## 2016 ANNUAL REPORT



CHANGING LIVES SINCE 1965

# MICHIGAN ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Local Civil LegalAid Offices servingcounties







MAP's civil legal aid programs are Legal Services of South Central Michigan, Family Law Project, and Farmworker Legal Services.

MAP also provides administrative services to several independent statewide programs: Crime Victims Legal Assistance Project, Michigan Poverty Law Program, Michigan Legal Help, Michigan Elder Justice Initiative, and Michigan Immigrant Rights Center.





Adrienne and her sister were living in a mobile home in Ypsilanti and struggling to pay rent on their very limited income. When the owner of the mobile home park sued to evict Adrienne, she not only faced homelessness, but also late payment fees and utility charges—despite the fact that the park was in deplorable condition and Adrienne had lived without water in her home for nearly seven months. During the subsequent eviction proceedings, LSSCM negotiated a settlement wiping out Adrienne's debts to the landlord and requiring the landlord to pay Adrienne a lump sum to compensate her for his violations of state and local housing laws. Without affordable legal assistance, Adrienne would have endured many more months in substandard living conditions and racked up thousands of dollars in debt, which would have adversely affected her ability to access housing in the future. With LSSCM's help, Adrienne and her sister (and even her cats!) were able to move toward a safe and stable future.



Guy Conti with pro bono attorney Lori Buiteweg of Nichols, Sacks, Slank, Sendelbach & Buiteweg.

#### PRO BONO AWARD

Guy Conti and Dan Dever (not pictured) received the Washtenaw County Bar Association's 6th Annual Public Service/Pro Bono Award in recognition of their considerable public service and pro bono work in the community.

#### STAFF AWARD

Kerene Moore was selected for the National LGBT Bar Association's Best LGBT Lawyers Under 40 Class of 2016.





LSSCM attorneys and partners before an evidentiary hearing in federal court in Detroit

#### LSSCM-WASHTENAW STAFF

Kathryn Haroney, Legal Assistant • Kerene Moore, Supervising Attorney
Libby Benton, Staff Attorney • Lisa Maskill, Staff Attorney
Min Kim, Staff Attorney • Mollison Morgan, Legal Assistant
Nick Gable, Staff Attorney • Sarah Munro, Staff Attorney
Tish Lee, Managing Attorney • Tonya Correll, Legal Assistant/Receptionist

#### FAMILY LAW PROJECT

Providing legal advice and representation to survivors of domestic violence in Washtenaw County primarily in divorce, custody, support, and protection order cases.

In 2016, LSSCM assisted 3,666 survivors of domestic violence and their families with 1,287 cases.



#### JACKSON OFFICE

Serving Jackson & Hillsdale Counties



#### PRO BONO AWARD

Thomas P. Riley of Thomas P. Riley Law Office, PLC received LSSCM-Jackson's 2016 Pro Bono award for his volunteer legal services to low-income clients.

At the beginning of 2016, Vivian was living a nightmare. She was married to a man, Tom, who was physically and verbally abusive to her on a daily basis. He regularly called Vivian "stupid" and "useless" and



threatened to kill her or keep her locked in their apartment. When Tom physically assaulted her, he intentionally punched, squeezed, hit, and pinched her in places that were typically covered by clothes—her abdomen, back, upper arms, and thighs. He also prevented her from renewing her driver's license or working outside the home. Every day, Vivian made plans to leave, but wondered if Tom would kill her if she tried to end their relationship. She also didn't know where she would go or how she would afford the court fees to file for divorce. In March, Vivian called the local domestic violence shelter, AWARE, Inc., and was referred to an attorney at LSSCM. LSSCM filed a divorce case and requested a personal protection order on Vivian's behalf. By October, Vivian's divorce was final and a personal protection order prohibited Tom from coming to her new home and place of work. With LSSCM's help, Vivian's nightmare had ended.

#### LSSCM-JACKSON STAFF

Emily Grainger, Staff Attorney • James Boufides, Staff Attorney James Tiderington, Staff Attorney • Joanne Laux, Staff Attorney Michael Derby, Managing Attorney • Sue LaFountain, Legal Assistant

#### LANSING OFFICE

Serving Ingham, Eaton, Shiawassee, Clinton & Livingston Counties



#### PRO BONO AWARD

Michael E. Cavanaugh of Fraser Trebilcock was honored with LSSCM-Lansing's 2016 Pro Bono Award for his efforts to increase access to justice in Ingham County.



