

Community Law Center

*2015
Annual Report*

From the Executive Director

Dear Friends:

We thank you very much for the generous support you have given us, whether through financial gifts or donations of professional time and service. It has helped Community Law Center continue in its mission of serving low-income neighborhoods and nonprofits by using the law to overcome the social, economic, and environmental problems that plague many neighborhoods.

2015 was another record year for Community Law Center. We continued to increase the number of volunteers and volunteer hours, reaching a total of nearly 500 pro bono attorneys, with total donated time valued at nearly \$950,000. Both our staff attorneys and volunteer attorneys worked tirelessly to provide the legal support needed by our clients.

Community Law Center's community-strengthening workshops and free legal services were critical to community-based revitalization efforts and to strengthening community voices to enable residents to advocate on their own behalf. Our clients vary greatly in size, geography, mission, and budget, but they have one thing in common – they all care deeply about their communities.

Community Law Center is focused chiefly on Baltimore City, with approximately 70% of our cases coming from Baltimore neighborhoods. In addition to their specific problems, we also delve into systemic issues and policy reform. Current examples are:

- Leading reform of the notoriously lax and ineffective Baltimore City Liquor Board;
- Convening and guiding the Tax Sale Work Group, a dedicated group of advocates and policymakers, to meaningfully reform of Baltimore City tax sale procedures;
- Successfully setting precedent in the courts with new legal theories to address dangerous and “public nuisance” conditions caused by vacant properties.

On behalf of our Board, staff, and clients, we thank you for the role you have played over the past year, and we hope you will continue to support our work.

Sincerely,



Kristine Dunkerton, Esq.
Executive Director



Dave Ryan, CPA, JD
Chairperson, Board of Directors

Community Legal Services Program

Community Law Center's staff attorneys and legal fellows address some of the most pressing legal needs of Baltimore's community organizations through the Community Legal Services Program. Through direct legal representation, these attorneys tackle issues that span neighborhoods and are central to neighborhood health, safety and happiness.

Settlement Regarding 57 Nuisance Properties Reached, Funds Donated to Community Law Center to Further Mission



In 2015, with co-counsel from Venable LLP and the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, Community Law Center settled a landmark lawsuit against owners of more than 50 vacant, dangerous and uninhabitable properties.

This case represented a new legal strategy in the fight against owners of abandoned properties in Baltimore City. Putting the power of City Code enforcement into the hands of the communities impacted by the vacant properties is a new tool that is proving effective.

The agreement's most vital provisions require the Defendants to invest in rehabilitating some properties and in demolishing the

properties that were beyond repair and endangering community residents. In addition, the property owners were forced to pay \$85,000 in settlement.

Several of Baltimore City's community associations voted to carry on their work through a generous donation of settlement funds back to Community Law Center in order to form a city-wide effort to address nuisance properties and the enforcement of the settlement agreement. The result: the creation of Baltimore RENEW, a bold alliance uniting Baltimore City residents, community associations, and business owners to eliminate nuisance, vacant properties in neighborhoods.

Improving Transparency and Accountability of the Liquor Board in Baltimore City



Staff Attorney Becky Lundbery Witt in front of the now-defunct Big Easy

Community Law Center's work puts the Liquor Board's inconsistent application of the law to light. Our blog, Booze News, holds the Liquor Board accountable for its actions and increases transparency of its decisions.

Community Legal Services Program Con't.

Community Law Center has also continued to represent neighborhood associations before the Liquor Board. The community leaders have experienced a greater opportunity to be heard and received more appropriate consideration by the liquor board of public health, safety and welfare issue as well as the needs and desires of the neighborhood.

Making Sure Communities Have a Voice in Neighborhood Redevelopment Projects

A consortium of twelve Baltimore organizations signed a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) with project developer planning a 28-acre redevelopment project in West Baltimore. Community Law Center drafted and negotiated the Community Benefits Agreement with the 12 organizations and the developer, representing the first CBA for a project of this scale. The project is expected to have a significant economic impact on West Baltimore, including the creation of 8,000 jobs over the life of the project. The CBA demonstrates the benefits of a developer taking the time to listen, include the needs, and address the concerns of well-organized area residents with a long term commitment of working together.

Tax Sale

As a result of a broken local tax sale foreclosure process, vulnerable homeowners lose substantial equity for small unpaid tax bills, communities suffer as a result of property speculation and abandonment, and the City fails to fully collect badly-needed revenue.

In 2015, Community Law Center co-chaired the Tax Sale Work Group, comprised of nonprofit leaders, city government officials, state representatives and foundation executives. The group is committed to identifying specific actions that can be taken to improve the tax sale system in Baltimore City.

PRO BONO SPOTLIGHT: JASON ROSE

Community Law Center wishes to thank Jason Rose, Partner at Venable LLP, for his service to Baltimore's neighborhoods. Rose, a member of CLC's Board of Directors, led the legal team, along with Thomasina Poirot, Laura Bouyea and six of Baltimore's community associations, in the landmark lawsuit against owners of more than 50 vacant, dangerous and uninhabitable properties within their communities. Venable LLP was awarded the 2015 Maryland Pro Bono Service Award for their work in the lawsuit.

