



CHILDREN'S CHAMPION

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER

The
**CHILDREN'S
LAW CENTER**

The Children's Law Center envisions a future for the District of Columbia in which every child has a safe home, a meaningful education and a healthy mind and body.

April 2009

Save the date: September 20th, 2009

Helping Children Soar Benefit

Mark your calendar: The annual Benefit returns to the Kennedy Center Roof Terrace Restaurant on Wednesday, September 30th, 2009. At the Benefit, United States Attorney General Eric Holder will receive the Children's Law Center's 2009 Distinguished Child Advocate award.

CLC looks forward to seeing you in September!

A Message from Judith...



"Every time you spend money, you're casting a vote for the kind of world you want."

Given today's grim economic reality, this aphorism applies now more than ever to the DC government budget process. With very limited dollars to spend, every budget choice reflects our community's priorities and requires hard decisions.

The DC Council has received Mayor Fenty's proposed fiscal year 2010 budget and will spend the next month hearing from advocates, residents and businesses before it votes on a final budget, mid-May.

The Council's vote will tell us what kind of a world they want.

Unfortunately, it is easy to lose track among the columns and rows of the budget tables that every line item makes a difference to real people facing real problems. With the stroke of a pen, hundreds of thousands of dollars can be redistributed from one line to another.

By moving money from one row to another, dozens of families can be given emergency funds to prevent homelessness. Money can be allocated to ensure that children suffering from the trauma of sexual abuse will be given the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

In This Issue:

2009 *Helping Children Soar* Benefit

Mother's Day: Send a greeting card from CLC

Spotlight: Aisha Williams, Covington & Burling LLP

Success Story: UPI Highlights CLC Client

A Message from Judith...

2009 *Helping Children Soar* Benefit



Children's Law Center will honor United States Attorney General Eric Holder at the ninth annual *Helping Children Soar* Benefit, September 30th.

Mr. Holder has been a champion for DC's children as a public servant, an advocate for pro bono legal services and a long-standing supporter of Children's Law Center.

Join CLC at the Kennedy Center's Roof Terrace Restaurant for a magnificent evening watching the sun set over the Potomac. Enjoy the company of friends and colleagues while supporting the children in our community who need our help most.

Your support of Children's Law Center is vital to ensure DC's children thrive. To learn more about becoming a sponsor please contact Kate Moen at 202-467-4900 x567 or kmoen@childrenlawcenter.org.

Honor your mother this Mother's Day: Send a Greeting Card from CLC

Mother's Day will be here before you know it! Show your mom how much you care by giving her the most thoughtful gift of all ... the gift of hope to DC's most underprivileged children. Make a donation in honor of your mother or in honor of a child who has no mother this holiday.

CLC will send your mother [this greeting card](#) for Mother's Day, May 10, 2009.



Celebrate the mothers in your life - your mother or someone who is like a mother to you - your aunt, friend, grandmother or sister- by making a generous donation to DC's children.

Many children in the District do not have a mother to celebrate. This holiday can be terribly heart breaking and lonely for them. Your purchase of a very special CLC Mother's Day card will help place one of DC's neediest children in the arms of a loving mother like yours.

Deadline to order Mother's Day cards is Tuesday, April 28.

Spotlight: Aisha Williams Covington and Burling, Loaned Associate



Covington and Burling LLP has provided full-time volunteer lawyers and paralegals to CLC since 2003. The lawyers and paralegals rotate to CLC every six months to represent low-income foster parents and relative caregivers in adoption, guardianship and custody cases. Covington's Aisha Williams joined CLC in January 2009 as its twelfth loaned associate.

In college, Aisha found a true passion for helping children and worked as an eighth-grade French teacher her first year after

college. In fact, Aisha was attracted to Covington because of their strong commitment to public service and, in particular, the opportunity to be a loaned associate and represent children at CLC. Aisha joined Covington in 2006 and currently practices in the firm's Intellectual Property, Corporate and Bankruptcy groups. Covington's loaned associate program gave Aisha the opportunity to practice family law at CLC.

"My time at CLC has given me renewed faith in humanity. I am a witness to all of the families who have stood up and stood in to provide a home, love, and care for children whose birth families were unable to do so. Providing foster homes for these children is more than a notion and it requires a tremendous amount of dedication. But these clients do it because they have a calling and inner sense of purpose. I can't help but to stand in awe of that," says Aisha. "I'm honored to be in a position to make my small contribution to their efforts."

Aisha will continue her work with CLC through June, 2009.

"Covington provides CLC with stellar attorneys and Aisha is no exception," says Lise Adams, program director for CLC's Family Permanency Project. "Moreover, the loaned paralegals are instrumental in supporting the work we do and are trained as investigators at CLC. We are truly grateful to Covington."

Or that money will be taken away. Dozens of children will enter foster care - simply because their parents cannot afford rent. Or the devastating effect of abuse will fester unaddressed, leading to destructive behaviors that land these young victims in jail, on the streets or pregnant too young.

Children's Law Center will be a voice for these at-risk children and families during the budget process - at the budget hearings and in meetings with individual Council staff. Our representation of more than 1,000 children and caregivers, our partnership with medical staff at community pediatric clinics, our broad range of advocacy on behalf of children in the schools, in the foster care and mental health systems and in the courts gives us detailed knowledge about which government programs work, which don't work and what is needed to keep children safe and to give them the tools they need to grow into productive adults.

Most of all, our work makes real to us every day that children aren't statistics. The budget isn't just numbers. We want to spend our money to live in a world in which all children have the opportunity to have safe homes, meaningful educations and healthy minds and bodies.

**Children's Law Center
is the largest legal
services provider in the
District ... helping more
than 1,000 children each
year.**

**Children's Law Center
advocates for abused,
neglected and
low-income children with
special education and
health needs.**

Success Story: UPI Highlights CLC client

Jane, a CLC client, is a devoted mother trying to make the best life possible for her children. Her eleven year-old, hearing-impaired daughter Grace lives with cerebral palsy.

Jane told Grace's pediatrician she was concerned her daughter's struggles in school were due to a lack of special support. The pediatrician referred Jane to Children's Law Center to help Grace get the equipment and resources she needed for her special health and education challenges.

CLC attorney, Yael Zakai worked as a fierce advocate to ensure Grace was guaranteed the support she needed to thrive in school. Thanks to Yael's persistence and dedication to her client, Grace can now easily complete her homework with an at-home tutor in a desk that enables her to read and write with no limitations. She keeps up in school and no longer falls behind her peers.

[Watch UPI's coverage of their inspiring story.](#)



Pro Bono Trainings:

Wed, April 15, 2009
Tues, April 21, 2009
Thurs, June 11, 2009

Please visit our website for [more information.](#)

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View the [February issue](#) of the Children's Champion

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For more information or to make a donation
please visit www.childrenslawcenter.org