# 2016 ANNUAL REPORT & 2017 STRATEGY



# **LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP**

It was a grey early December day. Our strategic planning committee gathered in a conference room for the final review of our new plan. But we had more on our minds: we were still coming to grips with the election and what it meant for the people we serve. We knew the result threatened to upend many achievements. We knew we had to re-evaluate strategies, to decide which would be effective under a new administration and which should be re-worked or shelved. We knew we would have to stay flexible to remain relevant.

So, we asked, what about our plan, which had been a year in the making? In the face of the uncertainty that December day, we joked that we should just tear the darn thing up!

But uncertainty gave way to resolve as we committed to a plan that is perfectly suited for this moment. The first strategy—do the most important work—anticipates our new reality and imposes a more rigorous process to ensure that each project secures the rights of large numbers of people. The second and third strategies—strengthening our high quality brand and further improving our financial stability better equip us to do that work.

We added a new tactic that dreary December day, drawn from our 1960s founding as one of the Lawyers' Committees for Civil Rights Under Law. Then, a very different President challenged lawyers from across the nation to lend their talents to the civil rights movement. In late 2016, we, too, determined that it would take dedicated lawyers and energized communities to protect civil rights from whatever comes next.

Today, we are living our strategic plan by making sure our work brings positive changes to the greatest number of people. We are going to the courts—which continue to discharge their critical responsibility to uphold the Constitution—to make our elections fair and accessible to all, and to protect employees from discrimination. We are enforcing laws that require safe and habitable housing for renters, and laws requiring states to provide healthcare to low income and disabled people. We continue to prepare our most marginalized fellow residents with the tools they need to gather and present their demands collectively, exercising their constitutional rights to assemble peaceably and associate freely.

Perhaps that last tactic—organizing—will be the most important of all. In January, we invited lawyers from across the Philadelphia region to begin a conversation about a new collaboration—one in which lawyers stand shoulder to shoulder to declare that discrimination and hate have no place in Philadelphia. From those meetings sprang a remarkable gathering of over 600 lawyers and community leaders to plan legal support for immigrants and refugees. Organizing helped us rise to meet this first of many challenges we know lie ahead. And now we have a structure in place when future crises arise: we'll know what to do and how much we can do together.

You, friends and supporters, are critical in that organizing. Your leadership is vital in eliminating barriers to education, housing, healthcare, employment, a safe and healthy neighborhood, and access to the ballot. And it is the generous contributions of your time and resources that allow us to use the power of the law to promote justice for all.

Sincerely,



In R.

Jennifer R. Clarke Executive Director



Br. T. for

Brian T. Feeney *Board Chair* 

# 2016 AT A GLANCE

REACHED **3100** PEOPLE THROUGH COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS



HELPED PASS PENNSYLVANIA'S NEW BASIC EDUCATION FUNDING FORMULA ESTABLISHED **FIRST-EVER** PROCESS FOR PENNSYLVANIA PARENTS TO FILE COMPLAINTS ABOUT CURRICULUM DEFICIENCIES

**IMPROVED ACCESS TO** 

MEDICAL AND DENTAL

SERVICES FOR

MFDICAID-FI IGIBI F

CHILDREN

**IN FLORIDA** 

HELPED ORGANIZE PHILADELPHIA CITY COUNCIL'S FIRST-EVER HEARING ON URBAN AGRICULTURE

PROVIDED DIRECT REPRESENTATION OR CONSULTATION TO 35+ COMMUNITY GARDENS AND MARKET FARMS

STOPPED THE ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL DECISION MAKING PROCESS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED SERVICES DURING SCHOOL BREAKS

TRAINED 274 PEOPLE ON THE RIGHTS OF EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES IN THE WORKPLACE LAUNCHED INNOVATIVE LEGAL STRATEGY TO CURBABUSIVE LANDLORD TACTICS

# **OUR MISSION**

The Public Interest Law Center uses high-impact legal strategies to advance the civil, social, and economic rights of communities in the Philadelphia region facing discrimination, inequality, and poverty. We use litigation, community education, advocacy, and organizing to secure their access to fundamental resources and services.

# WHAT WE DO

#### LITIGATION

We partner with pro bono counsel and other non-profits to bring class action lawsuits and other lawsuits that have the potential to change systems and transform law and policy for the better.

