Wilkins**

United States Circuit Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit

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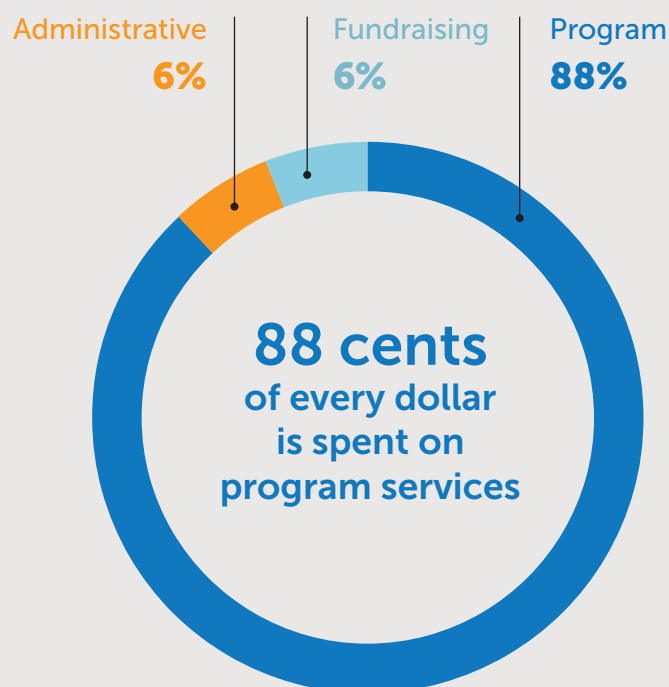
OCTOBER 1, 2016—SEPTEMBER 30, 2017

## Revenue and Support

DC Court Contractual Service	\$6,579,812
Grants	\$1,435,424
Contributions	\$1,956,273
Donated Goods & Services	\$364,830
Other Income	\$48,806
<b>TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT</b>	<b>\$10,385,145</b>

## Expenses

Total Legal Programs	\$8,767,870
General and Administrative	\$636,444
Fundraising	\$604,132
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$10,008,446</b>





Seventy members of Children's Law Center's 104 person team gather after a staff meeting (January 2018).

Pete Duvall/Anything Photo



501 3rd Street, NW, 8th Floor  
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