

November 2006

## **SPECIAL TENTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION THE CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER CELEBRATES TEN YEARS OF CHANGING CHILDRENS' LIVES**

Dear Friends,  
Happy 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday! In honor of our tenth anniversary we are departing from the usual newsletter format to tell the story of our ten year history, to give thanks to everyone who has helped CLC provide our specialized care to DC's most vulnerable children, and most importantly, to celebrate the lives of the thousands of children who have been - or who will be - our clients. Enjoy!

### **Ten Years Helping Children Soar**

In our first decade, we have grown into the largest civil legal services provider in the city and the only organization that provides comprehensive free legal representation specifically to children. Through our holistic approach, we address the needs of abused and neglected children and low-income children with special education and health needs.

CLC builds and strengthens our community at the fundamental level, the individual household. Whether ensuring that a child has a safe and stable home or assisting a mother in securing the special education or health services her child needs, our efforts are aimed at creating and maintaining strong and loving families, the building blocks of every neighborhood.

Over the past ten years, our work has literally transformed the lives of thousands of children giving them a chance to thrive. In 2006 alone, our dedicated team of lawyers will provide representation to almost 1,000 children, their families and foster and kinship caregivers through CLC's key programs: *Family Permanency Project*; *Health Access Project*; *Guardian ad Litem Program*, and *Protecting Child Witnesses to Domestic Violence*. To maximize the positive impact of our efforts, CLC's lawyers use the expertise gained from their direct work with children to educate the community and to shape and improve the legislative, administrative and judicial policies that affect children.



## The Need for The Children's Law Center

Ten years ago large class action lawsuits were the tools of change for child advocates dedicated to improving the lives of DC's at-risk children. A series of lawsuits had consumed advocates' time and energy but resulted in very few tangible improvements. While advocates searched for a "big fix," children were drifting in foster care, suffering from the trauma of sexual abuse, and struggling in school because of undiagnosed learning disabilities. Thousands of children's lives were at stake. Out of the frustration with the slow pace of change and the sheer determination to help each vulnerable child thrive, *The Children's Law Center was born.*

### 1996

- CLC was founded by James Marsh with Diane Weinroth and Ken Noyes as founding board members

"The Children's Law Center was conceived on a beautiful autumn day in September 1995 near Sheridan Circle on Embassy Row. Diane Weinroth and I were in the midst of a contentious battle with the DC and federal governments over a girl who was trafficked into the United States to be a concubine. The government wanted to deport this child and it was up to Diane and me to make sure that this did not happen. For many months, Diane and I would work tirelessly, sometimes until 3 or 4 in the morning, tackling the tough legal issues in this highly unusual case."



"It was during this time that I realized that two people could not provide the depth of knowledge or consistent intensity necessary to address all the unusual cases involving children in the District of Columbia. I also knew that people come and go, but institutions can last forever and that individuals can speak out alone, but organizations -- especially in Washington DC -- carry the weight of authority."

"The past ten years has seen The Children's Law Center grow from two people in a cramped office above a Korean deli to the largest legal services provider in the nation's capital. It is a dream that has come true in a way that was scarcely imagined a short decade ago. As I look back to the early years I see an eager group of idealistic lawyers wading cautiously into the water, then taking the plunge, never looking back but not exactly knowing where we were headed, how we would get there or what the future would provide. Thanks to many many gifts large and small -- gifts of time, help, and hope -- the Center has become everything and more than I could have ever imagined."

"As we enter our second decade, it will be up to us to carry the vision into the future of an organization which works tirelessly, consistently and intensely for all the children in the District of Columbia. The traditional tenth anniversary gift is tin, which is best known for resisting corrosion. With this in mind, let us preserve the past and build for the future never losing focus on the children who need an organization which will last forever."

James R. Marsh, Esq.  
Marsh Menken & Weingarden pllc  
CLC Founder  
CLC Board Member

## 1997

- The Pro Bono Adoption Project, now the Family Permanency Project, launched with Akin Gump and Hogan and Hartson as our first pro bono partners
- CLC received its first DC Bar Foundation grant



“On an endless commute after maternity leave, when I already felt anxious to go home and hug my baby, the newscaster reported of yet another incident of child abuse in the District. This time, the child didn’t make it. For once, I didn’t cringe and change the station. I cried. It seemed that I could not hug my own child enough that night, as if it might make a difference. Each time, I ached for the loss of the other innocent, vulnerable child.”

