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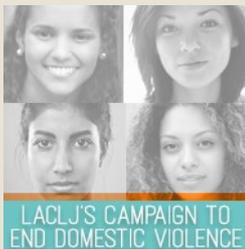
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Shop and Support



Click [here](#) to shop with AmazonSmile and support LACLJ clients and their families.

DVAM Campaign



\$30,000 Raised!

Thank you to all who donated to LACLJ's **Domestic Violence Awareness Month Campaign: NO MORE.** We set out to raise \$20,000 and raised **\$30,000!** Thank you for making the campaign a success!

If you missed the campaign, you can always [donate here!](#)

Attorney Spotlight



Thanksgiving Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. On Thursday, I will join my family for a long weekend during which we'll reconnect and catch up over a traditional holiday meal. I cherish the time together. It means everything to watch my mom read my daughter a book, hear my dad tell her half-true stories, and watch my baby brother acquiesce to her games of dress up. As I watch her revel in the attention, I also see how she stands on the shoulders of all of us.



In today's newsletter, we are sharing the story of Beatrice, who now has the chance this Thanksgiving to wrap her son in the embrace of her own family. Having suffered years of abuse by her son's father, it was not an easy path to this holiday season, and not one that clearly led toward spending Thanksgiving with her son. I'm so thankful that Beatrice found Erika, her LACLJ attorney, who helped her secure sole custody of her child. Hearing Beatrice's story reminded me how high the stakes are for our clients. It's not just a court order. It's where her son will spend the holidays. It's knowing he will be safe and that he will be surrounded by people who love him and will help him thrive. That's what we all want for our children.

I asked Erika what kind of Thanksgiving she thought Beatrice would have. She said it would likely be small – maybe an extended family member or two – but there would be a nice meal and the immediate family would be together. And that's what Beatrice wanted most.

Thank you for all you do to make stories like this one possible.

In gratitude,

Matt

A Home Where Her Child Can Thrive

After leaving a violent relationship with her son's father, Beatrice* came to LACLJ to secure custody of her son. For years, she had suffered physical, emotional and verbal abuse, and now her son's father sought to keep Beatrice from her child.

Since leaving the violent relationship, Beatrice had sought to create more stability and structure for her son. She had found a clean, comfortable home and consistent childcare to provide support while she worked. Despite her efforts to move forward, her son's father continued to fight her, resulting in a contentious custody dispute during which he made several false accusations to the court. Meanwhile, Beatrice feared for her son's safety when he was with his father and was particularly concerned about her son's possible exposure to drugs.

LACLJ Attorney Erika Diaz convinced the court to grant Beatrice sole physical and legal custody of her son and limited the father to supervised visits. As a result, Beatrice can now provide her son the stability he needs to thrive, and she can live more peacefully with the knowledge that she is legally



ERIKA DIAZ
Staff Attorney
Domestic Violence Program

Erika Diaz represents survivors of domestic violence primarily in family law matters (such as custody and visitation, divorce, and paternity).

What is domestic violence?

To me, domestic violence exists in any relationship in which one partner makes the other partner feel that they are anything less than a worthy individual deserving of respect, dignity and choice. The results range from serious emotional trauma to death and serious bodily injury.

What do you find most challenging about representing survivors of domestic violence?

It is difficult to personally witness the negative consequences domestic violence has on families and children.

What do you find most rewarding about your work?

It's rewarding to help clients take their first steps on their path to healing by helping their voices be heard in Court, and to have an awesome group of colleagues and support staff to help me help clients.

What might someone be surprised to know about domestic violence in the context of family law?

Victims of domestic violence, including the children who witness it, are often forced by Courts to have significant contact with the perpetrator of domestic violence.

Share a fun fact about yourself!

I love coloring and watching Justice League cartoons!

protected from her former abuser's attempts to undermine her bond with her child.

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

Community Outreach and Education

LACLJ attorneys train hundreds of community members and other social and legal service providers every year. Over 500 people attended trainings this fall.



Domestic Violence Panel with Sidley Austin LLP: Last month, LACLJ and Sidley Austin LLP hosted a panel in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month entitled "How Attorneys Can Help Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault." Panelists included Rachael Rezabek (Associate at Sidley Austin), Eve Sheedy (Counsel for Domestic Violence Policy at Los Angeles City Attorney's Office), Matt Strieker (Executive Director at LACLJ), Carmen McDonald (Supervising Attorney at LACLJ), Sheetal Chib (Director, Sexual Assault Crisis Services at YWCA of Greater Los Angeles), and Sylvia Gribbell (Human Services Coordinator at LACLJ).



SIJS Training at Public Counsel: LACLJ Staff Attorney Sarah Reisman (pictured above) and Supervising Attorney Carmen McDonald presented at Public Counsel's training, "Seeking One-Parent Special Immigrant Juvenile Findings in Family Court".





Immigration Trainings and Meetings: Michelle Carey, LACLJ Senior Attorney, provided her immigration expertise at trainings across the country this fall. Last month, Michelle was invited to present on SB 674 (a bill recently signed into law by Gov. Brown that requires law enforcement to sign certifications for qualified immigrant victims of violent crimes) at the New York City VAWA Advocates Coalition Meeting. Michelle also participated in the Immigrant Legal Resource Center's (IRLC) training on U Visas and Humanitarian Relief (pictured above) last month. Finally, Michelle moderated LA VAWA Network's annual U Certifier Roundtable, joining groups such as the Los Angeles Police Department, LA District Attorney's Office, the Mexican Consulate and the Salvadoran Consulate to discuss new California law, policies and best practices for individuals seeking U Visas.

Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice

1241 S. Soto Street, Suite 102, Los Angeles, CA 90023

Phone (323) 980-3500 // Email: info@lajl.org