#### **COMMUNITY EDUCATION**

The people most harmed by injustice are often best suited to advocate for change. We support our clients' advocacy efforts by providing technical, legal, and policy information through workshops, presentations, and digital platforms.



#### **POLICY ADVOCACY**

Working in coalitions, we advocate for local, state and federal policies, rules and regulations that impact our clients. We use public comments, meetings with elected officials, and communications strategies.

## ORGANIZING

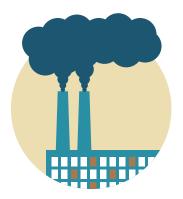
Change happens when large groups of people rise up and demand it. We provide organizing support to communities to help them have a voice in their futures and improve their lives.

# WE HELP LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE



## **HEALTHCARE**

Eliminate systemic barriers to medical and dental care for low income people, especially children.



# **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

Support low-income, historically disinvested communities and communities of color in advocating for healthy, sustainable and equitable neighborhoods.



# **PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Ensure all students, regardless of ZIP code, race, ethnicity, language or abilities, have access to a highquality public education.



# HOUSING

Stop housing discrimination against low-income people and promote healthy, affordable housing for people in the neighborhoods of their choice.



# **EMPLOYMENT**

Help people with criminal records and people with disabilities get jobs by fighting employment discrimination.



# VOTING

Protect every citizen's right to vote by modernizing Pennsylvania's election system and challenging discriminatory barriers to the ballot box.

# IMPROVING ACCESS TO MEDICAL AND DENTAL TREATMENT FOR 1.8 MILLION CHILDREN IN FLORIDA

"The thing that made me want to really help with the case was I regularly sat with my kids in health departments and clinics. I saw other parents who loved their children every bit as much as I did, but they had no idea how to navigate the system and many did not speak English. When I learned about the case, I took the opportunity to participate on behalf of the other children that had no one to speak for them, not because there was no interest but because their parents didn't know what to do."

Rita Gorenflo

Rita Gorenflo, a retired nurse from Hobe Sound, Florida, has seven adopted children. All of the kids have special needs and all were or are enrolled in Florida's Medicaid program, a program that provides medical and dental care for low income children and children with disabilities. In the 2000s, Rita couldn't find any providers to accept Medicaid insurance for two of her sons, Thomas and Nathaniel. Thomas needed orthopedic surgery, but even as his condition worsened, the family could not find a surgeon. Nathaniel had chronic sinusitis and ear problems, and Rita had to fight constantly to get someone to treat him.



It wasn't just Rita's children who were not being treated. Hundreds of thousands of children in the state's Medicaid program were not receiving even one check-up in a year. Less than one quarter of the toddlers who should have received lead screenings received the test. Only a small fraction of children received any dental care.

In 2005, Rita joined as a plaintiff in a class action lawsuit we brought in partnership with Boies Schiller & Flexner LLP. She joined other parents and Florida's medical professional associations in the suit against the state of Florida for violating federal law which requires the state to provide prompt medical and dental services to Medicaidenrolled children.

In 2014, after tens of thousands of hours of work by our legal team and more than 90 days of trial, a federal judge found Florida failed in operating its Medicaid system and ordered remediation. In 2016, we reached a settlement agreement that forces the state to make substantial improvements to its health care system over the next several years. Preventive dental care and dental treatment rates will be raised to national averages and outreach to increase enrollment will be improved. Doctor reimbursement rates will increase, and Florida's 1.8 million Medicaid-eligible children will actually have access to care.



"I am very thankful for this case and hopeful the system is going to improve. I am just so thankful the Public Interest Law Center and Boies Schiller & Flexner LLP did the extensive work that was necessary to get this case through the court system."

-Rita Gorenflo

# **2017 HEALTHCARE GOALS**

Improve the rate at which Pennsylvania children enrolled in Medicaid see a dentist.

# ORGANIZING FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE



"Community agriculture produces food, flowers, and herbs for the people, by the people... When we see vacant land, we see the potential for plants growing, and helping our city to connect to its long history, through planting native species. We are able to travel to a time before violent reliance on broken systems by growing ancient plants and sharing them with the next generation. We contribute to a more perfect ecological system when we tend to the land, and are inspired that another way is possible. Harmonious and challenging, complicated and highly fruitful - we the people see prosperity and democracy in action when we work the land."

