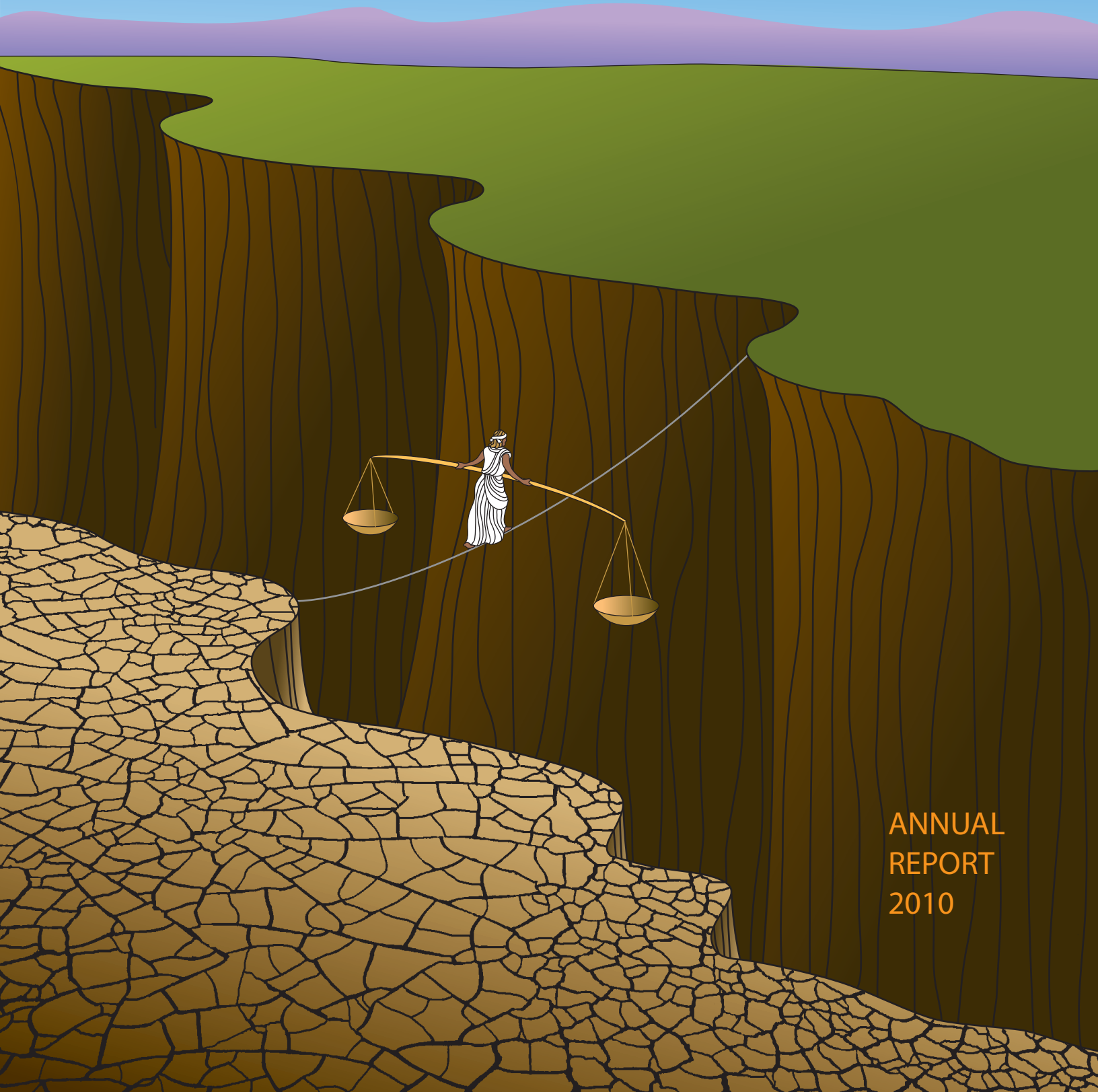


# CONNECTICUT LEGAL SERVICES, INC.



ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2010

# Service Area, Offices, and Staff

Connecticut Legal Services is a private, not-for-profit law firm dedicated to improving the lives of low-income people by providing access to justice.