“There seemed to be a spate of news like this in late 1996. Each report roused nagging thoughts: Should I be using my skills and resources to help these children? Within days, I was introduced to James Marsh, founder and director of The Children’s Law Center. We learned that hundreds of abused, abandoned and neglected children in the District were recommended for adoption, but their cases languished in the morass of the District’s legal system, often for years, because there were no lawyers to represent the poorer adoptive/foster families. We knew that a couple of pro bono attorneys would never make a dent in the caseload. CLC had a greater vision: The Pro Bono Adoption Project (now known as the Family Permanency Project).”

“Under CLC’s proposed model, Akin Gump and another prestigious firm would undertake several adoption cases per year. CLC would provide the necessary training and on-going mentoring to assure the necessary quality control the firms desired. In this way, the firm and CLC could leverage their investment in training while growing the number of outstanding advocates to whittle away at the backlogged cases.”

“Akin, Gump not only encouraged my pro bono work for CLC, but it enthusiastically agreed to co-sponsor the Pro Bono Adoption Project while the CLC was in its nascent stages. The firm’s exceptional talent, generous support of the project, financial contributions and other in-kind services over the last ten years has served as a model to encourage other large firms in the District to provide pro bono services and support and continues to make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable in our nation’s capitol.”

Vicki Scheer Foster  
Former Akin Gump counsel  
CLC Board Member

## 1998

- Recognizing that a lack of special education services was a barrier to adoption for many children, CLC added its first special education lawyer to the staff
- CLC wins Outstanding Legal Advocacy Award from the National Association of Counsel for Children



“CLC was my first real job after law school. I was a graduate of the University of Michigan Child Advocacy Law Clinic like James, and Don Duquette suggested I ask James if he had any work. When I went to the office, James was very gracious, and kindly told me that they didn’t have any money, and wished me luck in my future career, somewhere else. I came back the next day and offered to volunteer for a while. James gladly accepted that offer! I sold my car and lived off of the proceeds in order to volunteer for CLC full time until James hired me (which I was certain would happen, being 26 years old and more than a little green).”

“For the first few months, I mostly worked on child welfare cases. After a while, James asked me to take over management of a new pro bono Adoption Project he was working on. I was in charge of 'selling' the cases to law firms and managing the associates who took on the case files. The Project won a national child advocacy award within one year of its implementation (I take no credit at all for this - James was a genius. Adoptions increased over 30% in D.C. that year from his project alone). I still look back on my experience at CLC as one of the most exciting in my life. It goes without saying that the experience was invaluable to my career. I don't even regret that I left before CLC moved into its swanky new offices. It was one of those places where you knew great things were going to happen, no matter what it looked like back then. I am forever grateful to James for giving me the chance to be a part of it.”

Laura A. Dempsey, Esq.  
Marsh Menken & Weingarden pllc

## 1999

- CLC moves into free office space provided by McGuire Woods
- CLC awarded first Skadden Fellow

“I have heard people say that you should be mindful of each choice that you make because you never know which one will change the course of your life. I guess it's true. When I interviewed for a summer internship with The Children's Law Center at the NAPIL Public Interest Career Fair in 1998, I had no idea that that one decision would impact my life in so many ways.”

“When I was asked to write about my experiences as the first Skadden Fellow, so many things came to mind. I thought that I would write an informative piece about the small, cramped, roach-infested building that housed our offices in those days (1999). Then, I remembered how convenient that location was to the courthouse. My second thought was to write about the difficulties of working for an organization of just two people, James and me. But, then I remembered how enriching it was to have one-on-one attention and supervision. Okay, I thought, I'll write about the challenges of being a young new attorney. But, I couldn't help but to smile as I thought about the times James and I walked down to Chinatown for CLC-sponsored lunches to celebrate my early courtroom victories.”

“For me, being the first Skadden Fellow is less about being CLC's very first regularly paid employee (“smile”) and more about being part of the history of CLC and having wonderful stories to share. The fellowship gave me the opportunity to work with great people and on behalf of even greater people and I will be forever thankful for having had the opportunity.”



LaShanda Taylor  
Practitioner in Residence  
Washington College of Law  
American University

## 2000

- Judith Sandalow hired as first paid Executive Director
- CLC provides city-wide training on the Adoptions and Safe Families Act to more than 350 judges, lawyers and social workers
- First Adopt-A-Family Christmas Drive started by McGuire Woods staff who choose to give up their staff holiday party in order to give Robin Knight's family of 12 a special Christmas. It took two trucks to deliver the gifts!

