

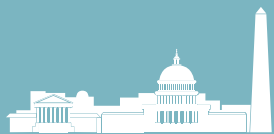


IMPACT REPORT 2018-19

DC VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROJECT

EST. 2008

PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICES FOR
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS
& AT-RISK CHILDREN



A NOTE FROM LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends,

We write this together as the outgoing and the incoming Executive Directors of the DC Volunteer Lawyers Project. We are both excited about this change and the progress that moving from a founder's organization represents. Together with our Board of Directors, we believe this is the perfect time to make this transition given the strength of our organization and the talent and expertise of our entire staff. We thank all of you—our supporters—for helping us to become one of the premier organizations providing pro bono legal services in Washington, DC.

We continue to increase our impact representing domestic violence survivors and at-risk children each year. In addition to accepting over **500** cases for representation, we helped over **500** individuals at our walk-in clinics and at the Domestic Violence Intake Center at DC Superior Court. In 2018, we opened two new Family Legal Clinics, one at the Commons at Stanton Square in Anacostia, where we are co-located with Community of Hope and Martha's Table, and another at Children's Hospital. In Fall 2019, with a two-year grant from the Equal Justice Works Foundation, we opened a new clinic at DC Superior Court to help victims obtain protection orders against their abusers.

All of these new endeavors are helping us to expand our reach and to ensure that anyone who is living in dangerous circumstances has access to our life-changing services. We are looking forward to reaching more members of our community through our new services, and **we are grateful for your continued support during this exciting time!**

With gratitude,

Sara B. Tennen *K B-L M*

Sara Tennen
Executive Director



Karen Barker Marcou
Co-Founder



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Publication date: October 2019



WHO WE ARE

DC VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROJECT, EST. 2008

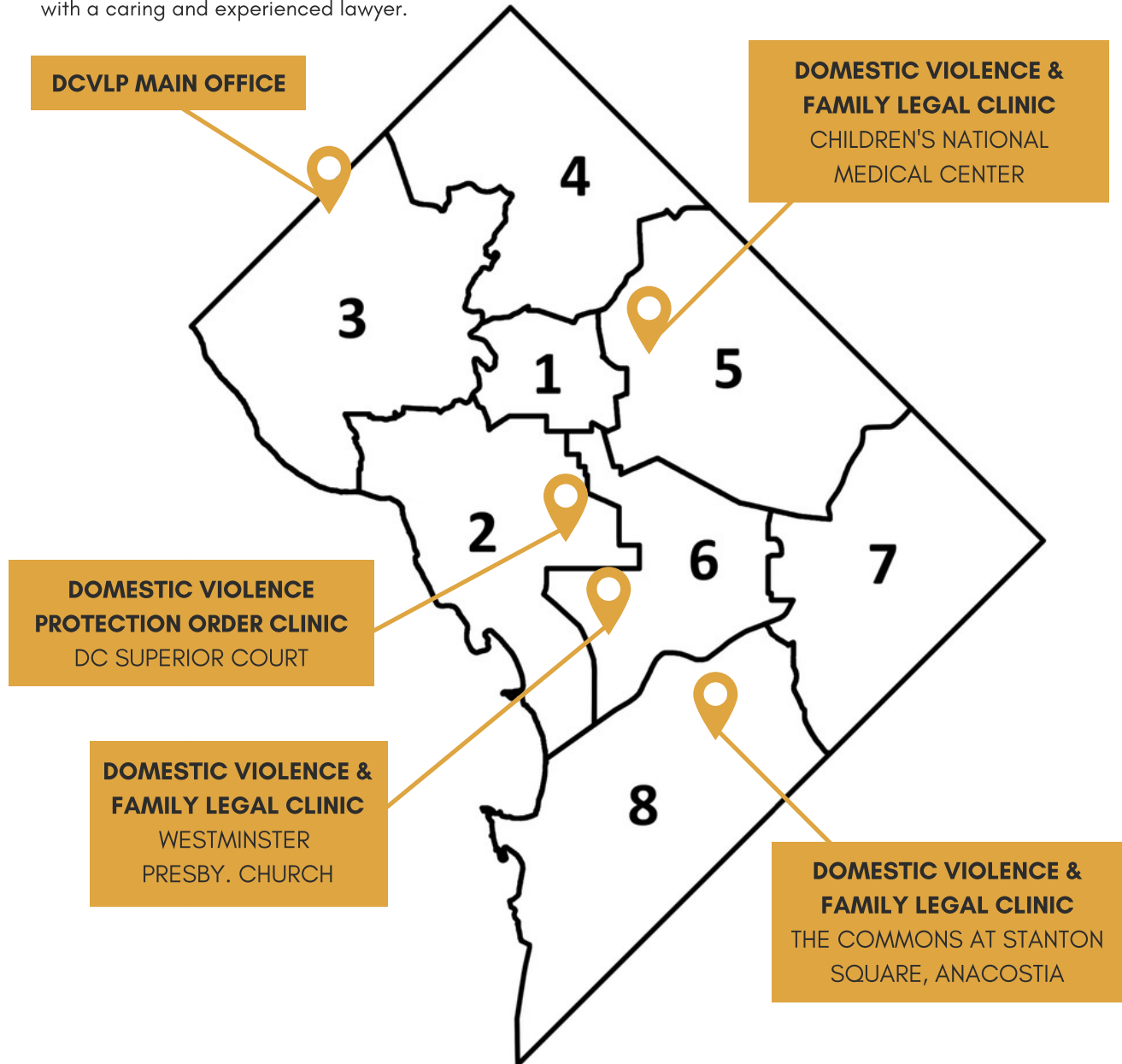
We are passionate about improving the lives of domestic violence survivors and at-risk children. Our small but experienced staff recruit, train and support hundreds of dedicated volunteer attorneys each year to handle emergency protection order, custody and child support cases on behalf of victims, and serve as court-appointed advocates for vulnerable children living with abuse, neglect and other dangerous circumstances.