The CLS service area—all of Connecticut except the greater Hartford and New Haven areas—contains 190,000 people financially eligible for services (2000 census).

CLS has six full-service offices, five satellite offices, and one administrative office.

On June 30, 2010,  
the CLS staff consisted of  
52.60 FTE lawyers  
2.00 FTE paralegals  
16.49 legal assistants  
7.88 FTE administrative staff.



## *CLS Helps Family Overwhelmed by Medical Expenses*

*Maria and Pedro have three children. Although Maria and Pedro do not speak or read English very well, they both work—until recently, Pedro worked two jobs in order to make ends meet. Unfortunately, their jobs do not provide medical insurance, and one of their children became ill. When Pedro was laid off from his second job, their child's medical bills became overwhelming. Maria approached the state for help and applied for medical coverage (Husky A) for her children. The Department of Social Services (DSS) ruled that Maria and Pedro made too much money to be eligible and denied the application. Maria tried to explain to DSS that her husband had lost his second job so the family met the income requirements. The DSS worker refused to verify their employment, accused Maria of lying about the family's income, and threatened to have the family investigated for fraud. He also told Maria that she needed to apply for a different medical program (Husky B). Maria did so but was told that she didn't qualify and needed to return to DSS to apply for the Husky A program. Confused and uncertain about where to turn, Maria found her way to Connecticut Legal Services for help. Her CLS attorney contacted the DSS worker and the worker's supervisor. The CLS attorney reminded the DSS staff of its legal obligation to verify the family's employment before deciding whether Maria's children were eligible for medical coverage. After a number of phone calls from the CLS attorney, DSS verified Maria's and Pedro's wages, found that they were eligible, and enrolled the three children in the appropriate medical program retroactively. The program now covers all three children, and the overwhelming medical bills have been paid.*

