2013 COMMUNITY REPORT

CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER
OF MINNESOTA

INFORM
NAVIGATE
EMPOWER

From the Board

Thank you! Because of friends like you, Children's Law Center of Minnesota (CLC) continued to provide hundreds of at-risk youth with trustworthy, high quality legal representation in 2013.

There were some significant changes at CLC during the year, but excellent legal representation and advocacy for abused and neglected youth remained constant.

After a remarkable four-year tenure, Linda Foreman retired from her position as Executive Director in 2013. Linda's energy and leadership elevated CLC as an organization in the legal and child welfare communities and helped CLC increase its efficacy and impact. We were pleased to welcome Lilia Panteleeva as CLC's new Executive Director in July. Lilia came to CLC from Thomson Reuters, where she was the Director of Business Operations in the Governance, Risk and Compliance division. In addition to her outstanding relationship and business management skills, she brings a passionate commitment to helping foster care youth.

Every day CLC's volunteer attorneys see firsthand how important it is to give youth in the child welfare system a voice and a sense of empowerment. Having experienced profound trauma, they are especially vulnerable and need strong advocates to ensure that they are getting essential services and support so they can overcome their history and move forward.

We would especially like to thank our new donors and those who have increased their contributions from prior years. Because of your generosity, we will continue to help young people navigate child welfare system and find ways to make the system work better for them.

Sincerely,

David Potter
2013 President
CLC Board of Directors

About the Children's Law Center of Minnesota

Each year, Children's Law Center of Minnesota (CLC) provides hundreds of abused and neglected youth with trustworthy, high quality legal representation, helping them navigate the child welfare and foster care systems. With a dedicated corps of 300 volunteer pro bono attorneys, we help improve and stabilize the lives of foster care youth—kids who might otherwise be at serious risk of homelessness, school failure, substance abuse, incarceration or a lifetime of dependence on public assistance.

Our mission is to promote the rights and interests of Minnesota's children in the judicial, child welfare, health care, and education systems.

Our vision is that foster care youth will have:

- straightforward and immediate access to effective services
- the support they need to overcome trauma and make a smooth transition to adulthood
- meaningful connections with trustworthy adults
- a sense of empowerment and control over their own futures
- stability, hope, and opportunity

Note from Lilia

CLC is able to offer free-of-cost representation to Minnesota children in need only because of the support of wonderful friends and volunteers. Not only are we backed by a dedicated team of pro bono attorneys, but also a host of other volunteers and interns who support our mission in so many different ways. I am proud to join this dedicated group of individuals committed to standing up for the rights of foster care and at-risk youth.

With the support of our community, CLC has a vital role in the lives of so many children who would otherwise have no say in significant decisions that will shape the rest of their lives. I am very excited and honored to lead the work of such an extraordinary organization and am pleased to report on our 2013 activities and results.

The Year in Numbers

- Provided direct legal representation to 532 clients to ensure their basic needs are met and that they have a permanency plan.
- Recruited and trained 109 new volunteer lawyers to represent CLC's clients.
- Authored and provided five *Practice Points* to volunteers and other youth service workers. Topics included the Indian Child Welfare Act, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, protective supervision, ensuring educational stability and latest developments in Minnesota's Child Welfare system related to trauma-informed services.
- Distributed over 1,000 "Know Your Rights" materials to foster care youth via youth-serving professionals.
- Reached more than 700 attorneys, law students, teachers, social workers, healthcare providers, guardians ad litem and other child welfare stakeholders through training sessions on permanency practices, trauma-informed services, healthcare needs of foster care youth and collateral consequences of charging school-based conduct as delinquency.

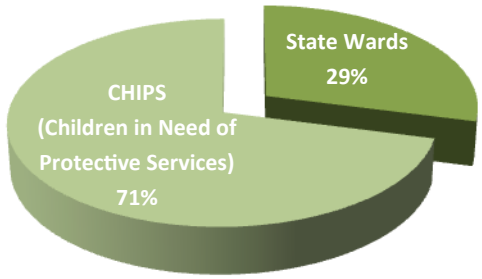
My lawyer made me feel like I had a voice and what I wanted mattered to someone.

CLC Client

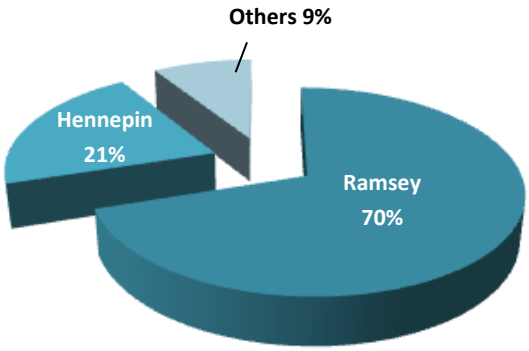
Direct Representation

CLC provided free legal services to 532 Minnesota foster care youth in 2013. These charts reflect demographic details for youth served during the year.

