

Benefit celebrates CLC's work, honors foster parents

\$193,000 raised will enable CLC to help 150 at-risk children

On September 22, it was all celebration and fun for The Children's Law Center. As the sun was setting against the red and orange hues of an early autumn sky, more than 400 big-hearted guests gathered at the Kennedy Center to help celebrate and support the work of The Children's Law Center.



"This has been a banner year for CLC," said Executive Director Judith Sandalow, as she arrived at the party. "We've doubled our capacity to help meet the needs of DC's abused and neglected children. When I look around this room and see so many friends and supporters who have helped make this possible, I realize that our children are the true winners tonight."

As the guests mingled with friends old and new, they were treated to elegant hors d'oeuvres,

a signature rum drink compliments of Rum Santa Teresa, and the sounds of flamenco guitar played by Richard Marlow.

The festive air of goodwill became emotionally charged momentarily as eyes teared up during the presentation of the 2004 Distinguished Child Advocate award to Marilyn and Eddie Egerton. The Egertons have opened their hearts and their homes to more than 25 foster children over the past 10 years, inspiring hundreds of other foster parents along the way and adopting four of the children.



"I came into your home when I was 17," one of their foster children Magdalena Dias said in introducing them, "but you will always be Mom and Dad for me." As the

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Adopt-a-Family Christmas Drive

In late October, CLC will begin organizing its Adopt-a-Family Christmas Drive to bring toys and clothing to the at-risk children we serve. Last year, we played Santa Claus to 190 children. This year we hope to make Christmas special for many more children.

We will need individuals and corporations to:

- "adopt" a child or family and provide them with gifts and clothes

- volunteer to help organize and execute the drive
- be a volunteer "wrapper" to wrap the gifts
- make financial contributions
- and more!

Please call Tara Tonkin at (202) 467.4900 ext. 510 or visit our website (www.childrenslawcenter.org) for information on how to get involved.

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Egertons painted a picture of Thanksgivings and Christmases filled with an ever-expanding family, they credited The Children's Law Center with making their adoptions go smoothly and quickly. CLC has been privileged to be the Egerton's lawyers for three of their adoptions.

The Celebration and Benefit was co-chaired by Mariella Trager and Valorie Danto-Sharpe, and nearly 50 Benefit Committee members helped in creating a wonderful evening. Pleased with the turnout, Trager told the crowd, "Tonight we raised close to \$200,000 – and that means we can provide help to more than 150 children. Tonight, we have made a real difference to at-risk children in our city."

Danto-Sharpe added "What we accomplished tonight is incredible. Just as important, however, are the hundreds more children who need the help of The Children's Law Center. We'll celebrate tonight, but it's back to work tomorrow so we can be the lifeline to the rest of the children in this city who need us."

To close the evening presentation, JiYoung Lee and Nino Sanikidze of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program of the Washington National Opera treated the audience to a short aria from Romeo and Juliette – and the guests continued to enjoy their friends, the evening and the cause.



Special thanks...

We give special and heartfelt thanks to ...

Benefit Co-Chairs, **Valorie Danto-Sharpe** and **Mariella Trager**, for their tireless and enthusiastic work in organizing CLC's Benefit.

Our **Benefit Committee**: Carolyn Bamford, Corinne Bensahel, Shigeko Bork, Collette Bruce, Deborah Gore Dean, April Delaney, Linda Donovan, Elizabeth Dupree, Arline Eltzroth, Isabel Ernst, Liz Evans, Jacqueline Falk, Tori Finelli, Karen Fisher, Izette Folger, Alison Greenhouse, Anissa Grossman, Holidae Hayes, Caroline Hurwitz, Deb Johns, Kara Kennedy, Connie Lawson, Sandra Ledoux, Trish Malloch Brown, Cheryl Masri, Linda McCarthy-Milone, Michelle McQuillan, Deborah Boone Meisel, Patrice Miller, Tracy Morgado, Ginger Pape, Marisol Pearlstein, Thomas Pheasant, Mary Tinsley Raul, Juan Carlos Rincones, Soraya Rubin, Georgia Shallcross, Sharia Shanklin, Nancy Sidamon-Eristoff, Monica Spaller, Pascaline Steiner, Cid Szegedy, Rhonda Wilkins, Sissy Yates

Fabulous friends and supporters...

The Children's Law Center runs on the energy, time, talent and resources of many special friends and supporters. We couldn't do it without you! CLC and our clients give special thanks to...

Beth Dozoretz who generously bought computers for a family of four children

The Men's Wearhouse for contributing tuxedos for graduation parties for some of our clients

Bethany Burns for donating a crib

DC United for donating soccer tickets

Big Apple Circus for donating circus tickets

Richard Simpson for donating Orioles tickets

John Perazich for donating to our legal library

D.D. Eisenberg for donating office supplies

Piper Rudnick, Thomson*West Group, The African-American Institute and **DC Agenda** for donating office furniture

For volunteering time and effort at CLC's 2004 Celebration and Benefit: **Jasmine Aherne, Sarah Yeomans, Molly McGregor, Lynne Tucker, Beth Kilby, Lindsay Mann, Meaghan Bouchoux, Amanda Wiltz, Niki Ersoy, Marquis Starks, Stephe Neal, Jade Nester, Jan Saslaw, Pooja Mehta**

United Way

If you participate in a United Way workplace giving campaign, please designate The Children's Law Center #8070 as the recipient of your donation.

