

COMMUNITY LAW CENTER TIMELINE

2011: Community Law Center celebrates its 25th anniversary! CLC begins offering semi-annual trainings to volunteer attorneys. In 2011, attorneys volunteered over 1,800 hours of legal services at a value of over \$500,000. Some of the legal services provided include organizational formation, zoning appeals, real property acquisition, and nuisance abatement.

2010: Develops a legal focus on equitable development and begins a dialog with community groups, government, private developers, and others about the importance of including neighborhood residents as stakeholders in developments occurring within their boundaries. *“As an individual that spends countless hours working in the community, I recognize the true value of CLC. Our communities need to be aware of all the resources that are available to them. Without the hard work of CLC, we would not be setting the standard for future development / community partnerships. I am sure we can and should form a means to let all of Baltimore know the value of CLC as a resource and garner support for the organization as well. Thanks for your hard work!!!”* **James Hamlin, State Center Neighborhood Alliance**

2009: Establishes MOUs with liquor licensees as a standard practice in Liquor Board hearings to curtail nuisance and criminal activity at liquor establishments throughout Baltimore.

2008: Educates community leaders and volunteer attorneys with the start of a regular workshop series. The informative and inexpensive workshops help neighborhood leaders understand their rights, nonprofits understand their responsibilities, and attorneys understand the issues and perspectives of our clients.

2007: Establishes the Enforcement Committee of the Baltimore Homeownership Preservation Coalition to focus attention on the need to better regulate and enforce the banking and real estate industry in Maryland. *“None of our progress would be possible without your critical and fine work. I am extremely impressed. You are a Maryland gem.”* **Sarah Bloom Raskin, Commissioner of Financial Regulation, Department of Labor Licensing and Regulation**

2006: Sponsors city-wide effort to remove “We Buy Houses” signs from city streets, leading to the removal of over 1,200 illegally posted signs.

2005: Honors Anne Blumenberg for her service as Executive Director of Community Law Center for 18 years. Kristine Dunkerton is hired as Community Law Center’s new Executive Director.

2004: Creates the Real Estate Services Project to focus on vacant property acquisition and renovation in Baltimore. *“Community Law Center has been with us every step of the way through the acquisition, redevelopment, and sale of houses in our community. The amount of legal expertise needed was overwhelming and it was Community Law Center that kept us alive. We could not have done it without them.”* **Michael Mazepink, Executive Director, People’s Homesteading Group**

2003: Uncovers unscrupulous practices by national mortgage servicers and sparks HUD investigation. Nationwide and industry-wide changes are made to the industry to better protect consumers from losing their homes to foreclosure.

2002: Protects the health and safety of city residents after forcing the closure of a corner store selling rotten meat labeled with altered expiration dates and drafts legislation enacted to protect city residents from stores selling expired foods. Community Law Center creates an initiative to focus on environmental justice to give communities a voice in land use decisions impacting neighborhoods.

2001: Drafts legislation enacted to allow state funding to be used to create side-yards out of vacant lots.

2000: Establishes the Project to End Predatory and Deceptive Real Estate Practices to conduct research and analysis designed to curb illegal and unethical property transactions after recognizing that the high rates of vacancy and foreclosure in the city were largely the result of property scams and mortgage fraud.

1999: Attacks open-air drug markets in Baltimore by forcing the removal of hundreds of illegal payphones routinely used in the drug trade.

1998: Argues the first drug nuisance abatement case against an owner-occupant in Baltimore City, resulting in the eviction of a drug dealer from a property that he owned.

1997: Focuses anti-crime and vacant house reduction strategies in Patterson Park communities, initiating over 70 drug nuisance abatement cases in one year. This strategy, with many partners, proved successful in creating a “neighborhood of choice.” *“I thought about all that CLC and Patterson Place went through together, trying to think of what was the most memorable case. The work that helped us most was, actually, the least exciting. We benefited most from the nitty gritty hands-on work of identifying property owners and property status.*

Those things were never straightforward, always it was an abandoned house whose previous owners had divorced then died or disappeared from the face of the earth. So, in the end it was the searching through records that saved our neighborhood.”

Carol Hartke, President, Patterson Place, Inc.

1996: Initiates the Community Bill of Rights legislation enacted to allow community associations to seek enforcement of housing, building, zoning and health codes.

1995: Establishes the Pro Bono Program to dramatically expand recruitment of volunteer attorneys to serve the needs of nonprofit, grassroots and community-based organizations. The Pro Bono Program matches community-based organizations and other nonprofits with attorneys who have volunteered to provide them with pro bono legal assistance.

1994: Develops a self-help nuisance abatement strategy to allow community members to board up vacant houses in the city and begins the Community Legal Services Program to provide comprehensive legal services to support communities with anti-crime efforts. In the program’s first year, violent crime is reduced from 25 – 56% in those communities represented by Community Law Center.

1993: Files first drug nuisance case against a landlord with tenants distributing drugs from a rental property. Drug nuisance cases against rental properties quickly became effective tools for both organizing neighborhoods and addressing crime and violence on a block.

1992: Files the first vacant house receivership actions on behalf of Baltimore City community associations to put vacant houses back into productive use.

1991: Advances a new weapon for renovating vacant houses with a Baltimore City Circuit Court victory in which a receiver was ordered to oversee a vacant property owner’s repair of housing code violations.

1990: Hires the first staff attorney.

1989: Files suit against the owners of 1300 illegal billboards blighting the city by advertising alcohol and tobacco primarily in low-income communities.

1986: Receives initial grant funding to open its office.

1983: Incorporates and forms an informal network of volunteer lawyers interested in providing legal assistance to small, nonprofit organizations.