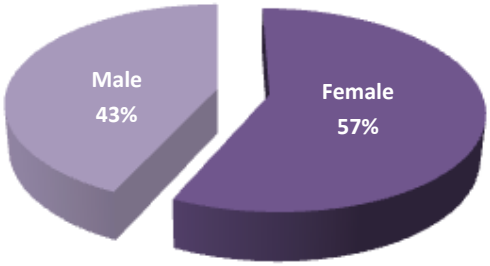
CASE STATUS



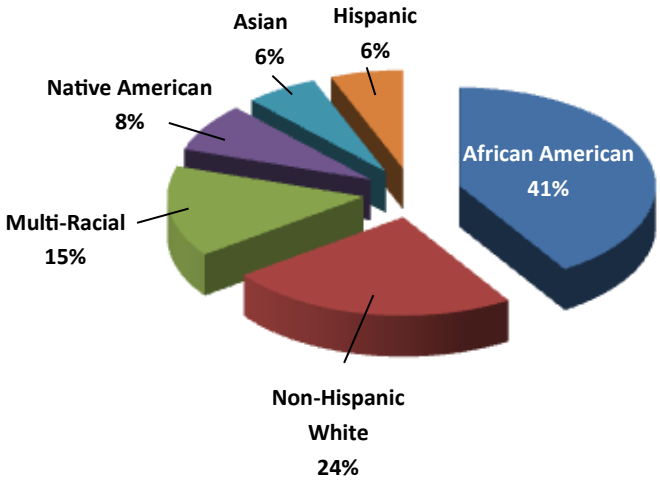
CASES BY COUNTY



GENDER



RACE

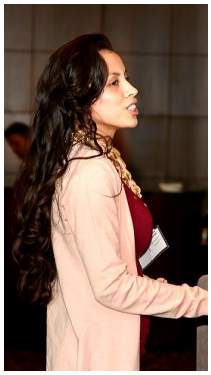


Kids in foster care have spent most of their lives having other people make decisions for them. Now they have an opportunity to play a role in making the decisions that affect them.

CLC Volunteer Attorney

Highlights

We are proud of our amazing staff social worker, Weida Allen, who received the 2013 Outstanding Service Advocacy Award from the Minnesota Justice Foundation for her commitment to advocacy for disadvantaged clients. Weida has been a staff social worker with CLC since 2002, has worked on over 2,000 CLC cases and has had an extraordinary impact on the lives of many of our clients.



One of our former clients—now about to enter law school—shared her moving story with the attendees of CLC's 2013 Annual Celebration & Benefit about her experience in the foster care system. She spoke of the dedication of the CLC attorney (a 3M volunteer) who represented her throughout some of her most difficult teenage years: *"With my lawyer, I could speak and have my needs heard, to make a situation better. Because my lawyer stuck around, I felt I could talk with her. I could tell her everything. She didn't judge me…With my lawyer checking in on me, it made me want to do better, to keep going to school, to keep coming home; it made me want to do better, because my lawyer cared."*

In 2013, CLC represented 13 youth who were seniors in high school. **All** of them graduated.

Due to legislative changes that took effect in August of 2010, foster youth can now stay in foster care up until age 21. By the end of 2013, CLC had served 44 clients enrolled in the 18-21 extended foster care program who aged out of the foster care system in 2013. Of those 44:

- 41 have finished high school (93%)
- 27 have gone on to post-secondary education (61%)
- 28 are employed (64%)

Compare this to national statistics on children who age out of foster care: only 46% of youth in foster care graduate from high school by the time they exit care, 10% go on to post-secondary education and 51% are employed when they age out of foster care.

Children's Law Center of Minnesota's

19th Annual Benefit & Celebration - October 2, 2014

Please mark your calendar!

Thank You!

We are grateful to the following generous donors who contributed to CLC in 2013:

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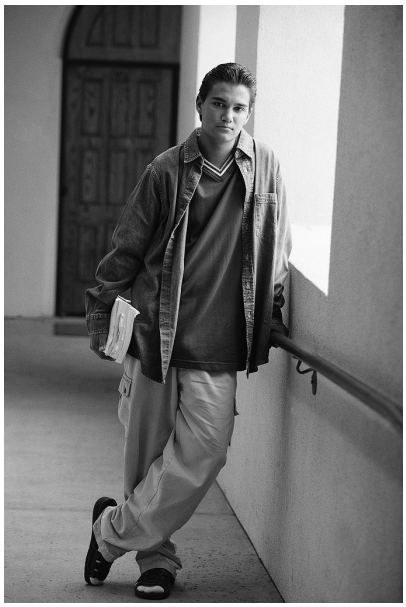
My lawyer was the only person in my life who was consistent, who was there.

CLC Client



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I chose CLC because it is an organization that does truly inspiring work… Being an advocate for these children and giving them a voice in what happens to them has been a tremendously fulfilling experience. And, the attorneys and staff at CLC are absolutely fantastic to work with!

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Thank you also to the many dedicated volunteers who donate their time and expertise to help make children's voices heard.

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