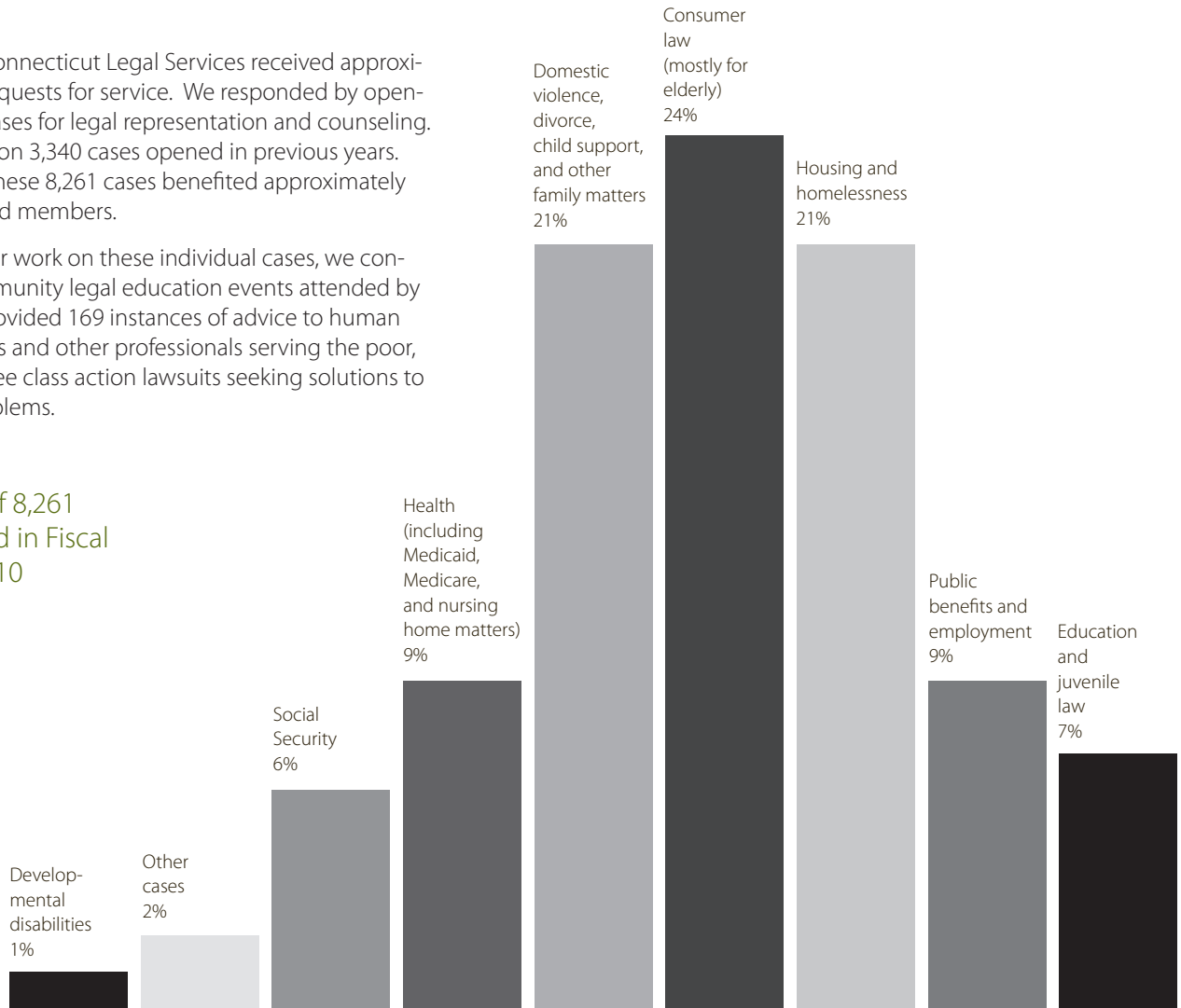


# Distribution of Cases

In 2009–2010, Connecticut Legal Services received approximately 19,635 requests for service. We responded by opening 4,921 new cases for legal representation and counseling. We also worked on 3,340 cases opened in previous years. Our services in these 8,261 cases benefited approximately 18,376 household members.

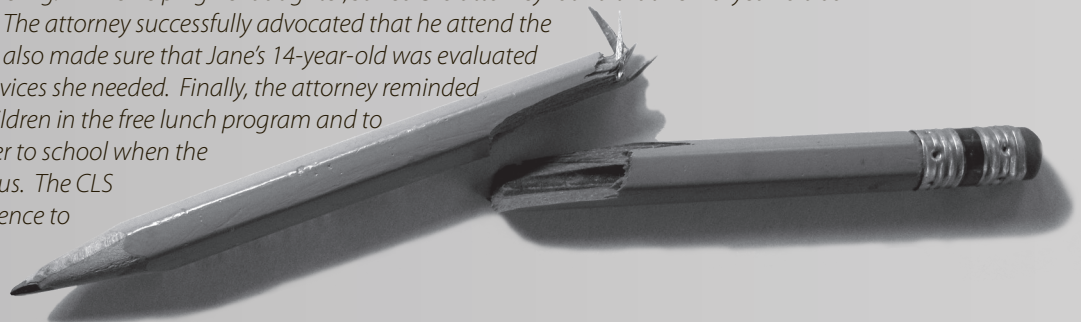
In addition to our work on these individual cases, we conducted 177 community legal education events attended by 8,674 people, provided 169 instances of advice to human services agencies and other professionals serving the poor, and litigated three class action lawsuits seeking solutions to widespread problems.

## Distribution of 8,261 Cases Handled in Fiscal Year 2009–2010



## Children Struggle to Stay in School; CLS Steps In

Jane is a disabled mother of three children, ages 14, 15, and 16. Jane's 16-year-old daughter suffers from an anxiety disorder that makes social settings very difficult for her. Jane asked the school for help, but the administration refused; as a result, Jane's daughter stopped going to school. Jane called Connecticut Legal Services for help. Her CLS attorney worked with the school to explore multiple plans and placements to get her daughter back to school. Today, Jane's daughter is making progress and happily attending a private school designed for children with anxiety disorders. She also receives transportation to help with her anxiety about traveling. While helping her daughter, Jane's CLS attorney found that her 15-year-old son also was having school anxiety issues. The attorney successfully advocated that he attend the same private school. The CLS attorney also made sure that Jane's 14-year-old was evaluated and received any special education services she needed. Finally, the attorney reminded the school system to enroll all three children in the free lunch program and to reimburse Jane for driving her daughter to school when the 16-year-old is too anxious to ride the bus. The CLS intervention made an enormous difference to the well-being of this family.



