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5th Annual Law Rocks LA



SAVE THE DATE

[Law Rocks Los Angeles](#) will take place **March 18 & 19, 2016** at Whisky a Go Go!

Attorney Spotlight



ARIANNE WANG
Attorney, Teen/LA Program

What unique issues do young people face that may be different from adults?

Young people manage many of the responsibilities of older adults, but without the same level of experience or resources. Everything is relatively new and thus has greater capacity to be formative and/or traumatic. It's hard to know what you don't know, whether it's about relationships, parenting, navigating the courts or other resources, or understanding your rights. They juggle family life and relationships with school, work and peer pressure - all while still growing themselves.

What is challenging about your work?

February is National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

In the United States, one in three teens will be in an abusive or unhealthy relationship. Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month aims to raise awareness and promote efforts to end abuse in teens and young adults' relationships.



Like domestic violence in adult relationships, teen dating violence includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. While dating and domestic violence can happen to anyone, teens are a particularly vulnerable group and are often less likely to report an incident.

Because teens often defer to other people to make decisions or judgments, many young people do not realize that their relationship might have dating violence dynamics.

LACLJ's Teen Legal Advocacy (Teen/LA) Program educates and represents teens and young adults experiencing high-conflict and abusive situations. Our attorneys educate young people about safe, healthy relationships and help them understand their legal rights. By providing them with education and advocacy on a wide range of issues, we empower them to make meaningful changes toward safer relationships and stable lives.

Get to know one of our Teen/LA attorneys in the Attorney Spotlight (left sidebar).

Appeal published after teen client is denied protective order



Rodriguez v. Menjivar legal team pictured from left to right: Kat Ryzewska (Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP), Nancy Lemon (Family Violence Appellate Project), Michael Holecek (Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP), and LACLJ attorneys Arianne Wang, Carmen McDonald and Sarah Reisman.

Beverly is a young mother and a survivor of dating violence. She came to LACLJ through our Teen/LA program when she was 18 with her infant child. The father of her child had inflicted

Sometimes it's challenging to come into a case with a lot of bad facts. My young clients have often done things that the courts would not look kindly on. A lot of my job is not only educating my clients on their rights and options, but also teaching them how to be an adult when it comes to actions that might impact their case.

What is most rewarding about your work at LACLJ?

I like helping people and helping them learn new things. By educating my clients on the court process, their rights and options, and general life tips to improve their case, I am providing something that will hopefully benefit them beyond the court order at hand.

What might someone be surprised to know about Teen/LA?

Many people are surprised at how often dating violence and sexual assault occurs, especially with teens and young adults. We don't want to think about our children experiencing things, or perhaps we believe that we "taught them better," but preventing dating violence and sexual assault is a lot more complicated than that.

Share a fun fact.

I'm also a single parent, so I know how hard it is to juggle all of life with a young child. I guess this is only a "fun fact" if you consider that kids can be pretty cute, and it's always amazing to see them learn new things.

physical and mental abuse on her during their relationship and continued to threaten her after they broke up. Beverly feared for her and her child's safety because of the batterer's controlling behavior, so she sought a permanent restraining order. LACLJ represented her, but the court denied the order, stating that too much time had passed since the last incident of physical abuse and overlooking the impact of mental abuse.

LACLJ believed the court wrongfully denied Beverly a restraining order and garnered support from [Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP](#) and [Family Violence Appellate Project](#) to file an appeal. On the day of oral arguments, the Court of Appeal agreed that the trial court had made a legal error and ordered the court to issue the restraining order.

The Court of Appeal's decision not only validated Beverly's experience as a survivor, but also gave her the peace of mind to move forward and build a safer life for her and her daughter. For other survivors seeking protection through the court, the published opinion clarifies that mental and emotional abuse are not only clearly defined in the Domestic Violence Protection Act, but also often have the most lasting, traumatic impact.

LACLJ joins nationwide fight for Obama's immigration plan

Last month, the United States Supreme Court announced that it would review the Texas initiated lawsuit challenging President Obama's executive immigration initiatives.

The lawsuit particularly challenges President Obama's proposed plan for **Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA)** and expanded **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)**. These initiatives would help keep families together by providing work permits and temporary protection from removal to approximately 5 million immigrants. After Texas and 25 other states filed a lawsuit challenging the executive action, a federal district court in Texas put a hold on DAPA and expanded DACA. The Obama administration appealed the court's ruling but was denied by Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

In support of the appeal and President Obama's plan, LACLJ joined immigrant rights' groups, states, local governments, law enforcement officials, current and former members of Congress, and current and former immigration and homeland security officials to request that the Supreme Court hear the case. Moving forward, the Supreme Court is expected to make a decision on President Obama's executive actions this spring, and LACLJ will sign onto a brief describing the merits of the case.

These Deferred Action initiatives are essential for keeping immigrant families united. LACLJ's Immigration Program represents young people on their DACA petitions, but their parents do not have access to the same security. DAPA would allow parents of American citizens and permanent residents who have been living in our communities for years to safely stay with their children in the United States.

LACLJ welcomes two new attorneys, Melissa and Mariliz!



LACLJ staff attorneys Melissa Viramontes and Mariliz Aquino

LACLJ is excited to welcome two new attorneys to its growing team of advocates! **Melissa Viramontes** joins our Access to Justice Program, where she represents low-income litigants in high-conflict custody cases. Melissa previously volunteered with LACLJ as a law clerk. **Mariliz Aquino** joins LACLJ's Immigration Program. She will represent survivors of interpersonal violence and vulnerable youth on their U Visa, VAWA and DACA petitions.

[Click here](#) to get to know more about Melissa and Mariliz!

Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice
1241 S. Soto Street, Suite 102, Los Angeles, CA 90023
Phone (323) 980-3500 // Email: info@lclj.org

