



Dear LACLJ Supporter,

I am so proud of our team for quickly responding to the needs of survivors and thinking innovatively about how we provide services during safer at home orders.

This month's newsletter highlights some of the incredible creativity and advocacy of our staff. As we continue to see the impacts of the pandemic on our communities, we must work differently to ensure survivors have the support and resources they need.

Read more about our impact below and an interview with one of our newest members to the team.

Warmly,

Norayma Cabot
Executive Director

When Jessica feared her asthmatic daughter would get sick from COVID-19, she turned to LACLJ for advice.



LACLJ Helps Mother Navigate Visitation

Jessica* is a survivor of domestic violence and mother of a six year old who has severe asthma. **When COVID-19 began spreading in Los Angeles, she was worried about her daughter's health more than ever.** Jessica's daughter spent every other weekend with her father, and her health often suffered after these visits, even before the pandemic.

Jessica met with her LACLJ legal team and we advised her on her legal options. She requested a note from her daughter's doctor regarding her medical condition and discussed modifying visitation with her daughter's father. **We talked to Jessica about offering alternatives to in-person visitation,** such as daily phone calls and make up visits.

Jessica was able to advocate for her daughter's health and successfully worked on a parenting plan. They agreed to have him video chat and to set up make up time visitation once it is safer to do so again. **Jessica feels a greater sense of relief now that she can keep her daughter safe.**



Advocating for Survivors From Home

As Director of Legal Services, Carmen McDonald not only oversees LACLJ's legal programs, but also collaborates with our community partners to advocate for survivors. Last year, Carmen was appointed to the **LACBA Access to Justice Committee, Judicial Appointments Committee,** and serves as liaison to the **Family Law Executive Committee.**

In response to the pandemic, Carmen has been able to leverage this work to discuss how to keep providing services to survivors. **She successfully advocated for the court to give all domestic violence family law nonprofit providers access to the Justice Portal.** With this system, we will be able to obtain client records directly and more efficiently serve low-income survivors throughout the county.

Carmen also recently **testified at the State Assembly Judiciary Committee** to support free legal services to low-income, undocumented families who are struggling with high conflict custody cases. AB-2271 passed and is being referred to the Committee on Appropriations.



What have you been working on?

A large part of my focus right now is updating the HotDocs DVRO interview program for victim service providers. The program will improve the quality of petitions and declarations for survivors pursuing restraining orders. I've also been setting up our summer law clerk program, recruiting volunteers and managing pro bono engagement with our first ever virtual clinic.

This year, you exceeded expectations and recruited 7 law clerks and 4 pre-law college level volunteers for the summer. How were you able to achieve this given so much uncertainty and the impact of COVID-19?

We were creative and did a lot of outreach so that students and law schools knew we were accepting applicants. Because the program is remote this summer, we've been able to recruit students outside of LA for the first time, including as far as New York and Connecticut.

I also worked closely with our legal team to think outside the box of what our volunteers could help us with. Many will be taking on important research questions to help us build a memo bank about custody issues, court processes, confidentiality and ethics, while others will be supporting our administrative team.

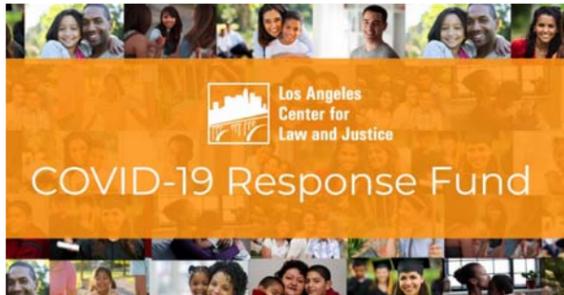
How did you become involved with helping survivors?

I have always been committed to working with the survivor community. In New York, I represented survivors exclusively and before LACLJ, I worked for a start-up helping survivors become financially secure.

Could you share a fun fact about yourself?

I'm a new mom to a beautiful baby boy and I love to cook. I also recently completed my 600 hour training as a pilates instructor.

To inquire about pro bono opportunities, contact Amira at probono@LACLJ.org.



LACLJ has created the [COVID-19 Response Fund](#) to keep our virtual doors open and continue to provide free legal services for low-income survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Help protect the safety and rights of survivors by making a gift today.

Donate

*Actual names and photos are changed to protect the privacy and safety of clients.

5301 Whittier Blvd, Fl 4
Los Angeles, CA 90022



Email not displaying correctly?
[View it in your browser](#)
[Unsubscribe](#)