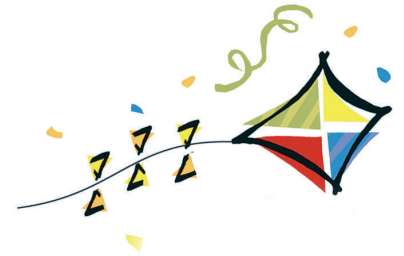


“It brings tears to my eyes even thinking about all that you have done for me and my family. Tears of joy. I’ll never forget it; words can’t express how I feel. All the things you’ve done over the years, my heart just aches. I need to say more, but I can’t think of the words right now.”

Robin Knight  
Client Family who benefited from First Adopt-a-Family Christmas Drive

## 2001

- DLA Piper partners with CLC, representing caregivers of 75 children and providing CLC with free office space
- CLC helps to draft and pass Guardianship Act of 2001 which helps relative caregivers give permanent homes to their young relatives who are in the neglect system
- CLC hosts family law site of [probono.net](http://probono.net)
- Tracy Morgado, zilart!, donates her time and talent to design CLC logo and materials
- CLC holds first Benefit honoring Barbara Harrison as our first Distinguished Child Advocate



“I learned about The Children’s Law Center from Mariella Trager. I was impressed with the organization’s work and wanted to get involved. I met with Judith Sandalow to talk about the organization. I was so impressed. I realized they were terrific advocates for children, but that they didn’t know anything about marketing. I offered to develop the organization’s logo at no cost to CLC. I knew I could help them by creating an organizational identity. I also told Judith that she would see a “morale boost” in her Board and staff once they chose a logo and had an organizational “look.”

“I developed several logos and met with Judith at a local restaurant. She chose her top two. One had children climbing up on the letters of CLC’s name, and the other had children with kites. After discussing each one at length, Judith took both of the draft logos with her and went to a group of people standing in line waiting to get seated for lunch. She asked them what they saw in each name. That’s Judith. It worked – and helped her make her decision on which logo really communicated the organization’s heart and soul.”

“The logo was chosen and Judith said she was surprised and happy that I was right...having the logo did boost everyone’s morale. I then used the logo to create various materials, including a brochure, letterhead, and designing the invitation and program book for the annual benefit, to help the organization get its name out and to teach the community about CLC’s important work.”

“I’m proud of the work I and my company, zilart!, have done with CLC. It’s been a great partnership and I feel a sense of accomplishment that I have been a part of CLC’s work on behalf of their clients.”

Tracy Morgado  
Zilart!

## 2002

- Health Access Project started in partnership with Children’s National Medical Center with funding from the Goldberg, Meyer and Cafritz foundations
- Mariella Trager co-chairs Benefit moving it to Kennedy Center venue, increasing the enjoyment and success of this and future events
- Senators Mary Landrieu and Mike DeWine add line item to DC Court appropriation to improve GAL representation through contract with a local organization



“While Meyer has been a strong supporter of The Children’s Law Center, we had a bumpy start. We provided a \$20,000 grant in 1999 to support a special education project, but then declined it three times over the next two years. I can’t recall the reasons for these declines, but CLC straddled three of Meyer’s program areas: education, law/justice, and health/mental health but didn’t fit cleanly into the focus of any. At first, Meyer didn’t “get it.”

“Judith refused to give up. She called to ask why CLC was denied. Each time she called, she made a compelling point (she is a lawyer after all). I listened and shared Meyer’s health priorities. We educated each other, she about the issues and needs, and I about how foundations work. Gradually light bulbs went off. I remember that when we met in person, Judith talked about the disconnect for low-income children and their caregivers trapped by systems meant to protect them. She described the non-medical barriers to health as the result of domestic violence, special education needs, and complex foster and kinship care issues; she explained the frustration doctors felt when they had to send children back into the same unhealthy situations with—at best—only referrals that most would never pursue. We shared stories, frustrations, and our hopes for improvements. She mentioned a model in Boston where a lawyer is placed at a hospital to provide immediate legal support to children and caregivers in need. It was a perfect fit. I invited a proposal for the Health Access Project. When it came in Judith had secured support from two people we greatly admire: Diana Goldberg and Dr. Gloria WilderBrathwaite.”

“Meyer believes in Judith’s vision and leadership. Meyer continues to support CLC and clearly sees how its work is bridging gaps and making a real difference for children in this city.”

