Transformative Legal Services

Our mission is to provide transformative legal services that enable diverse communities in East Palo Alto and beyond to achieve a secure and thriving future.

Our goal is to support individuals and communities in effecting significant, positive changes. Our practice areas include immigration, housing, and economic advancement.

A Visit from Reverend Jesse Jackson Jr.

Our year began with special visit from the Reverend Jesse Jackson Jr. who spent a day in East Palo Alto meeting with community members and stakeholders. In the evening, he made introductory remarks to a packed auditorium at Stanford University for a panel discussion focusing on the housing crisis and issues of equitable development. The Reverend’s transcendent words aptly reflect our call to service:

“You don’t drown because the water’s deep. You drown because you stop kicking...We cannot stop kicking.”

We are inspired everyday by the strength, courage and hope that we see in our community.

Ilyce Shugall, Esq.
Directing Attorney, Immigration
Ilyce was named a Woman of Influence by the Silicon Valley Business Journal. She was also appointed to the California State Bar’s Immigration and Nationality Law Advisory Commission.

Jason Tarricone, Esq.
Directing Attorney, Housing and Economic Advancement
Jason was selected by the Silicon Valley Business Journal for its 40 Under 40 list with other Silicon Valley movers and shakers. Jason was also recognized as a Rising Star by Super Lawyers magazine.
“[T]here are still many families in the Peninsula being evicted. Help your community... spread the word.”

-Gabriel Banuelos

In most Bay Area communities, families have few options when their monthly rents are suddenly increased hundreds or thousands of dollars, or when entire buildings of families are cleared out. Communities are being destabilized as speculators look to cash in on a heated housing market by evicting families and doubling or tripling rents.

“Everyone in the building is like family,” said 14-year-old Gabriel Banuelos whose family was forced out of their home in Redwood City, in which they have lived for over 10 years. The entire complex of residents, which included dozens of children, was ordered to leave in 60 days. Gabriel organized his neighbors and joined forces with our housing program and legal aid attorneys to push back. As a result of their collective advocacy, the families in Gabriel’s building will receive financial relocation assistance, three additional months to move during which they will not pay rent, and an immediate return of their security deposits.

In addition to fighting for Gabriel and other residents, we are advocating for much-needed policy change throughout San Mateo County to protect families and stabilize communities.
As a young adult, James was convicted of a minor, alcohol-related crime. At the time, James was going through the pain of seeing his single mother battle cancer, a fight she later lost. James now has two daughters to take care of and felt that this conviction, which occurred during a difficult period in his life, was holding him back from getting a job and supporting his family.

People like James, many with minor offenses dating back many years, have a harder time getting a job, getting loans, furthering their education or buying a car. These limitations greatly decrease their chances of becoming economically self-sufficient and having successful futures.

Through an innovative public-private partnership between Community Legal Services, DLA Piper LLP, Hewlett Packard Enterprise and the San Mateo Private Defender Panel, we are now able to help James and others like him file their record dismissal petitions. Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers, adults who could not get help because of inadequate resources or lack of awareness are now able to transform their lives through quality legal assistance.

“Helping these clients... is the small way I help bridge the access to justice gap and is one of the most rewarding parts of my practice.”
- Chris Tirrell, Hewlett Packard Enterprise
“Little by little, we have been learning not to be so fearful anymore. We are now a little more free.”

-Immigration Client

At the age of 16, Enrique fled his home country, El Salvador. He left on his own after gangs shot at him and threatened to burn him alive. Many children, like Enrique, have travelled thousands of miles on their own, fleeing violence and persecution and seeking safe haven in America.

Enrique was caught by U.S. Border Patrol and detained for almost a month before being released to live with his aunt in East Palo Alto. We recruited a pro bono attorney at Kobre & Kim LLP to help Enrique. He was recently granted asylum and is now building a new life here, no longer fearful of being killed.

This past year, our agency served as the clearinghouse for over 600 immigrants in our region, including more than 100 unaccompanied children like Enrique, whose deportation cases have been fast-tracked by the federal government. Every Wednesday, our immigration attorneys, along with volunteers, appear at the San Francisco Immigration Court, offering legal consultations to children and families and appearing as “friends of the court.”
Statement of Financial Position as of June 30, 2015

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<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certificates of deposit</td>
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<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
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<td>Property and equipment, net</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deposits</td>
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<td><strong>Total assets</strong></td>
<td>$2,123,911</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Liabilities and Net Assets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable &amp; accrued expenses</td>
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<td>Accrued interest</td>
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<td>Unrestricted net assets</td>
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<td>Temporarily restricted net assets</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total assets</strong></td>
<td>$2,123,911</td>
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Revenue Growth 2013 - 2015

- FY 2013: $1,179,221
- FY 2014: $1,430,559
- FY 2015: $2,064,035

Revenue
- Special Events
- Contributions
- Attorney's Fees
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Expenses
- General / Administrative
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- Programs

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