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## CLS Helps Disabled Man Obtain Benefits

Roger applied for Social Security benefits. When the SSA denied his application, Roger requested formal reconsideration; the application was denied again. He appealed that decision and contacted Connecticut Legal Services for help. Roger's CLS attorney obtained comprehensive medical documentation supporting Roger's disability claim. While the claim was pending, Roger's CLS attorney was able to obtain Title XIX (Medicaid) health coverage for him, without which Roger could not get medical transportation to the UConn Health Center for treatment. At the SSA hearing, Roger testified about his degenerative disc disease, serious depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Roger's CLS attorney argued that the nature and severity of his disability prevented him from working on a regular and continuing basis in any occupation and at any level of exertion. The administrative law judge agreed and awarded disability benefits. With these benefits, Roger can now find a stable place to live.

# Letter from Executive Director and Board Chair

*To our friends and supporters:*

*We are crossing a chasm of financial difficulty. Wherever we look—at Connecticut Legal Services, at the low-income families and individuals we serve, or at business and government environments—we see people trying to carry on through this time of often overwhelming fiscal pressure.*

*We are optimistic that for Connecticut Legal Services, things will be easier two or three years from now. In the meantime, our most important priorities are to serve our clients well and in large numbers and to support and retain our staff so that we emerge from a period of adversity in as strong a position as possible.*

*The survival strategy for our clients is less clear. Some people who have lost jobs will have been out of work for years by the time the economy improves; some (particularly those who are older or partially disabled) may never find work again. Desperately ill clients need medical care now, not when the economy improves. Women coping with domestic abuse need to find safety for themselves and their children now, although their options are bleak.*

*Despite the many challenges CLS and our clients face, our attorneys and staff are energized and engaged in the immediate effort to solve the life crises of poor people. These problems flow into our offices daily, and they cannot wait. With your help, we will continue to make an enormous difference in the lives of low-income people throughout Connecticut.*

*Sincerely,*



Tom Goldberg

Board Chair



Steve Eppler-Epstein

Executive Director



## CLS Helps Mother Protect Her Children

*Ellie, a mother of two, walked into a Connecticut Legal Services office because she needed help. Her estranged husband had sexually assaulted her three-year-old daughter. She wanted to divorce him and receive full custody of her children. Ellie's CLS attorney helped her file for divorce and included a request for sole custody of her children with no visitation privileges for their father. For two years, Ellie's CLS attorney worked with law enforcement personnel, family relations mediation services, and the children's guardian ad litem to negotiate the terms of her divorce and protect Ellie and her children. Because of CLS's advocacy, Ellie achieved all her goals, and her children are safe from further abuse at the hands of their father.*