Katherine T. Freshley  
Senior Program Officer  
Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation

“A dear friend, Alexia Morrison was chair of the Board of The Children’s Law Center. She gave me a copy of CLC’s newsletter – where I read a story about a client of CLC lawyer Yasmine Pahlavi. I was moved to tears as I read about Tony, an eight-year-old boy who had been neglected by his mother, didn’t have enough to eat and suffered with untreated severe asthma. He was rescued and placed in a group home for infants and toddlers. Yasmine went to extraordinary lengths, used tenacious advocacy and knowledge of the law to help move out of the orphanage and to be adopted by his grandmother. This was a wonderful organization helping children that had been abused, some abandoned, needing care and a loving family. I called the organization immediately and asked how I could help.”



“I signed on as co-chair of CLC’s second benefit and worked with staff to move it to a new venue, the Kennedy Center, and to introduce it to lots of new people. I asked everyone I could for help, and they said yes. I am extremely fortunate to have very generous friends. The benefit was a great success thanks to the work and generosity of many. I am very proud of the benefit and how enjoyable and important it is to so many of CLC’s supporters – from the law firm community – to many individuals who understand the need to help CLC’s clients.”

“Those of us volunteering are not the heroes of CLC. The heroes are the dedicated attorneys who work long hours and do anything that needs to be done for their clients. I wish we didn’t have to do this work – but until the problem is solved we must be there for these children. We must work hard to make sure they have a chance to grow up, healthy, happy and loved.”

Mariella Trager  
CLC Board of Directors  
*Helping Children Soar* Benefit Chair

## 2003

- CLC is awarded court contract and begins three-year expansion to develop capacity to represent 500 children each year and to improve the representation of all abused and neglected children
- Child Witness to Domestic Violence project launched
- Freddie Mac Foundation awards CLC first \$100,000 grant to fund Family Permanency Project



“After the Family Court Act was passed we began preparing the transition plan for Congress. One of our goals was to improve legal representation for children and families in Family Court. The Children’s Law Center’s expanded role in representing neglected and abused children as guardian ad litem was a significant step toward accomplishing this goal. Congratulations on ten years of serving children and families in the District of Columbia. I appreciate your dedication and commitment to protecting neglected and abused children.”

The Honorable Lee F. Satterfield  
Former Presiding Judge of the Family Court of the DC Superior Court

## 2004

- HAP expands to serve DC’s Latino community through partnership with La Clínica del Pueblo



“We never believed we could integrate so effectively the legal services offered by the Children’s Law Center into the medical services offered at La Clínica del Pueblo. Over the past year and a half CLC’s services to our predominantly immigrant community have proven key in the improvement of their current and future health. The Children’s Law Center has made legal resources available to those who would have otherwise been unable to find them because of language and immigration status barriers. Many of our clients have come to La Clínica seeking cures only for their health problems choosing to remain silent about abuse and violence in their homes. When they are informed about CLC’s services open to them they are surprised, but incredibly grateful. With CLC’s help we have been able to continue our mission of providing a holistic approach to health for the immigrant community in a culturally sensitive way. Thank you Children’s Law Center!”

Dr. Juan Romagoza  
Executive Director  
La Clínica del Pueblo

“What would we ever have done without CLC? My husband and I have adopted four beautiful children from the DC child welfare system. Three of those adoptions were handled by attorneys who were assigned to us through CLC’s program. What a blessing you have been in our life! Although we do not live below the poverty level, there is no way that we could ever have afforded to pay for legal representation for four adoptions. Each of our children had been living with us in foster care for over a year when their goals changed to adoption. If CLC had not gotten us pro bono attorneys to handle our cases, our children might not have been able to stay with us. They might have been torn away from the only stable family situation they had ever known, to be sent to other placements that may or may not have worked out. These children are the loves of our lives and my husband and I are eternally grateful to CLC for helping us to ensure that we would be a family forever.”



Marilyn Egerton  
Foster and Adoptive Parent

## 2005

- HAP expands to focus on mental and behavioral health issues of children, thanks to EJW fellowship sponsored by McDermott, Will & Emery
- Wayne Curtis becomes Chair of the Board of Directors
- The Kite Club, CLC's major gifts program, is inaugurated



“The reason for being the Chairman of The Children's Law Center is pretty much the same one for being on the board, what we do affects the long term well being of some of the most important members of our society -- children. I once lived in a children's home in Dayton, Ohio, Shawn Acres. I was one of the lucky children to come out of that institution fully functioning. I have come to realize, however, that an institutional setting is the least likely environment for a child to be nurtured and succeed as an active adult in our society. The work we do at CLC every day is about advocating for the rights of the child, and getting them into a loving and supportive home is paramount.”