We operate free walk-in clinics throughout the District so domestic violence victims and caregivers of at-risk children can access free legal services on a wide range of issues, social service referrals, crisis support, and safety planning.

OUR VISION IS A FUTURE WHERE THERE IS NO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ALL VICTIMS AND AT-RISK CHILDREN LIVE IN SAFE AND STABLE HOMES.

Our free, low-barrier, and accessible walk-in clinics are located throughout the District to make it easy for domestic violence victims and caregivers of at-risk children to speak with a caring and experienced lawyer.

DCVLP SERVICE LOCATIONS



FIGHTING FOR SURVIVORS

DCVLP'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM

To help survivors achieve permanent safety, stability, and financial independence, our lawyers represent clients in protection order, custody, child support, divorce and domestic violence-related immigration cases. Our attorneys also advocate for victims at their abusers' criminal hearings.



OUR CLINICS

WORK TO ELIMINATE
BARRIERS TO ACCESS

Located throughout the District, our free walk-in clinics are co-located with partner organizations to provide holistic care to our clients.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & FAMILY LEGAL CLINIC

Weekly clinic at
Community of Hope
in Anacostia

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & FAMILY LEGAL CLINIC

Weekly clinic at a church in
SW DC with DASH &
My Sister's Place

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & FAMILY LEGAL CLINIC

Monthly clinic at
Children's National
Medical Center

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTECTION ORDER CLINIC

Bi-weekly clinic at DC
Superior Court



DCVLP Volunteers Henry Phillips & Erin Morgan of Gibson Dunn at our Clinic in Southwest DC



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM

ALISHA'S STORY

Alisha's boyfriend violently assaulted her twice in front of their young baby. After the second incident, she called the police. Her boyfriend was arrested and Alisha went to court the next day and filed for a Civil Protection Order. With the help of her attorney from DCVLP, Alisha was granted a protection order that included custody of her young son. Seeking to maintain control and power over Alisha, and to retaliate against her for the criminal charges he was facing, her abuser immediately filed in family court for custody of their baby.