 Kirtrina Baxter, staff community organizer and Soil Generation member testifying at Philadelphia City Council hearing on urban agriculture

People of color, immigrants, refugees and neighbors in low-income communities in Philadelphia have a decades-long legacy of using vacant, abandoned land to grow food and community. In 2016, we partnered with food justice advocates to secure big wins on city policies that will support food and community spaces for years to come.

At the request of Philadelphia City Council, we helped draft a resolution calling for the first-ever city-wide hearing on urban agriculture. More than 100 people came out in force to show support and testify, including members of Soil Generation, the black-led coalition of urban gardeners and farmers we helped launch and support. City Councilmember Blondell Reynolds Brown noted during the hearing:

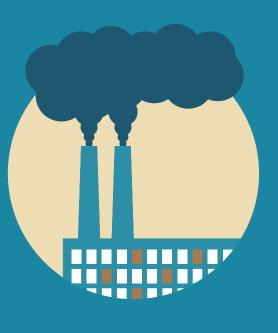




"I have struggled as I sit here trying to figure out if I remember the last time we had an audience of testifiers and advocates that were richly diverse in terms of age, in terms of cross-sections of the city, in terms of ethnicity, in terms of energy and enthusiasm... it's remarkable."

And, after four years of advocacy, we worked with City Council and the Philadelphia Water Department to enact legislation to create an exemption for gardens and farms from paying storm water fees or related debt, saving gardens thousands of dollars.

See more at: www.GroundedInPhilly.org



*"In the words of our city's many"* growers, urban agriculture heals communities and gives them a path to self-reliance. Urban agriculture means empowerment and making your voice heard. It means getting to choose what nourishes you and your community."

– Amy Laura Cahn, Staff Attorney, Philadelphia Food Policy Advisory **Council testimony** 

# **2017 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE GOALS**

Support land tenure and long-term preservation of community gardens and market farms.

Promote equitable development policies, including affordable housing and urban agriculture.

# PROTECTING PEOPLE'S RIGHTS TO SAFE AND HEALTHY HOUSING

"I wanted to bring this case because I know a lot of people that have been taken advantage of by landlords and I thought my taking a stand could help those who want to have their voice heard and come forward but are afraid to speak up. This case is very important to me because I believe everyone should be treated as equal, no matter what. It is really unfair to treat people differently because of the level of their income."

–Yazmin Vazquez

Yazmin Vasquez, her mother and her infant nephew had just moved into a new apartment in a safer neighborhood in north Philadelphia when she realized things were not right. It was winter and she couldn't get the heat to turn on. Her family was cold. There were cracks in some windows. The stove would not light. The smoke detectors were not installed appropriately. There were rodents all over the apartment, and they ate her food and burrowed into her furniture. She could smell raw sewage leaking up from the basement.

No matter how many times she asked her landlord or property manager to fix the problems, her home remained uninhabitable. She alerted the City's Department of Licenses & Inspections and the Fair Housing Commission. And after she did, her landlord tried to evict her. So she turned to us for help.



"My apartment made me physically sick and I was stressed out all the time," said Yazmin. "And then, I was nearly homeless for six months after I had to move out because of this situation."

Thousands of people in the Philadelphia region are living in unhealthy homes like Yazmin's. And with 95% of low-income tenants lacking access to free legal representation, they have little power to fight back in Landlord-Tenant court.

This year we launched a comprehensive housing project designed to change this dynamic. First, we are bringing cases against landlords like Yazmin's to build case law that will keep landlords from renting substandard housing. We are active members of the Healthy Rowhouse Project, advocating to increase city funding for housing improvements. And, we are working with the public interest legal community to secure support and funding for a right to counsel in civil landlord-tenant cases, so that all people have access to representation.

"Landlords should heed the message of *this suit: Be prepared to follow the law* and repair and maintain your property, not just collect rent to get rich quick."

- Staff Attorney Dan Urevick-Ackelsberg

# **2017 HOUSING GOALS**

Improve homeownership, neighborhood stability, and housing quality for low-income renters.

Reform Landlord Tenant court. including securing a commitment from the City of Philadelphia for a civil right to representation for low-income tenants.