“My goals for CLC are to build upon the successes of its founders and preceding Chairs. To enable the CLC leadership, particularly the Executive Director, with the resources and Board guidance to remain the best in class when it comes to advocating for children's issues, particularly as they relate to adoption and education and health. I look forward to the day when every time a piece of legislation on adoption and/or children's rights is being considered locally or nationally, CLC's views are sought for guidance.”

Wayne R. Curtis,  
Chairman  
CLC Board of Directors

## 2006

- CLC celebrates 10th Anniversary and continues to build a strong foundation for future growth



“I became a foster parent the same year that James founded The Children's Law Center. My oldest son was 10 years old and couldn't read. My seven-year-old son cringed in fear every time he spilled his milk. I believed then that love would be enough to heal the wounds inflicted on my two wonderful sons. James believed that smart and caring lawyers could, by themselves, reform the child welfare system. We were both half-right. It turns out that love has a powerful healing quality, and dedicated, creative lawyers can literally save children's lives. However, neither of us realized how much help we would need to give our children a chance. I discovered that it takes specially trained teachers, small classes, therapists, pediatricians and many community supports to help heal the wounds of parental neglect and abuse. James – and now I – have learned that our talented and hard-working lawyers can only help children if The Children's Law Center has friends who donate their financial resources, their good names, their business and other expertise to ensure that CLC has the stability to support their work. We both learned that the truest gift comes from those who keep helping, year after year.”

“My oldest son graduated from high school this year. My younger son is planning to go to college. Both of them believe that they have an important place in our community. The same is true for The Children's Law Center. Thanks to the generosity of so many friends and the tireless dedication of our first rate staff, The Children's Law Center is planning for the next 10 years. We are, as I write, negotiating a 10-year lease for new offices near the courthouse. We have hired nine new lawyers who will start work this fall. We are adding special education advocacy to the ways in which help foster children. We are working with Children's National Medical Center to bring our successful medical-legal collaboration to children who live in Wards 7 and 8. Our Family Permanency Project has expanded from helping children exit foster care into adoptive homes to also helping grandparents keep their grandchildren from ever having to suffer the trauma of being foster children.”

“James wrote about a young woman he and Diane Weinroth were representing when they conceived of The Children’s Law Center. A young woman who had been abandoned and sexually abused. My dream is that in 10 years she will have a daughter who will grow up safe, loved and without the scars her mother received. Maybe that daughter will invent a cure for cancer, will be the District’s first United States Senator or will work at The Children’s Law Center, giving hundreds of children the chance to live the happy and engaged life that she has lived.”

Judith Sandalow  
CLC Executive Director

### With Gratitude. . .

Reading at grade level, moving from a group home to live with a grandmother, avoiding hospitalization or being adopted into a loving family - these are the tangible outcomes that we achieve for our clients every day. The Children’s Law Center measures its success by our ability to bring about positive results and outcomes for each individual child. Every day CLC’s focus is on the children who need us most -- children with special health and education needs, abused and neglected children, and children who witness domestic violence.



CLC’s programs foster hope and create opportunity. Our work represents a comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of some of our community’s most vulnerable and underserved individuals – children who have been abandoned, abused and neglected, and children living in extreme poverty without food, health care or the services they need to live a healthy life.

CLC’s Board and staff have worked tirelessly for the past decade, improving the world one life and one family at a time. We have only been successful with *your* help and support, *your* friendship and commitment. You write the checks, donate your expertise and give of your time and talent so our attorneys can change our clients’ lives. *Your generosity* has not only allowed us to operate but in the past ten years you have allowed us to grow and expand our services so we can speak for more underserved and underrepresented children.

**On behalf of our Board, staff and most importantly the children we serve, “thank you.”**



Almost 500 friends, supporters, and child advocates gathered at the Kennedy Center Roof Terrace Restaurant for The Children's Law Center's Tenth Birthday Party raising **\$315,000** to fund CLC programs. It was a fitting celebration of the lives of the thousands of children CLC has supported since opening its doors in 1996, and an opportunity for CLC to say "thank you" to the many individuals and firms who have allowed us to grow from a small organization to the largest civil legal services provider in the city and the only organization that provides comprehensive free legal representation specifically to children.

