



Dear LACLJ Supporter,

This month, I would like to take some time to highlight the **incredible work made possible by our dedicated volunteers** who help advance our mission of securing justice for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Whether they are filing an appeal for the first time or completing their hundredth immigration petition, **our volunteers make a meaningful and lasting impact in each survivor's life.**

Last year, our volunteers provided **over 15,000 hours of service** to low-income survivors that LACLJ could not have otherwise been able to afford. As a result of their efforts, LACLJ clients have obtained the legal remedies they are entitled to as survivors, received services in their preferred language, and felt supported by their team of advocates.

To all of our volunteers, thank you for continuously going above and beyond.

Warmly,

Gladys La Torre
Interim Executive Director

With the help of pro bono attorneys, LACLJ helped Susana reverse a court decision that incorrectly denied her request for a domestic violence restraining order.

LACLJ Sets Precedent for CA Survivors



Susana did not hesitate to call the police on the night her husband repeatedly threatened to kill her. **She feared for the emotional well-being of their children** who had already witnessed their dad physically abusing her earlier that night. After filing a police report, Susana obtained a criminal protective order against her husband that prohibited him from contacting Susana and their children.

However, **Susana was denied another key legal protection** (known as a domestic violence restraining order) that offers a wider array of critical protections to survivors, such as child custody and visitation orders. Without this additional legal protection, Susana's husband could cancel the criminal order or take away her children at any time. Susana didn't want to **risk her children's safety** so she came to LACLJ to learn about her rights as a survivor of domestic violence.

With the help of pro bono attorneys from Sidley Austin LLP and Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, LACLJ successfully overturned the Court's decision that originally denied Susana's request for a domestic violence restraining order. The [published decision](#) that resulted from the appeal will **ensure that survivors in California**

can obtain the necessary legal protections to maximize their safety. For Susana, this decision means she can now look forward to rebuilding her life with her children in a **violence-free** home.



Earlier this month, **LACLJ volunteer and Leadership Council member, Martin Kohan** (second from the left in the picture above), was presented with The Legal Aid Association of California's 2019 Award of Merit in recognition for his work on behalf of low-income immigrant survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Immigrant survivors of a crime who cooperate in the prosecution of their abusers can petition for certain types of immigration relief available to them as victims of a crime, such as a U-Visa or VAWA. Martin has drafted such immigration petitions on behalf of hundreds of immigrant survivors, many of whom have already obtained a work permit or green card because of his work.

Martin's commitment to the agency goes beyond client representation. He joined LACLJ's Leadership Council last fall and has leveraged his personal network to raise funds for LACLJ during the agency's annual Domestic Violence Awareness Month Campaign.

Congratulations on this well-deserved honor, Martin!



LACLJ Board Member, **Cristyn Chadwick**, teamed up with other [Alston & Bird LLP](#) employees to create **care packages** for LACLJ clients whose cases are especially long and stressful. Each care package includes water bottles, snacks, a notebook, and other practical items that clients often don't bring to court or attorney appointments because they don't expect to be there for long. Unbeknownst to them, these appointments often take the entire day.

Thank you Alston & Bird LLP for supporting LACLJ clients on their path to obtaining justice!



Last fall, LACLJ received a grant from the Vernon CommUNITY Fund to support the provision of free legal services for survivors residing in the Vernon area.

Vernon CommUNITY Fund

LACLJ is proud to join the City of Vernon in its efforts to contribute to programs that improve the quality of life of Vernon area residents. Throughout its 46-year history, LACLJ has prioritized services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in the communities of East and Southeast LA, including Vernon. **Thank you to the Vernon CommUNITY Fund for its continued support of LACLJ and LACLJ families!**

Volunteer at LACLJ!

Are you an attorney interested in giving back to the L.A. community? If so, consider becoming a pro bono attorney at LACLJ. Our attorneys offer training in family and immigration law matters. Please contact LACLJ's Assistant Director of Development, Marissa Marasigan at marissam@laclj.org for more information.

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