# Financial Supporters and Other Income Sources for 2009–2010 Expenditures

## GOVERNMENT BASED GRANTS

Agency on Aging, Senior Resources (Eastern Connecticut)	\$ 44,458	Fairfield County Community Foundation, Inc.	44,394
Agency on Aging, Southwestern Connecticut Area	64,962	Family Reentry, Inc.	5,714
Agency on Aging, Western Connecticut Area	62,384	General Re Corporation Fund	5,000
Bridgeport Housing Authority	25,146	Liberty Bank Foundation	2,500
City of Middletown	10,000	NewAlliance Foundation	5,000
Connecticut Commission on Child Protection	1,713	Rock Foundation	5,000
Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities	3,327	Sacred Heart Mustard Seed Fund	750
Connecticut Court Support Services Division	465,770	Seaman Family Foundation	58,557
Connecticut Department of Social Services	679,246	Susan B. Anthony Project, Inc.	485
Connecticut Office of Protection and Advocacy	52,500	The Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut	15,396
Connecticut Public Defender Services	6,000	The Daphne Seybolt Culpeper Memorial Foundation, Inc.	13,474
HPRP—Region 1 (through CTE, Inc.)	10,002	The Robert G. and Marguerite M. Derx Foundation of New Fairfield, Connecticut	40,000
HPRP—Region 2 (through Mercy Housing & Shelter Corporation)	6,858	The Jewish Home for the Elderly	1,550
HPRP—Region 3 (through TVCCA)	2,502	The Melville Charitable Trust	49,695
HPRP—Region 4 (through Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc.)	8,623	The James H. Napier Foundation	5,000
HPRP—Region 5 (through New Opportunities, Inc.)	16,589	The Frank Loomis Palmer Fund, Bank of America, Trustee	10,000
HPRP—Bridgeport	36,839	The Tow Foundation, Inc.	25,442
HPRP—New Britain (through Friendship Service Center of New Britain, Inc)	11,596	United Way, Central and Northeastern Connecticut	66,000
HPRP—Waterbury	76,083	United Way, Costal Fairfield County	35,000
Community Development Block Grant Program-City of Bridgeport	10,000	United Way, Greater Waterbury	16,675
Community Development Block Grant Program-City of Meriden	5,000	United Way, Greenwich	12,500
Community Development Block Grant Program-City of Waterbury	11,318	United Way, Meriden and Wallingford	30,000
Community Development Block Grant Program-Town of Fairfield	3,820	United Way, Northwest Connecticut	3,064
Town of Ashford	1,000	United Way, Southeastern Connecticut	39,647
Town of Coventry	1,000	United Way, Southington	5,000
Town of Darien	2,000	United Way, Stamford	15,000
Town of Ellington	1,700	United Way, West Central Connecticut	5,000
Town of Groton	14,000	United Way, Western Connecticut–Litchfield County	3,500
Town of Mansfield	5,000	United Way, Western Connecticut–Northern Fairfield County	23,522
Town of Vernon	4,000	Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut, Inc.	3,000
U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs	182,338	Xerox Corporation U.S.A	2,500
<b>Total Government-Based Grants</b>	<b>\$ 1,825,775</b>	<b>Total Private Grants</b>	<b>\$ 7,171,740</b>

## PRIVATE GRANTS

Community Foundation of Greater New Britain, Inc	\$ 19,291
Community Foundation of the Tri-County Area's Women & Girl Fund	5,781
Connecticut Bar Foundation (Interest on Lawyer's Trust Account)	2,998,570
Connecticut Bar Foundation (Court Fees Grants-in-Aid)	3,247,024
Connecticut Bar Foundation (Judicial Branch Grants-in-Aid)	246,090
Connecticut Health Foundation	99,600
Eastern Federal Bank Foundation, Inc.	1,000
Estate of Ruth I. Krauss	3,560
Fairfield County Bar Association, Inc.	\$ 2,458

## DONATIONS AND OTHER INCOME

Attorney Fees	243,767
Campaign for Justice	290,127
Donated Goods and Services	275,972
United Way Donor Designations	15,180
Interest Earned	15,814
Unrealized Gain/(Loss) on Investments	854
Miscellaneous	3,991
<b>Total Donations and Other Income</b>	<b>845,705</b>
<b>Total CLS Income</b>	<b>\$ 9,843,221</b>