Alisha's abuser continued to terrorize her. With limited resources, unstable housing, and no family support, Alisha often felt alone. With the guidance and support of her DCVLP attorney and DCVLP's client advocate, Alisha was able to obtain daycare vouchers for her young son and job training and placement services. DCVLP's client advocate was also able to connect Alisha with a partner organization where she was able to move into long term, supportive housing.

After a heavily contested trial, Alisha was granted permanent sole physical and legal custody of her young son, and her abuser was granted no rights of visitation.

“ **THANK YOU FOR YOUR DESIRE TO HELP ME, YOUR PATIENCE AND YOUR EXPERT CARE, HUGS, LONG HOURS IN AND OUT OF THE COURTROOM!** ”

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



We maintain meaningful partnerships with over 25 other local organizations to provide holistic services to our clients.

Our attorneys and advocates connect adults & children who are living in homes with violence and abuse to our community partners for emotional wellness and physical health services, substance abuse treatment, housing assistance, or other critical needs.



**Children's
National®**
Medical Center



D A S H
DISTRICT ALLIANCE FOR SAFE HOUSING



ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN

DCVLP'S CHILD ADVOCACY PROGRAM

DC Superior Court judges appoint DCVLP volunteer attorneys as *Guardians ad litem* to represent vulnerable children who are being abused or neglected, or are at risk of serious harm from parental substance abuse, mental illness, domestic violence, or incarceration.

In 2018, we began TARGET (Teens At-Risk: Growing, Engaging, and Thriving) to provide specialized support to volunteers working with older children and resources for older child clients.



LETTER FROM DC SUPERIOR COURT

"ON BEHALF OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORK IN SUPPORT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS AND AT-RISK CHILDREN IN THE DISTRICT. . .

. . . The presence of the DCVLP attorneys gives the children a voice in court, and provides the DC Superior Court judges with valuable information as they make life-changing custody and home placement decisions.

Unlike many other jurisdictions throughout the country, DC Superior Court does not have any funding for representing children as Guardians ad Litem in high conflict custody cases. Therefore, our judges rely heavily on the DC Volunteer Lawyers Project to represent the best interests of these vulnerable children."

June 2019

MEET TEAM DCVLP

MANAGEMENT

Sara Tennen, Esq., MSW | *Executive Director*
Jackie Love-Baker, Esq. | *Director of Development*
Rebecca Simpson, Esq. | *Legal Director*
Brian Yourish | *Director of Operations*

SUPPORT STAFF

Lorraine Holmes | *Client Advocate*
Lauren Leavell | *Paralegal & Data Manager*
Laura Taylor | *Dev. & Communications Manager*
Jennifer Watkins | *Vol. & Outreach Coordinator*
Suzy Ziaili | *DV Program Manager*

DCVLP ATTORNEYS

Jennie Berman, Esq. **Cindy Kim, Esq.**
Roxana Cannon Arsht *Managing Attorney*
Law Fellow **Victoria Lynch-Draper, Esq.**
Ashley Carter, Esq. *Managing Attorney*
Equal Justice Works **Lauren Snow, Esq., MSW**
Law Fellow *Staff Attorney*
Linda Kauskay, Esq. **Jen Stillerman, Esq.**
Supervising Attorney *Supervising Attorney*
Richard Kelley, Esq. **Aida Vindell, Esq.**
Supervising Attorney *Supervising Attorney*



Our staff of 18 annually supports a network of 260 volunteers allowing us to help 1,000 domestic violence victims and at-risk children

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

With Shanell King

Tell us a little about yourself:

I am currently an Active duty Coast Guard attorney stationed in Washington, DC. I am the Chief of Defense Services or the lead defense counsel for the Coast Guard. In this position I am responsible for all of the Coast Guard defense counsel, the detailing of all court-martial cases as well as administrative separations for enlisted and officers, and policy surrounding defense services provided to Coast Guard members.