#### STAFF AWARD

**Liza Rios, Nicole Shannon,** and **Justin Babbitt** received **MAP's 2016 Outstanding Advocate Award** for their work on the Life O'Riley case (see next page). **Justin** was also recognized by **Michigan Lawyers Weekly** as part of the **Up & Coming Lawyers Class of 2016.** 

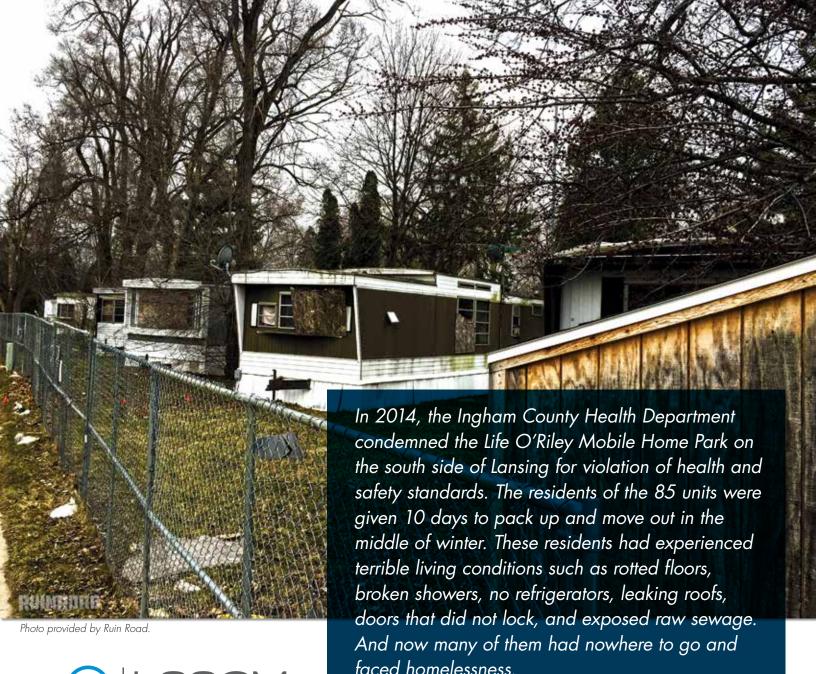
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Jessica Mass, Staff Attorney • Justin Babbitt, Staff Attorney
Kristina Martin, Staff Attorney • Liza Rios, Managing Attorney
Marc Allen, Staff Attorney • Nickie Perera, Staff Attorney

Nicole Shannon, Supervising Attorney

Sarah Bouck, Staff Attorney

Tanya Mathis, Legal Assistant





In 2016, LSSCM helped
21,242 people with
essential legal needs
including evictions,
foreclosures, access to
health care, employment,
family law, debts, and
access to food stamps
or other public benefits.

When news of the condemnation broke, LSSCM collaborated with other service providers in the area to hold emergency outreach meetings. Residents were connected with appropriate services including access to shelter, clothing, furniture, and legal assistance. LSSCM sued the owners of the mobile home park on behalf of 13 former residents. In 2017, three years to the day of the condemnation of the Park, LSSCM's clients were awarded a substantial monetary settlement to compensate them for what they endured as residents at Life O'Riley Mobile Home Park.



#### BATTLE CREEK OFFICE

Serving Barry, Branch, & Calhoun Counties



#### PRO BONO AWARD

LSSCM-Battle Creek's Pro Bono Award was presented to Robert J. Sharkey of Vandervoort, Christ & Fisher, P.C. in March 2016.

#### STAFF AWARD

Alisa Parker and Megan Reynolds were presented with MAP's 2016 Effective Community Advocacy Award for their recent work on behalf of 63 Burmese and Syrian refugee families.