# Statements of Financial Position—June 30, 2010, and June 30, 2009

ASSETS	June 30, 2010	June 30, 2009	LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	June 30, 2010	June 30, 2009
<b>Current Assets</b>			<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents— Operating Funds	\$ 2,664,100	\$ 2,904,577	Accrued Pension Liability	\$ 3,875,356	\$ 3,127,799
Cash in Escrow—Client Funds	10,517	5,680	Accounts Payable	44,534	60,693
Cash—Insurance Escrow	6,752	5,340	Accrued Expenses	39,242	45,901
Receivables			Refundable Advances	139,770	22,919
Grants and Contracts Receivable	\$ 265,373	\$ 76,408	Accrued Annual Leave	531,479	426,415
Promises to Give	1,009,170	2,085,695	Client Trust Deposits	10,509	5,680
Other Receivables	39,366	60,816	Total Current Liabilities	\$ 4,640,890	\$ 3,689,407
Prepaid Expenses	135,835	217,296	<b>Net Assets</b>		
Total Current Assets	\$ 4,131,113	\$ 5,355,812	<b>Unrestricted</b>		
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			Operations	\$ (1,726,700)	\$ (642,679)
Property and Equipment	\$ 529,845	\$ 665,121	Insurance Escrow	6,752	5,340
Leasehold Improvements	736,276	732,371	Fixed Assets	457,479	487,740
Total Fixed Assets Before Depreciation	1,266,121	1,397,492	Total Unrestricted	\$ (1,262,469)	\$ (149,599)
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(808,642)	(909,752)	Temporarily Restricted	1,231,553	2,325,126
Total Fixed Assets	\$ 457,479	\$ 487,740	Total Net Assets	\$ (30,916)	\$ 2,175,527
<b>Other Assets</b>			<b>Total Liabilities And Net Assets</b>		
Security Deposits	\$ 21,382	\$ 21,382		\$ 4,609,974	\$ 5,864,934
Total Other Assets	21,382	21,382			
Total Assets	\$ 4,609,974	\$ 5,864,934			



## CLS Helps Disabled Widow Fight Illegal Harassment

Beth, a 71-year-old widowed cancer survivor, fell behind on her credit card payments when her husband, on whom she had relied financially, died suddenly. Although the couple had payment protection insurance, the credit card company rejected Beth's claim as untimely—she had not claimed protection when she first became disabled. Her husband was still healthy and working, so the couple continued to make payments despite her disability. After her husband's death, Beth fell behind and started to get collection calls from the credit card company. Some callers illegally threatened to attach her Social Security payments and to pursue collection of the debt from her children, none of whom were co-signers on the accounts. Already under the care of her doctor for anxiety and depression caused by the death of her husband, Beth became more anxious and more depressed by the calls. She contacted Connecticut Legal Services for help. Her CLS attorneys filed a lawsuit against the credit card company for violation of Connecticut laws that protect people from these kinds of collection tactics and against infliction of emotional distress. The credit card company immediately sought a settlement. Beth's CLS attorney reached a very favorable agreement for Beth, and she can now live without the constant worry of menacing telephone calls from creditors.

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## Disabled Couple Fights Eviction; CLS Helps

*Mike and Sue live in a second-floor unit of a privately owned senior and disabled housing complex. Because of various injuries and illnesses, both Sue and Mike have a very difficult time walking and need walking aids. Their downstairs neighbors complained about the noise from the walking aids, so Mike and Sue asked their landlord to relocate them to an apartment where their walking aids would not disturb anyone. (Although they did not describe it this way, they had made a request for a reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.) The property owner illegally denied their request, and the noise complaints persisted. A couple of months later, the property owner told Mike and Sue that he was terminating their lease because of the noise complaints and took action to evict them from their apartment. Then Mike suffered another stroke. A hospital staff member discovered what was happening and referred Mike and Sue to Connecticut Legal Services for help. Their CLS attorney requested that the property owner comply with the earlier request for an accommodation, required by state and federal law, and terminate the eviction. After the CLS attorney had a lengthy conversation with the property owner and his attorney, the owner agreed to transfer Mike and Sue to a first-floor unit and withdrew the eviction.*



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## *CLS Helps Abused Woman Start Over*

*Rita met her husband while he vacationed in her country. After some time, they married, and she moved to the United States to be with him. Rita's husband became addicted to drugs and started abusing her. Rita had relied on her husband to handle her immigration paperwork, but he never completed or filed it. When she was eight months pregnant, her husband violently attacked her and attempted to strangle her. Rita fled from the home and sought safety in a domestic violence shelter, where she stayed until her child was born. The shelter referred Rita to Connecticut Legal Services for help. Rita's CLS attorney filed a petition under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) on Rita's behalf so she could continue the immigration process independently from her abusive husband. While that petition was pending, Rita's CLS attorney helped secure temporary cash assistance and aid for Rita to go back to school at her local community college. Her CLS attorney also helped her file for divorce and seek sole custody of their infant son. Rita completed her accounting degree, her VAWA petition for legal immigration status was approved, and she now works as a bank teller, which allows her to support herself and her son. Rita and her son live in their own apartment, free from the threat of violence.*