# FIGHTING SO ALL PENNSYLVANIA CHILDREN HAVE ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION



"Many districts, with kids of every race, are underfunded in Pennsylvania. But that system-wide deprivation should not obscure this sobering reality: the surest way to find a Pennsylvania school district that is underfunded is to look for the presence of black and brown children. Resolving these disparities is one of the major civil rights struggles confronting Pennsylvania."

-Joan Duvall-Flynn, President of NAACP PA State Conference

In 2016, we went before the state's highest court in our lawsuit alleging that Pennsylvania officials are failing to fully and fairly fund public education. Together with more than 200 parents, students, clergy, advocates, Philadelphia City Councilmembers and people from as far away as Erie and Pittsburgh, we packed the courtroom and urged Pennsylvania's Supreme Court Justices to affirm that children have an enforceable right to a sound education, and to give us a chance to prove that right is being violated. A decision is expected sometime in the spring of 2017.

This organizing followed our success with the Campaign for Fair Education Funding in advocating for the state legislature to adopt a new formula for how it distributes basic education funding. We are now urging the legislature to fully fund the formula.

Philadelphia students rally for fair funding.

Legal team from Public Interest Law Center, Education Law Center-PA and O'Melveny & Myers LLP after oral argument.

We also continued our work to ensure that parents of students with disabilities who do not speak English as their first language are able to participate in their children's education. Currently, the School District of Philadelphia provides parents with documents in English only, and similarly fails to provide interpretation services during planning meetings. As a result, parents with limited English proficiency are effectively excluded from the decision making processes for their children. In 2015, together with the Education Law Center-PA and Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP, we filed a federal lawsuit against the district for these failures. This past year, the Department of Justice filed a brief in support of our clients. And, a federal judge rejected the School District of Philadelphia's motion to dismiss the case, allowing the case to move forward in 2017 with discovery and, eventually, a motion for class certification.

# **2017 EDUCATION GOALS**

Secure adequate and fair funding for public education in Pennsylvania.

Secure interpretation and translation services for Philadelphia school parents with limited English proficiency.

# HELPING COMMUNITIES USE LEGAL TOOLS TO ADDRESS THEIR NEEDS



"We call it La Finquita. In Spanish it means 'the little farm.' My family and my two sons, we have been growing things here the whole time. One of my sons passed away and we keep up his memory here. We would be very sad to see this place go away. It is part of our family."

Longtime gardener and resident Danny Rodriguez

We use law and organizing to provide communities the tools they need for an equitable and meaningful voice in the health, sustainability, and future of their neighborhoods.

In March 2016, we initiated litigation to save a quarter acre community farm and garden in Philadelphia's South Kensington neighborhood. Neighbors at La Finquita have been growing thousands of pounds of produce each year for residents and food banks since the Philadelphia Catholic Worker started the garden in 1988. In January 2016 gardeners found the locks changed on the entrance of the fence that surrounded the garden for decades–suddenly the garden was at risk. We and co-counsel at Saul Ewing LLP filed an adverse possession lawsuit on behalf of the Philadelphia Catholic Worker to save their land and the garden on it. And, we helped them rally to secure media coverage, which has raised the public profile of their claim. The lawsuit is ongoing.

We also took this approach with communities in south Philadelphia and southwest Philadelphia to confront community development and environmental justice issues. The Hawthorne Empowerment Coalition is a group of south Philadelphia residents that oppose the construction of a 32-story mixed use tower in their neighborhood. The tower threatens to increase traffic congestion and noise pollution and the community was ignored during the design process and





La Finquita gardeners.

**2017 COMMUNITY GOALS** 

zoning hearing. We intervened on behalf of the Coalition to ask the court to overturn prior zoning approvals so that people in the neighborhood can have a say moving forward.

La Finquita's farm stand.

We have been supporting the Eastwick Friends & Neighbors Coalition since 2012, when residents learned about unwanted development set to occur on 135-acres of open space. Following a major victory in 2015, which finally brought an end to that unwanted development, we helped residents as they prepared to participate in the neighborhood's first-ever community-based planning process and supported efforts to stop the sale of a nearby, shuttered public school building so that this 47-acre property could be included in the planning process. Provide community lawyering services to communities facing environmental injustices.

Increase compliance with state law prohibiting use of background checks.

Reform Pennsylvania's legislative redistricting model.

# SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN ACCESSING CRITICAL RESOURCES

"When the school district wouldn't provide my son with the language therapy he needed, I had to pay out of my own pocket for additional services, even though my son has a right to individualized services."

