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Spotlight: MSW Intern



LEANNE BROTSKY
1st year MSW Student, USC

Leanne works with LACLJ attorneys to provide a health and human services perspective on client interactions. She provides clients linkages to community resources and support for life challenges that may arise during their legal cases.

What do you find most challenging working here?

Seeing our clients struggle to get their basic life needs fulfilled (safe housing, effective transportation, child care, etc.) while they deal with the demands of the legal system.

What has surprised you most about working here?

The dedication of both LACLJ clients and staff. Our clients face a lot of barriers, but they show incredible perseverance and strength. LACLJ staff do challenging and demanding work, but are always happy to put in extra time for clients.

Board President welcomes LACLJ's next leader

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to announce that **Matt Strieker** will be our new Executive Director beginning February 23. The search committee unanimously agreed that Matt, an experienced nonprofit leader and community advocate, was the right choice to lead our incredible team at the Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice (LACLJ). We were all impressed with his commitment to the community LACLJ serves, his vision for our organization, and we also liked his gregarious and upbeat personality!



Matt was previously the Deputy Director of the UCLA School of Law's Williams Institute, the nation's leading research institute on LGBT law and policy. As Deputy Director, he helped double the Institute's budget and endowment and raise the Institute's profile among community leaders, policymakers and the bar. Previously, Matt was a staff attorney at the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), where he represented Latino and immigrant clients in constitutional class action litigation.

Please join me in welcoming Matt to LACLJ. I hope you can all meet him soon at our annual dinner in June, or other upcoming LACLJ events.

Sincerely,
Damian Martinez
LACLJ Board President

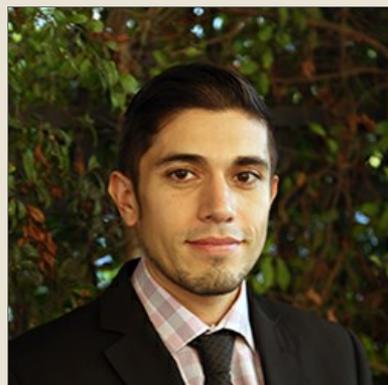
LACLJ helps mother of three find stability for her children

Elisa* came to LACLJ after escaping from an abusive relationship. She had already divorced her abusive husband and obtained custody of her three children, all of whom are diagnosed with autism. However, her ex-husband was continuing to use the legal system to threaten and harass her and their children. Her ex-husband had retained multiple attorneys and filed several motions to take custody away from Elisa. He also resumed his violent behavior, assaulting Elisa while attempting to make contact with the children.

Elisa came to LACLJ through the Shriver initiative, a court-based project that focuses on very high-conflict custody disputes, often involving domestic violence. She was confused about the process and was unaware that she had a court hearing the very next day. LACLJ's lawyers defended Elisa against several motions to change custody and a lengthy custody evaluation. Thanks to the support of LACLJ's attorney Alex Zuniga, Elisa was able to maintain custody of her special needs children and obtain protective orders limiting their father's visitation. Elisa now lives with hope that she and her children are safe from abuse and the stress of a contentious court battle.

**Client's name has been changed for confidentiality.*

New staff members join LACLJ's fight for family safety



What do you wish other people knew about LACLJ?

I wish everyone knew how big an impact LACLJ's work has on our clients' lives. Beyond legal outcomes, the hard work and support of LACLJ staff brings clients reassurance and relief that they often don't find in many other places.

What might someone be surprised to know about you?

I love baseball and most other sports. I was born and raised in the Bay Area, so I have lots of good teams to follow year round (Go A's! Go Niners!).

What's your favorite place in L.A.?

Guisados. If I could eat their tacos for every meal, I would!



New Staff Attorney, Mario Rico, and External Relations and Pro Bono Supervisor, Jenny Farrell.

We are excited to introduce the newest additions to LACLJ's team! In September, we created an **External Relations and Pro Bono Supervisor** position and hired Jenny Farrell. Jenny oversees LACLJ's pro bono program and engages volunteers through donor development. This month, LACLJ was able to hire a new staff attorney, Mario Rico. Mario will join LACLJ's **Access to Justice** team, taking on high-conflict custody cases.

[Click here to get to know LACLJ's newest staff members!](#)

S. Mark Taper Foundation support critical to LACLJ's growth

In December 2014, the S. Mark Taper Foundation awarded \$50,000 in general operating support to the Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice. Support from the S. Mark Taper Foundation allows LACLJ to implement a new evaluation system and build a stronger holistic services model in order to deepen the impact of our programs. The grant will also allow LACLJ to execute a rebranding effort to better communicate our vision to the community. Thanks to the generosity of the S. Mark Taper Foundation, LACLJ can make critical infrastructure investments that strengthen the quality of services to the most vulnerable families in Los Angeles.

Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice

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