## In Memory Of

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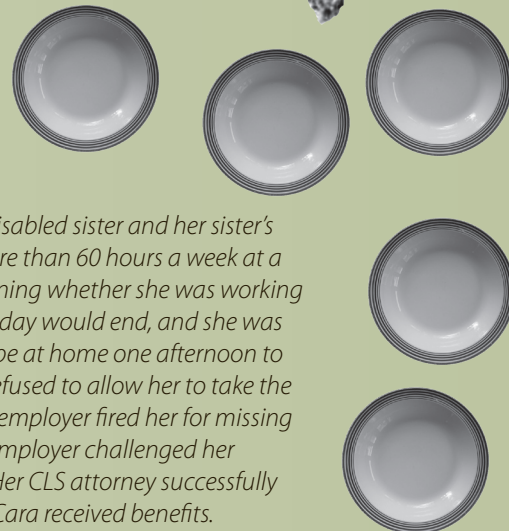
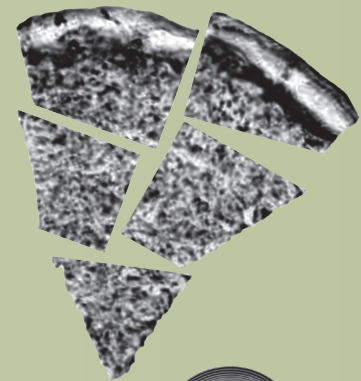
## In Honor or Appreciation Of

Aaron Bayer  
Livia Barndollar and her  
terms as president of  
the Connecticut Bar  
Association and chair  
of the Connecticut Bar  
Association Family Law  
Section  
Robert E. Beach Jr.  
Clients, students, staff,  
and faculty of the  
Quinnipiac University  
School of Law Clinical  
Programs

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New Britain office staff  
Connecticut Legal Services  
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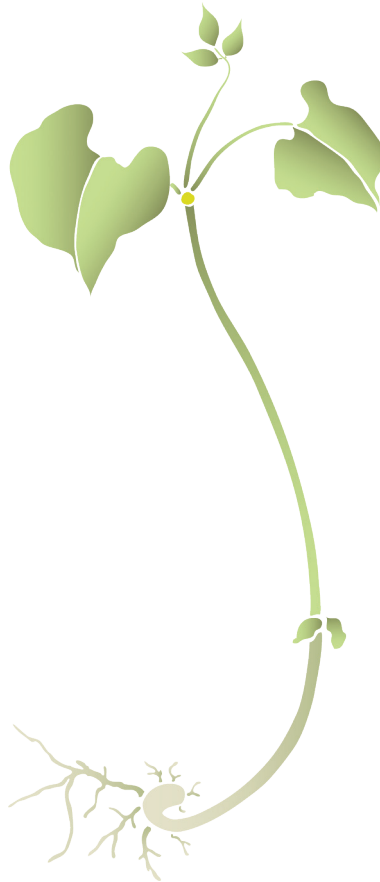
## CLS Helps Mother Support Extended Family

*Cara is a single mother with two children. She also provides a home for her disabled sister and her sister's child, who cannot live independently. To support her family, Cara worked more than 60 hours a week at a low-wage job. On a daily basis, Cara's employer would let her know each evening whether she was working the next day and when she would start work. She never knew when her workday would end, and she was not permitted a planned day off. Cara also had health problems and had to be at home one afternoon to receive medical equipment for which she needed instruction. Her employer refused to allow her to take the afternoon off, but Cara had no other way to get her medical equipment. Her employer fired her for missing that afternoon's work. Cara applied for unemployment compensation. Her employer challenged her application, and Cara found her way to Connecticut Legal Services for help. Her CLS attorney successfully represented her in the unemployment compensation hearing, ensuring that Cara received benefits. Since then, Cara has found another position that allows her the flexibility to take planned days off and is supporting herself and her family.*

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