How and why did you first get involved with DCVLP?

I first volunteered with DCVLP because I felt so far removed from the reason I went to law school. As a law student I wanted to help children. I was going to graduate and go into family law practice. As law school continued I moved away from that initial goal. I love what I do, and the freedom I have to assist Coast Guard members, but I never forget about my desire to help children. **DCVLP allows me to fulfill that desire.**



Why do you volunteer?

I volunteer because I can't imagine not giving back in some small way.

What advice can you give to new volunteers?

Enjoy it. Enjoy the families that you meet and the children that you assist. Learn from each encounter and remember that different doesn't mean wrong, it just means different.

83 at-risk children represented

102 family law cases handled

313 protection order cases accepted

315 victims received assistance via our Legal Info Line

570 victims served at our clinics

2018

**BY THE
NUMBERS**

2
0
1
8

VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR



Jennifer Stillerman | Volunteer Of The Year

Caleb Dulis of Ropes & Gray | Law Firm Volunteer Of The Year

Grace Kurland & Brandon Adkins of Cleary Gottlieb | Civil Protection Orders

Isra Bhatti & Emily Apte of King & Spalding | Family Law

Robyn Swanson & Karen Zizmor | Child Advocacy

DCVLP provides everything volunteers need: training, in-court supervision, mentoring, office space, an online resource library, a Client Advocate & a Volunteer Coordinator.

CHANGE A LIFE. BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

HIGH HONORS 100+ HOURS

Magdalena Acevedo	Jordan Howlette
Charrise Alexander	John Huber
Jessie Altman	Gage Javier
Emily Apte	Vetan Kapoor
Adya Baker	Jane Khoury
Sara Bakker	Shanell King
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Isra Bhatti	Michelle Lockard
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Tara Dittamo	Elizabeth Shah
Cynthia Dorsainvil	Victoria Smith
Jim Douglas	Michaela Spero
Caleb Dulis	Jen Stillerman
Amy Engstrom	Ahuva Sunshine
Sara Falk	Robyn Swanson
Amy Fiordalisi	Shannon Taylor
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Judy Gallagher	Jennifer Toth
Sheila Gardner	Dominic Velloze
Laura Griffen	Kristin Whidby
Christopher Hai	Kelly Winship
Andrea Hamilton	Angela Yoo
Dale Harburg	Karen Zizmor

VOLUNTEER HOURS | 2018

HONORS 50+ HOURS

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Argus Backsoky	Mickey Martinez
Rianna Barrett	Shoshana Marvin
Marina Beckhard	Peter Masciola
Stephanie Bergman	Bob Mathis
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	Charlene Whitman

**Since 2008 our volunteers
have donated**

**100,000
HOURS**

worth

\$31.5 million

COST TO OUR CLIENTS: \$0





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DCVLP Executive Director

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“

TO ME, THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT WORK YOU CAN DO: HELP A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVOR AND HER CHILDREN LEAVE AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP AND GET SAFE. AS A PRO BONO ATTORNEY, I CAN MAKE A HUGE IMPACT IN SOMEONE'S LIFE VERY QUICKLY.

”

Blair Decker, DCVLP Volunteer Attorney & Junior Board Member

\$100,000+

DC Office of Victim Services

\$50,000+

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CHAMPION OF JUSTICE

BENEFIT | 2019

"I know what it's like to live in a home where someone has access to guns who shouldn't. I don't want to see somebody live with that fear in their heart. **Nobody should have to live in fear of their life or their safety because of domestic violence.**"

— Congresswoman Debbie Dingell



Advisory Council member Kathleen Buhle Biden with Representative Debbie Dingell, recipient of our Champion of Justice Award

