

Children's Champion



Become a Santa for Children's Law Center and help DC's children.

We need your help!
Nearly 700 children are counting on you.

Click here to sign up!

give the gift of hope.

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Are You a Lawyer for Children?

This simple question has been echoing in the halls of many local law firms for the past few weeks. Posed by Children's Law Center Advisory Board members as part of a new campaign to raise awareness about DC's at-risk children among firms' associates and counsel, this question invites CLC's colleagues in the legal community to join the fight for better opportunities for DC's neediest children.

The *Lawyers for Children* Campaign officially launched on October 18th and will continue through Thanksgiving. We hope that it will bring together members of DC's legal community in new ways. Those who sign up for the annual *Lawyers for Children* Campaign will receive invitations to exclusive membership networking activities, invitations to forum discussions on the challenges facing DC's at-risk children and listing in CLC annual donor recognition materials.

On October 26th, CLC invited guests to celebrate the Campaign with a kick-off happy hour at CLC's offices. We were joined by reporters from *Washington Lawyer* and *LegalBisnow*. You can read more about the [event](#) and see [pictures](#) on our website. Pictured below are Advisory Board member George Murphy (Bryan Cave), Thomas Hall (DOJ), Brian Nysenbaum (Latham & Watkins), Michael Kenneth (Troutman Sanders), Advisory Board member Liz Richards (Latham & Watkins), and past CLC loaned-associate, Sarah Hall (Covington & Burling).



A Note from Judith

Five Christmases ago, three-year old Jeremiah got a toy train from his CLC volunteer Santa. This year he wants a remote control car. Although his Christmas wish list hasn't changed, everything else in his life has.



For an eight year old, Jeremiah has spent too much time in and out of hospitals, social worker offices and even funeral homes. He was born extremely premature and suffered from a chronic lung disease that required him to breathe through a tracheostomy tube. When he was two years old he was removed from his birth mother's home after she caused irreversible brain damage to a younger child. Jeremiah didn't speak or eat solid food.

Jeremiah's father stepped up to care for him, but didn't have the resources or skills to advocate for Jeremiah's complex needs. With the help of a team of CLC attorneys, Jeremiah soon had a night nurse to help care for him, a team of specialists to treat his unique medical issues and a school environment that offered intensive speech and physical therapy. That Christmas was Jeremiah's first in CLC's Holiday Hope Drive, and the toys, clothes and grocery gift card he received helped keep his family together.

Jeremiah's CLC legal team included lawyers with expertise in child welfare, special education and health care. Together they were able to help Jeremiah's father navigate Medicaid-funded health care for children with special needs and the DC school system.

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Calling All Volunteer Santas!

Although it's not yet Thanksgiving, Children's Law Center has been gearing up for our annual Holiday Hope Drive. Nearly 700 children have signed up, and we still need several hundred Santas. Gifts from Santa mean the world to a child celebrating Christmas without his parents or siblings for the first time...gives strength to a mother who just wants to feed her family a holiday meal...and rekindles the hope that all of DC's children have for a better life. All of our clients who participate in the Hope Drive would not be able to celebrate the holidays this year without the kindness of a volunteer Santa.

Santa's job is simple: to make children's wishes come true. A Santa does this by buying two items from the child's wish list, shopping for a full outfit of clothing (including shoes) for the child, and providing a holiday meal by purchasing a grocery gift card. Santas then schedule a time to drop off the gifts at CLC's office between December 4th and 11th. Pictured below are some Santas from Latham & Watkins with the gifts they delivered last December.



The support that CLC receives from the community to carry out the Holiday Hope Drive each year is extraordinary, but so is the scale of the project. Please take a moment to [sign-up to be a volunteer Santa](#) this holiday season. Contact the Head Elf, [Erika Manderscheid](#), if you have any questions about participating in the Hope Drive.

Become a Lawyer for Children
DONATE TODAY!



Children's Law Center works to give every child in the District of Columbia a solid foundation of family, health and education. As the largest provider of free legal services in the District, our 75-person staff partners with local pro bono attorneys to serve 1,200 at-risk children each year. We use this expertise to advocate for changes in the District's laws, policies and programs. For more information, visit www.childrenslawcenter.org.

News from Judith (continued)

Tragically, just as Jeremiah's life began to improve, his father passed away. Before Jeremiah's father died, however, he asked Jeremiah's night nurse to adopt him – and she agreed! As Jeremiah's lawyer, CLC couldn't also represent his foster mother. So, we called upon our strong network of law firm partners and found a pro bono lawyer to file an adoption petition, while CLC focused on ensuring that Jeremiah's new school placement would be adequate for his special needs.

Jeremiah is just one of 1,200 children that benefit each year from CLC's comprehensive approach and diverse programs. His team included CLC staff lawyers from all of CLC's programs as well as a pro bono lawyer and volunteer Santa.

Jeremiah's adoption will be final in the spring. He's a growing eight year-old who loves hot dogs and can almost read on grade level. Although the best Christmas gift he can imagine is a remote control car, someday he'll understand that his CLC attorney brought him an even better gift – a life of opportunity built on a solid foundation of family, health and education.

Upcoming Events

Caregiver Representation Pro Bono Attorney Training

Thursday, December 9, 2010

1:00p.m - 5:00p.m.

(Registration begins at 12:45p.m.)

Crowell & Moring LLP

1001 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Please RSVP to [Melanie Jaskolka](#)

or call (202) 467-4900 x586

Please join us to learn about adoption, guardianship, and custody law and practice with presentations by experienced attorneys from Children's Law Center and a "View from the Bench" by Associate Judge Juliet McKenna of the D.C. Superior Court.

Special Education Pro Bono Attorney Training

Tuesday, December 14, 2010

12:30pm - 4:30pm

Location TBD

Please RSVP to [Melanie Jaskolka](#)

or call (202) 467-4900 x586

Please join us to learn about representing parents and caregivers of children with special education needs.