#### LSSCM-BATTLE CREEK STAFF

Alisa Parker, Managing Attorney • Anna Moss, Staff Attorney
Chris Letcher, Staff Attorney • Gabriele Vicente-Lemus, Receptionist
Karen Braasch, Grant Manager • Katy Reed, Staff Attorney
Linda Kellum, Staff Attorney • Pam George, Paralegal

#### MONROE OFFICE

Serving Monroe & Lenawee Counties



#### PRO BONO AWARD

**LSSCM**–**Monroe** presented the **2016 Pro Bono Award** to **Matthew P. Mundrick** of Churchill, Smith, Rice, Swinkey, and Kuhn L.L.P. in Temperance.

Also pictured: Jessica Paladino (Monroe County Bar Association President), Rebecca Hicks (Monroe County Bar Association Treasurer), Hon. Jarod Calkins (1st District Court), Michael Brown (Monroe County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney), and Shannon Lucas.

#### LSSCM-MONROE STAFF

Amanda Eicher, Staff Attorney

• Jenna Furman, Staff Attorney

Patrick Clement, Staff Attorney

• Peggi Grodi, Legal Assistant
Shannon Lucas, Managing Attorney



In March 2016, 63 refugee families living in several apartment complexes in Battle Creek were notified that they needed to move out at the end of their leases. Many of these families had lived in the U.S. for less than two years and were placed in their current housing by refugee resettlement agencies. The apartment complexes claimed they were obligated to evict these families due to findings by unnamed local government officials that the units exceeded occupancy standards. Upon learning of the plans to evict numerous refugees, LSSCM, in collaboration with the Fair Housing Center of Southwest Michigan, began an investigation of the cases and ultimately contested these mass evictions. LSSCM discovered that the apartment complexes had been inspected by City Code Compliance and the Fire Marshall the year prior, with no occupancy concerns cited. In addition, no government official had directed the apartment complexes to evict the refugee residents. LSSCM attorneys were successful in negotiating with the landlords and avoiding lengthy litigation. In the end, corrective notices were sent to all refugee families stating that they were not required to move and welcoming them to renew their lease at the end of the lease term.



Brianne was 14 years old when she spent the summer picking asparagus with her family in Michigan. She had migrated with her family from Texas for the Michigan harvest. Her family contacted FLS when their employer failed to pay Brianne what she was entitled to and threatened to evict the family from the camp.

Because she was only 14 years old at the time of her employment, Brianne was excluded from minimum wage protections under the Michigan Workforce Opportunity Wage Act. FLS, however, pursued a wage claim under the Michigan Payment of Wages and Fringe Benefits Act with the Michigan Department of Licensing & Regulatory Affairs' Wage and Hour Division. As a result of FLS's advocacy, Brianne was awarded the wages that she was owed.

In addition, FLS discovered that Brianne and her family were being housed in an unlicensed migrant labor camp—one that had already accrued fines for lacking licensure and needed thousands of dollars in improvements to meet the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's standards. When the employer attempted to forcibly evict Brianne and her family, FLS advocated on the family's behalf to ensure that the family was allowed to remain in their housing until they were able to safely return to Texas.



In 2016, Farmworker
Legal Services provided
legal advice or
representation to 1,619
individuals in 560 cases
and provided information

about legal rights to **3,745** individuals during **479** visits to migrant labor camps across Michigan.



#### FARMWORKER LEGAL SERVICES STAFF

Diana Marin, Staff Attorney • Jennifer Gallardo, Staff Attorney
Jose Rosas, Legal Assistant • Kara Moberg, Managing Attorney
Mariah Hennen, Community Advocate • Verelle Kirkwood, Staff Attorney



Twenty-three attorneys across Michigan serving victims of domestic violence and elder abuse

Five years ago, Serena divorced her physically, verbally, and sexually abusive husband, Dirk. In the divorce, Serena was granted custody of their young daughter. Dirk was ordered to complete programs to address his history of violence and substance abuse before resuming regular parenting time (or visitation) with their daughter.

After the divorce was finalized, Dirk did not complete these programs. In fact, he was arrested multiple times for stalking Serena and violating the conditions of the personal protection order that prohibited him from coming to her home or place of work and from threatening or assaulting her. Serena was forced to move four times within a couple of years, which was expensive and stressful. And Dirk continued to find her in the small city where they lived in Michigan.