Pro Bono lawyers help children waiting for adoption

As DC's Family Court focuses on moving children out of foster care more quickly, the need for lawyers to handle adoption cases has increased dramatically. In fact, during the summer of 2004, CLC developed a waiting list of 28 families who were ready to adopt but couldn't move forward until they found a lawyer to file the adoption papers. With children's futures at stake, CLC sprang into action.

Responding to a plea from Family Permanency Project Director LaShanda Taylor, more than 35 lawyers from area law firms attended a specially scheduled training session on adoption law

and practice. Within a few days, all 28 families had *pro bono* lawyers ready to help them move forward to give a child a permanent home.

Because the need for lawyers to handle adoption cases has grown, CLC is not only recruiting new *pro bono* attorneys but we are also expanding our in-house capacity to help. We forged a partnership with Covington and Burling, through which they generously "loan" an attorney and a paralegal to The Children's Law Center to help with the more complex adoption cases. And beginning in November, CLC will add a new staff attorney, Amy

Sankaran, to the project. These additions, coupled with the fact that more and more area law firms are stepping up to the plate with volunteer attorneys, mean that 175 children will move closer to permanency this year.

CLC would like to thank the following firms for helping to fund the costs of training manuals and refreshments: **Arent Fox, Bracewell & Patterson, Fried Frank Harris Shriver & Jacobson, Piper Rudnick, and Venable.** We give special thanks to John Lowe and Finnegan Henderson for audiotaping the training session and to the law firm of **Kay Scholer** for providing the conference room for the training.

Health Access Project expands to serve Latino community

Started two years ago in partnership with Children's National Medical Center, the Health Access Project has made a huge impact on the health outcomes for some of DC's poorest children. Since the project's inception, CLC Attorney Tracy Goodman has been located on-site at Children's Hospital and works with the medical staff there to solve social, environmental and economic problems that impact a child's health.

Beginning this fall, the Health Access Project will be expanded to La Clinica del Pueblo, a community-based clinic that serves the Latino population in the Adams Morgan and Mount Pleasant neighborhoods of DC. Bilingual

CLC Attorney Lauren Onkeles will be based in the clinic and will use her language and advocacy skills to bring the health outcomes for poor Latino children into line with those of their wealthier peers.

"Good doctors and good medicine alone will not guarantee a child's good health," explained CLC Executive Director Judith Sandalow. "Even if they have top quality medical care, for instance, a child with asthma will not get better if their home is infested with rats or mold. The lawyers who staff the Health Access Project help solve the environmental and social problems that prevent a child from living a healthy, productive life."

"Lauren will bring the expertise CLC gained at Children's into a community-based clinic for the first time." added La Clinica's Alicia Wilson. "The medical staff at La Clinica is excited to have this new resource."

OUR WISH LIST INCLUDES:

Bus tokens/metro cards for clients
McDonald's/Burger King, etc. coupons
Infant and toddler clothes (new)
Gift cards for groceries
Underwear and socks – boys and girls, all sizes
Car seats for all ages
Pots, pans, and dishtowels
Winter coats for all ages
Office furniture (new or gently used): desks, chairs, file cabinets, bookcases

CLC expands to help more children

In order to help more children find permanent and safe homes, CLC is expanding.

- CLC has hired 6 new staff attorneys: **Katayoon Majd** (Stanford '00), **Charlotte Garden** (NYU '03), **Rebecca Goldfrank** (American University WCL '04), **Claire Raj** (Case Western Reserve '03), **Mindy Leon** (NYU '03) and **Carla Watson** (NYU '02).
- CLC welcomes four new investigators: **Toni Maschler**, **Gabrielle Rhodes**, **Michelle Latimer**, **Mary**

Laurin Brunson.

- **Amy Sankaran** (University of Michigan '02) joins the Family Permanency Project to help more children find homes through adoption and guardianship.
- **Lauren Onkeles** (Georgetown '03) joins the staff to expand the Health Access Project to La Clinica del Pueblo.
- **Bob Berlow** joins CLC as a Senior Attorney, bringing more than ten years of experience in special education advocacy.

CLC Staff is award winning

Staff attorney **Lauren Onkeles** has been awarded the Frederick B. Abramson Public Interest Fellowship.

Vivek Sankaran, CLC Supervising Staff Attorney, was awarded the 2004 Public Interest Alumni of the Year Award from the University of Michigan Law School Public Interest and Community Service Organization.

Judith Sandalow received a commendation from the DC Department of Mental Health in recognition for her dedication and commitment to the children and families of the District of Columbia.

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The Children's Law Center
901 Fifteenth Street, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
www.childrenslawcenter.org

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