Benefit Chair Mariella Trager worked tirelessly with the Benefit Committee to make this the most successful and enjoyable benefit to date! Special friends Barbara Harrison, co-anchor NBC4, and Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA) joined in the celebration to honor and present awards to this year's Distinguished Child Advocates, The Honorable Lee F. Satterfield and DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary.

### Ten Years Helping Children Soar Sponsors

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**Lola's Story**

Lola and her mom moved to DC from Tennessee. Lola's mom had been struggling with a crack cocaine addiction for years and was looking for a fresh start in a new city. But mom's fresh start never came.

One day Lola's mom left her at a classmate's house and *never returned*. Lola had no family who could care for her so she was placed in the foster care system. Lola hasn't seen her mom in more than six months and constantly asks, "Why did my mommy leave me? Was I a bad girl? Is she coming back?" You can see the sadness on her face. And even though Lola is suffering from the trauma of being abandoned, she is a good natured little girl – and very kind. She loves school and is doing exceptionally well. The wonderful news is that Lola and her foster mom are doing well – and now CLC is helping the foster mom adopt Lola – helping them to become a "forever family." Lola has found *her* new start!

**2006 CLC Adopt-a-Family Holiday Drive**

**Feel the Joy of Being Santa - Make a Difference in a Child's Life!**

CLC has more than 500 individual children hoping Santa will bring them something to open on Christmas morning. We invite you to sign up to be a Volunteer Santa and give a child the joy and surprise of opening holiday gifts!

**CLC makes it easy!**

Simply contact our Head Elf and let her know if you want to adopt a child or even a family. She will match you with a child, share that child's story, and pass on her wish list - sizes included! We ask that you give each child two new gifts from their wishlist and a new outfit - shirt, pants, and shoes. We also ask you to get a gift card for the family so they can buy the fixings for their holiday meal.

**Start some new holiday traditions. . .**

So - instead of giving your father another ugly tie, adopt a child in his honor! Or, instead of the same tired "secret-santa gifts", get together with your office mates and adopt a family or two! Or, instead of having a holiday party with your friends, adopt a family and go shopping together for "your" children!

**Make a Tax-Deductible Donation. . .**

If you want to be a Volunteer Santa but have no more time for shopping, make a donation to CLC and the Head Elf will make sure every child has a gift or **she will use it to support our children all year long.**

Ready to be a Santa? Start a new tradition? Questions? Please contact Head Elf Catharine Clarenbach at [cclarenbach@childrenslawcenter.org](mailto:cclarenbach@childrenslawcenter.org) or give her a call at 202-467-4900 X567.

## WHY WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT...

- In Washington, DC 29% of our children live in poverty
- One in six children lives in extreme poverty – with families of four trying to survive on an annual income of less than \$10,000.
- Three thousand abused and neglected children are living with uncertainty and impermanence in the turbulent child welfare system and 700 children are waiting to be adopted.
- The rate of teen deaths by homicide, suicide or accident is twice as high in DC as it is nationally (98 per 100,000 in DC).
- Impoverished children's health is influenced by social and environmental factors that a trip to the doctor cannot fix. Visiting a doctor doesn't end the rodent infestation that exacerbates a child's asthma. Simply writing a prescription won't ensure that the school nurse gives medication on time and that the school provides the related therapy to ensure that a child flourishes. Without adequate housing, nutrition, income supports, and appropriate educational and mental health services, impoverished children experience relatively poor health and developmental outcomes.
- After being trapped in the child welfare system for most of their lives, thousands of our young people eventually "age-out" of foster care each year without a family to provide them with the support and safety net to help them succeed. These children are significantly more susceptible than their peers to unemployment, homelessness, early pregnancy, and incarceration. Almost half do not complete high school, and only half find stable employment. Many have ongoing special educational, physical and emotional health needs, but often have difficulty accessing the services that can address these problems. Lacking the family and other adult support that many teens take for granted, these youth face the various challenges of adulthood alone.
- Poor children have a significantly higher risk than wealthier children for health problems like diabetes, lead poisoning, malnutrition, asthma and school-related violence.
- More than 15,000 children have unaddressed special education needs according to some estimates.
- Children are suffering each and every day because their families' basic needs are not being met. They struggle with extreme poverty, live in substandard housing conditions and lack access to health information, services and insurance coverage.

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