Serena was out of options and could not afford to hire an attorney. Fortunately, Serena was referred to the Crime Victims Legal
Assistance Project in 2016. CVLAP talked with
Serena about her options. She decided that moving out of Michigan to a confidential location was the only way she would be able to provide a safe and stable home for her daughter. CVLAP represented her in requesting permission from the court to move away from Michigan and to keep her location and contact information confidential. The judge granted Serena's request and she and her daughter safely moved out of Michigan within a few weeks of the court's order.

CRIME VICTIMS LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT (CVLAP) STAFF

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• Amy Myers, Supervising Attorney

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• Rebecca Shiemke, Managing Attorney

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Providing support to legal aid programs and other poverty law advocates across Michigan. MPLP is a joint project with the University of Michigan Law School.



In 2015, Sheila, 73, was struggling with health issues. She had owned her home for almost twenty years, but had fallen behind on recent mortgage payments. She had also taken out a reverse mortgage (converting a portion of equity into cash) on the property in 2003. Because of her health issues, Sheila did not realize that her home was in foreclosure. Her daughter, Dana, moved in with Sheila to



care for her, but Dana was also unaware that her mother's home was at risk. Because the lender failed to post the required notice, Sheila and Dana were blindsided when the home was sold at a Sheriff's sale in February 2016. Sheila passed away in July 2016 and the lender filed to evict Dana from the home. Through MPLP's Michigan Foreclosure Prevention Project, Dana was connected with an attorney who successfully challenged the eviction. In the end, Dana was able to remain in her mother's home with the support of MPLP's partner program, United Community Housing Coalition.

In 2016, MPLP's
Michigan Foreclosure
Prevention Project saved
3,138 homes.



Lisa Ruby, Public Benefits Attorney, in federal court with LSSCM's Nick Gable.

#### MICHIGAN POVERTY LAW PROGRAM STAFF



Helping Michigan residents solve their legal problems

michiganlegalhelp.org

In 2016, **777,000 people** 

visited the MLH website
to get the help
they needed to
handle their own
legal problems.



Michigan Legal Help staff members.

In 2016, visitors to the MLH website completed 86,824 sets of forms. 238 forms were completed each day, on average—a 38% increase from 2015.

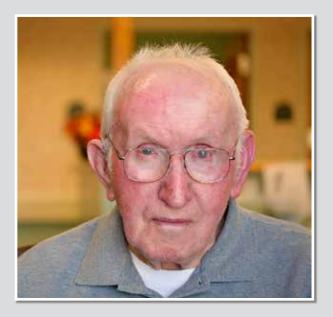
This website has been extremely helpful to me! I've been sharing the information with all my friends and family! I'm so excited to be able to have the help I need available at my fingertips and not have to worry about how can I get the answers I need...everything is simplified for you on the website!

[Website Visitor Testimonial]

This service is amazing! In a stressful situation it was so nice to have MLH do the work for me. Thank you very much for being such a big help!

[Website Visitor Testimonial]





Bennett, a wheelchair user who lost one leg to amputation and had serious health challenges, was residing in a nursing home. With MEJI's help, Bennett arranged to move out of the nursing home and into an accessible and affordable apartment. Two weeks before his new apartment became available, the nursing home attempted to involuntarily discharge Bennett to a homeless shelter because of a partial debt he owed. The homeless shelter, however, was unable to meet Bennett's many critical health-related needs and did not have any available beds. Nevertheless, the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs approved his discharge from the nursing home and advised the nursing home staff it could roll Bennett's wheelchair out to the parking lot.

MEJI staff, including the local long term care ombudsman and pro bono partners, worked feverishly to delay the discharge.

While nursing home staff tried to get Bennett out of the building, an agreement was negotiated that ensured Bennett could remain in the nursing home for an additional two weeks.

At the end of the two weeks, Bennett moved into his subsidized apartment where he received the services and supports he needed. Without MEJI's intervention, Bennett would have been stranded in the parking lot with limited mobility, no way to refrigerate his medication, no cash, no food, nowhere to go, and no family to assist him. Fortunately, Bennett was able to access MEJI's services and he is now thriving in his new home.

# Justice Initiative

Empowering, educating, and protecting low-income older adults and people with disabilities

meji.org



In 2016, MEJI took over the Michigan long term care ombudsman program charged with addressing the quality of life and quality of care experienced by residents living in the state's nursing homes, homes for the aged, and adult foster care facilities.