Rose is an experienced litigator who focuses on the efficient resolution of disputes in such areas as pharmaceutical and medical device litigation, business torts, and commercial contracts. Before joining Venable, Rose also worked in a New York firm, where he represented a major air carrier in the 9/11 Commission investigation and related September 11 litigation arising out of the terrorist attacks in 2001.



Pro Bono Attorneys

Glen Allen	Emerson Dorsey	Venroy July	William Paxton	Ashley Spooner
Stanley Alpert	Helaine Fingold	Sarah Kahl	Vasilios Peros	Gabriel Steele
Hirsh Ament	Michael Floissac	Henry Kahn	Uyen Pham	Eric Steiner
Susan Baker	Brendan Fox	Stewart Kameen	Thomasina Poirot	Kate Titford
Keir Bancroft	Barbara Francis	Ryan Kennedy	Lucas Polcyn	Patrick Turley
Matt Barsamian	Érica Franzetti	Parag Khandhar	Michael Pretl	Davin Van Eyken
Greg Bedward	Christopher Fritz	Steven Koliias	Thomas Prevas	Megan Wakefield
William Bernetich	Colin Gaynor	Michael Leeb	John Quinn	Amanda Webster
Ryan Bickmore	Dorcas Gilmore	Kelcie Longaker	Jason Rose	Alana Williams
Anne Blumenberg	Therese Goldsmith	Lauren Lyon-Collis	Shana Roth Gormley	Steven Willner
Jennifer Blunt	Kevin Gralley	Cameron Macdonald	Jeremy Rountree	Michelle Winbush
Raquel Bracho	Elizabeth Handelsman	Lorna Maloney	Stephen Rourke	Jessica Woods
Gary Brooks	Renee Hatcher	Samantha Manganaro	Gabriel Rubinstein	Emily Zhao
Darek Bushnaq	Christopher Heagy	Michael Mannes	Jerome Schaefer	Yosef Ziffer
Brian Chappell	Sharon Heaton	Timothy Manuelides	Michael Schollaert	
Joey Chen	Reid Henderson	Darren Margolis	Christina Schoppert Devereux	
Nick Collevocchio	Philip Hinkle	Damian Mark	Amanda Schwartzkopf	
Joseph (Jeb) Cook	Robin Jacobs	Erica McWhorter	Rajni Sekhri	
Louis Brendan Curran	Fu-Mei Jiang	Daniel Mendelsohn	Indira Sharma	
Conrad Deitrick	Collier Johnson	Penny Minna	Michael Sheehan	
Anne Di Salvo	Kelly Johnson	Razvan Miutescu	Michael Sherman	
Phillip Diamond	Caitlin Johnston	Eileen Morgan Johnson	David Silvers	
Douglas Dick	Cecilia Jones	Patricia Morrison	Miriam Sincell	
Dorothy Dierdorff	Stacey Jones	Nicole Musgrave-Burdette	Dan Skowronski	
Michael Dietz	Thomas Joraanstad	Chika Ojiaku	Laura Skowronski Bouyea	

2015 Financials

Revenues, gains and other support:

Public support received directly:	
Contributions	\$346,306
Contributed professional fees	\$941,169
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	\$1,287,475
Special events	\$5,256
Grants from governmental agencies	\$174,551
Other revenue:	
Fees	\$21,726
Miscellaneous	\$896
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	\$22,622

Total revenues, gains and other support \$1,489,904

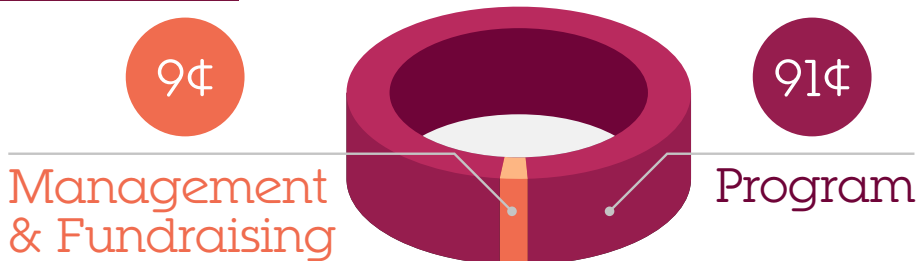
Expenses:

Program services –	
Legal assistance to communities & nonprofits	\$1,481,032
Supporting services:	
Management and General	\$114,240
Fund raising	\$16,810
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Total supporting services	\$131,050

Total expenses \$1,612,082

Change in net assets	(\$122,178)
Net assets – beginning of year	\$420,617
Net assets – end of year	\$298,439

For every dollar spent...



Donors

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Alliance of Rosemont Community Organizations, Inc.
Amazon Smile Foundation
Annie E. Casey Foundation
Baltimore Gas & Electric Co.
Clinton & Katharine Bamberger
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**COMMUNITY
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