CLEARY GOTTlieb | PRO BONO PARTNER OF 2019



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UNDERWRITER Knock Out Abuse

CHAMPION Pfizer

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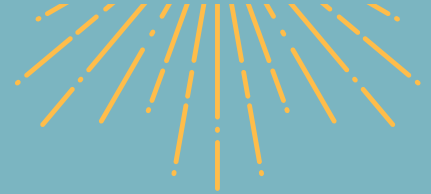
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18 Staff

recruiting, training & supporting volunteer lawyers

snapshot

2018

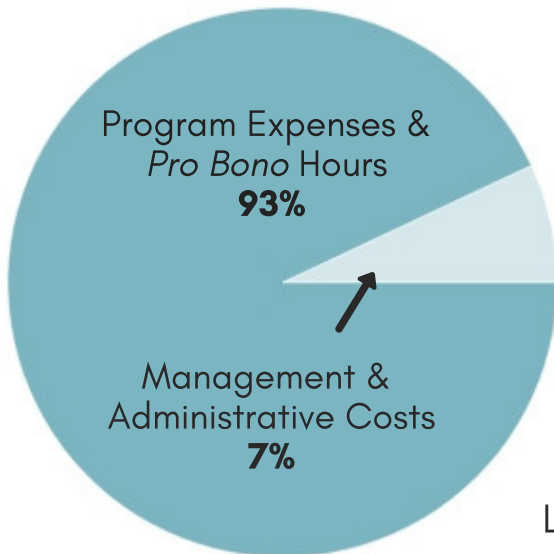


260 Active Volunteers

providing *pro bono* legal services

**1000 Domestic Violence Victims
& At-Risk Children**

escaping violence & establishing safe & stable homes



RESOURCE ALLOCATION

every \$1 donated
becomes \$4 of services

Learn more at www.dcvlp.org/donate/finances

LETTER FROM CO-PRESIDENTS

Dear Friends of DCVLP,

We want to bring you news about some important changes in our organization. We are delighted to announce that Sara Tennen, who has served as Deputy Director for the past year, will become our Executive Director effective **July 1, 2019**. Sara will be replacing co-founder Karen Marcou, who has been an exemplary leader of our organization for the past twelve years. Karen will remain actively engaged with DCVLP as a member of the Board of Directors.

Karen is making this transition after twelve years of leading DCVLP to become one of the premier organizations providing pro bono legal services to survivors of domestic violence and at-risk children in Washington, DC. She and her co-founders recognized that a lack of malpractice insurance and proper training and supervision was an obstacle to many volunteer attorneys, and they created a legal organization that serves as a virtual law firm for attorneys providing these crucial legal services. Under Karen's leadership, DCVLP has helped over **5,000** victims of domestic violence and at-risk children and now has a roster of over **2,500** volunteers. Additionally, the program has grown significantly to include three legal clinics throughout the city where attorneys provide advice to individuals who are considering their legal options to escape difficult circumstances.

Sara Tennen is the perfect successor to carry on the evolution and growth of DCVLP as its new Executive Director. As Deputy Director, Sara has demonstrated that she has all the necessary skills and leadership qualities to lead DCVLP. Sara has extensive experience in the family law and domestic violence community: she has prosecuted sex crimes against children with the Maricopa County Attorney's Office in Arizona, privately practiced family law in Arizona and Maryland, and has worked at DCVLP in a supervisory capacity in each of the organization's practice areas. Further, Sara's stature in DC Family Court ensures that DCVLP will maintain its important position as a critical defender of the rights of victims and children in dire circumstances. We are also grateful for DCVLP's incredibly talented and experienced staff, who will support Sara through this transition and help DCVLP to continue on its trajectory of growth.

The DCVLP Board congratulates Karen and Sara on their accomplishments to date and looks forward to their future contributions to our organization. We also thank you, our many supporters, as we enter this new era at DCVLP. Together we will continue providing our high-quality pro bono legal services to underserved members of our community in desperate need.

Warm Regards,

Pam Sauber & Dale Harburg



DC VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROJECT

EST. 2008

**PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICES FOR
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS
AND AT-RISK CHILDREN**

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