Alison Hirschel, Salli Pung, and Dan Wojciak presenting at the Michigan House of Representatives' Families, Children, and Seniors Standing Committee Meeting.





#### MICHIGAN ELDER JUSTICE INITIATIVE STAFF

Alison Hirschel, Director • Ahnuh Hayes, Local Ombudsman
Dakima Jackson, Assistant State Long Term Care Ombudsman
Dan Wojciak, MI Health Link Ombudsman
Jonathan Tabor, Legal Counsel to MLTCOP
Karrie Jordan, Local Ombudsman
Salli Pung, State Long Term Care Ombudsman
Shelby Coolbaugh, Administrative Manager
Susan Steinke, Outreach Coordinator



STAFF AWARD

Christine Sauvé received

MAP's 2016 110% award

for her exceptional

commitment to her work

at Welcoming Michigan.

In 2016, MIRC helped
283 immigrants
become U.S. citizens
and assisted a total
of 2,105 clients
with immigration-related
issues.



Building a thriving Michigan where immigrant communities are fully integrated and respected

michiganimmigrant.org

In 2016, Welcoming Michigan
hosted 26 events and
35 trainings for over 4,000
community members, engaged
219 elected officials, and
assisted 4 Michigan municipalities
in joining the Welcoming Cities
& Counties program.

#### **Welcoming** Michigan

Building Immigrant Friendly Communities welcomingmichigan.org



MAP recognized the entire MIRC staff for their tireless efforts to meet the increased demand for services, for both direct representation and technical assistance to partners, since November 2016.



Anna Hill with Nickie Perera, formerly of the Center for Civil Justice and now a Staff Attorney with MAP's Legal Services of South Central Michigan-Lansing.

On November 29, 2016, Anna Hill, Staff Attorney at MIRC, presented oral arguments at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit in MIRC's class action filed on behalf of noncitizens who were denied full Medicaid benefits because of a glitch in the state's computer system. MIRC's first client in this case was an Iraqi refugee child with diabetes who could not access primary care to manage his condition due to the state's error and was consequently hospitalized multiple times on an emergency basis. MIRC's ultimate success in this case, along with our partners at the Center for Civil Justice, ensured access to healthcare for more than 80,000 individuals.

#### MICHIGAN IMMIGRANT RIGHTS CENTER STAFF

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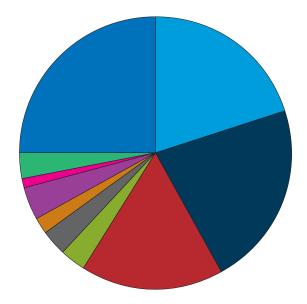
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In **2016**, MAP's Pro Bono attorneys completed **464 cases**.

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•	Legal Services Corporation*\$2,213,342	(22%)
•	Michigan State Bar Foundation**\$1,989,361	(20%)
	Other Governmental Funding\$1,675,166	(17%)
	Foundations\$268,441	(3%)
	Local United Ways\$307,300	(3%)
	Local Area Agencies on Aging\$212,144	(2%)
	Other Grants\$374,749	(4%)
•	Miscellaneous Income and Interest\$78,730	(1%)
•	Contributions\$313,123	(3%)
•	Donated Goods and Services\$2,451,605	(25%)

**93%** of the Michigan Advocacy Program Budget goes **directly to programs** that **help low income** individuals.

TOTAL REVENUE......\$9,883,961

#### **EXPENSES**

TOTAL EXPENSES \$10,046,929

This reflects a consolidated statement of activity for Michigan Advocacy Program as well as Crime Victims Legal Assistance Project, Michigan Poverty Law Program, Michigan Legal Help, Michigan Elder Justice Initiative, and Michigan Immigrant Rights Center.

#### WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR 2016 FUNDERS:

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Area Agency on Aging – Regions IB, II, IIIC, CareWell Services Southwest, Tri-County

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – New Americans Collaboration

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U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Supportive Services for Veteran Families

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United Way of Monroe/Lenawee Counties

United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region

United Way of Washtenaw County

University of Michigan Law School

Volunteers of America Michigan (Supportive Services for Veteran Families)

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