

**Children's
Law Center
of Minnesota**



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2015 Report to the Community

INFORM

NAVIGATE

EMPOWER

FROM THE BOARD

Thank you friends! Due to your incredible generosity, Children's Law Center of Minnesota (CLC) continued to provide high quality zealous advocacy for hundreds of vulnerable children within the child protection system throughout the year.

2015 witnessed tremendous changes to the child protection system across Minnesota. Due in large part to recent statutory changes made in response to the recommendations of Governor Dayton's 2015 Task Force on Protection of Children, along with increased staffing at the counties, the number of children entering the child protection system increased dramatically over previous years. This has created a significantly greater demand for CLC services.

Thanks to the tremendous generosity of our donors and pro bono volunteers, along with the hard work and commitment of staff, CLC was successfully able to rise to this challenge and represented the largest number of clients over a 1-year period in program history (663)—double the number of clients served in 2010.

In 2015, the CLC Board of Directors also engaged in the strategic planning process, establishing a plan that creates a near-term sustainable model for the program. Under this plan, CLC will focus on direct legal representation for youth in foster care within the metro area. While we will continue working with youth outside the metro area, CLC will not actively pursue expansion into greater Minnesota until we have reached sufficient capacity to keep up with the increased demand for our services in the metro area. To achieve this capacity, CLC will attempt to secure new sources of funding from the counties/state. At the same time, we will continue to work with the Legislative Task Force on Protection of Children to improve the laws and policies of Minnesota's child protection system, which will have a statewide effect.

We are only able to meet this enormous demand and provide these essential services to at-risk vulnerable youth because of the amazing support from our exceptionally dedicated volunteers and charitable law firms, businesses, foundations, and individuals who understand the importance of legal representation for abused and/or neglected youth within the child protection system, and the major positive impact it has on youth in the present and throughout the rest of their lives.

Sincerely,

Thad Johnson
2015 President
CLC Board of Directors



ABOUT THE CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER OF MINNESOTA

Each year, 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 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.

FROM THE DIRECTOR



CLC is pleased to report on program activities, highlights and results over another successful year delivering well-informed, professional representation and advocacy for vulnerable youth within the child protection system.

In 2015, we experienced an increased demand for our services at rates never before seen at CLC. While in many ways this stems from landmark changes to the child protection system, it is also a testament to the extraordinary value of CLC services, recognized and appreciated by people entrenched within the system, including county attorneys, judges, guardians ad litem, social workers and most importantly, our clients.

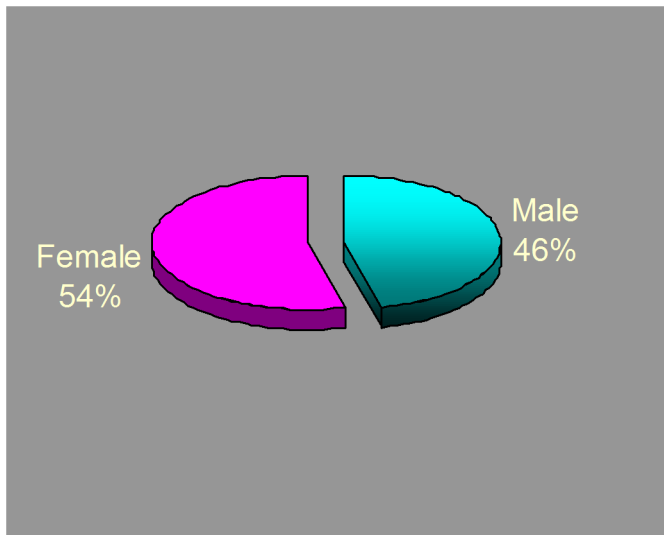
We are so grateful for the support of our many friends enabling us to meet this increased demand and continue providing these vital services for vulnerable youth, including our dedicated team of pro bono attorneys, donors, board members, staff, and a host of other volunteers and interns who support our mission in so many ways. Many thanks to you all!

Sincerely,

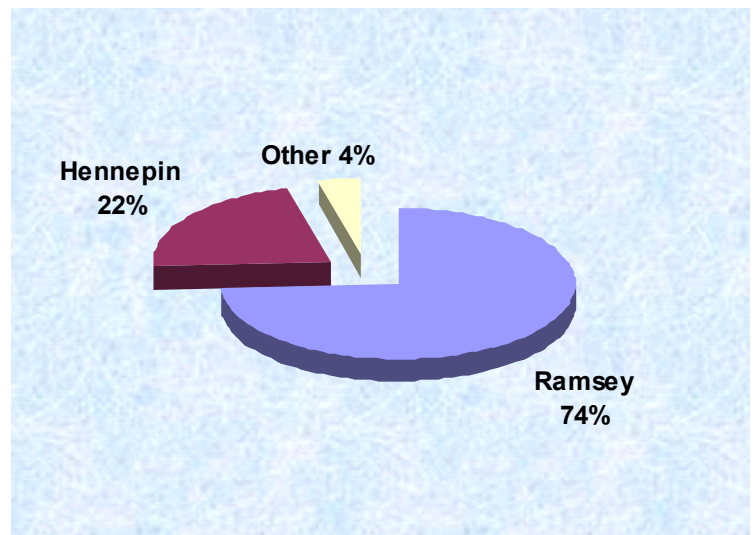
Lilia Panteleeva, Executive Director

2015 Direct Representation Statistics

Cases by Gender:



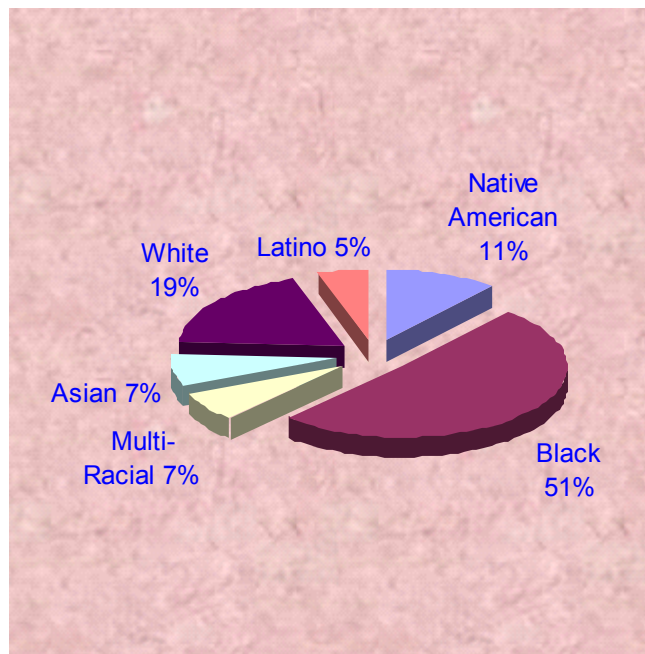
Cases by County:



Demographics:

It was a good feeling to know that I had someone who was willing to listen to what I wanted.

-CLC Client



Having a CLC attorney helped me have a voice.

-CLC Client



THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

- ◇ Provided direct legal representation to 663 youth.
- ◇ The youth that CLC represented in 2015 included 51 high school seniors, 34 of whom graduated during the year (67 percent). 70 percent of the graduates are enrolled in post-secondary programs and 70 percent are employed. (Compare to national averages for foster care children exiting care: 31 percent have graduated high school, 10 percent have enrolled in post-secondary programs and 47 percent are employed).
- ◇ Recruited and trained 61 new volunteer lawyers to represent CLC's clients bringing the active volunteer attorney roster to 291.
- ◇ Reached more than 900 attorneys, teachers, law students, legislators, social workers and others through outreach and training sessions on topics including the importance of legal representation for foster care youth, laws regarding children aging out of foster care, collateral consequences of juvenile delinquency records, breaking the cycle of poverty, and the school to prison pipeline.

It is so important for these kids to have access to legal services, because if they don't, their voices aren't heard.

-CLC Volunteer Attorney



THANK YOU!

We are grateful to the following generous donors who contributed to CLC in 2015

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**Thank you also to the
many dedicated
volunteers who donate
their time and expertise
to help safeguard the
rights of youth and
ensure that their voices
are heard.**

CLC wishes to extend our gratitude and sincere appreciation to the Association of Corporate Council (ACC) - Minnesota Chapter for organizing the fantastic spring 2015 Casino Royale Gala to benefit CLC! Many thanks!!



PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS

CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER OF MINNESOTA

21st ANNUAL BENEFIT AND CELEBRATION

THURSDAY OCTOBER 13th, 2016, 5:00 pm

Windows on Minnesota / IDS Center, Minneapolis

Client success story: DW was a young girl when she was removed from her mother's home. Although she was adopted, she and her brother were later removed from the adoptive home while a younger sibling remained. She then spent much of her high school in an unstable foster home before landing in the home of a loving and stable foster parent her senior year. During all of these transitions, DW's CLC attorney remained the only constant as DW's social worker, guardian ad litem, and foster parent all changed during her time in foster care (in some cases, more than once). From helping DW locate the resources needed to live independently to filing the paperwork necessary to modify DW's birth certificate to remove her adoptive parent's name, CLC worked with DW to make sure her voice was heard. We are now happy to report that after graduating high school, DW is on track to graduate from college with a degree in criminal justice-all while working nearly full time. She has become a self-reliant and resilient young woman through her hard work, determination, and unwavering commitment to a better life. CLC feels very fortunate to have shared in her journey.