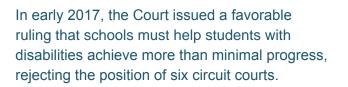
- Kimberly Williams, parent of student with disabilities

For many students with disabilities, school breaks, such as winter and summer break, can be challenging; if they do not have continued access to the services they need, they can regress from the progress they have made during the school year. Federal law protects students from this harm by requiring school districts to provide individualized Extended School Year (ESY) services during breaks.

During the 2013 summer break, however, the School District of Philadelphia operated a one-size-fits-all ESY program, violating federal law and failing to provide students with the individualized services they needed. Together with pro bono counsel from Covington & Burling LLP, we filed a lawsuit on behalf of parents whose children were not receiving appropriate services, and we got results. In 2016 we negotiated a settlement agreement through which the School District agreed to provide individualized services, better involve parents in planning, and train teachers and staff on ESY processes.

This year we also took our advocacy on behalf of students with disabilities to the U.S. Supreme Court when we helped rally disability rights organizations to submit two friend-ofthe-court briefs in an important special education case, *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District.* For the first time in 35 years, our nation's highest court reviewed what level of educational benefit is required under federal law to ensure students with disabilities receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education. We asked the court to take on the case, and after it did, we asked the court to support a high standard of education benefits.





Finally, we continue our work to support employees with disabilities. For example, last fall we advocated for an employee who was fired after working for her employer for 27 years because she became disabled and needed two days of additional leave. She was left without a job and at risk of losing her home. We helped her get her job back so that she could remain in her home. And we forced the employer to change its leave policies, benefiting tens of thousands of employees.



# 2017 GOALS SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Increase the rate of employment and retention among people with disabilities.

Ensure School District of Philadelphia individually tailors summer programs for children with disabilities

## **2016 ANNUAL CELEBRATION**

More than 200 people and 73 sponsors joined us for our annual cocktail party at FringeArts. Thanks to generous supporters, we raised \$331,000 to support our mission and we honored our partners with the Thaddeus Stevens Awards.



Nick Chimicles of **Chimicles & Tikellis LLP** for his dedicated service on our Board of Directors *"Nick has been a leader"* in just about every major board initiative. Nick was there with others to develop and implement a business plan. He thinks of us when his team of creative lawyers is working on a potential case that might overlap with our mission. And day to day, Nick always shows up." - Executive Director Jennifer Clarke



Boies Schiller & Flexner LLP for more than a decade of pro bono service

"The Boies Schiller & Flexner firm and the team that worked for ten years alongside the Public Interest Law Center on this case are all extremely proud to accept this honor. This is the type of case we became lawyers to litigate." -Boies Schiller & Flexner Partner Stuart H. Singer



**Soil Generation** for building a city-wide, people-of-color led movement in support of urban agriculture and food justice

"On behalf of our black-led coalition, I want to thank the Public Interest Law Center for this award and its generosity supporting Soil Generation and the work that we have done in the community. I implore you to continue to support the Public Interest Law Center and grow a garden!" -Nyambi Royster, member of Soil Generation



## **PRO BONO VOLUNTEERS**

Our capacity to represent our clients for free is made possible by the generous support of pro bono attorneys, interns and volunteers. In 2016, over 100 private attorneys from more than 30 firms volunteered more than \$700,000 worth of their time on our cases and projects.

The partnership between our staff, attorneys from Reed Smith LLP and staff of The Village of Arts and Humanities is just one example of how pro bono attorneys build our capacity. Reed Smith LLP attorneys Michael Falk and Joshua Peles contributed significantly to our work with The Village for over a year. The Village teaches art, music and dance; converts vacant lots into art; grows and cultivates gardens; and, helps neighborhood men and women struggling to overcome drug addiction. The Reed Smith team assists The Village with various legal issues, including land acquisition, clearing title and removing liens on Village-controlled properties.



Michael Falk Reed Smith LLP



Joshua Peles Reed Smith LLP



Aviva Kapust The Village

"When witnessing The Village's incredible transformation of an area of our City once overcome by blight into a neighborhood sanctuary and the valuable services offered by The Village to community youth and other residents, it is impossible not to be inspired to help. It has been and continues to be a joy to serve and work with this great organization in partnership with the Public Interest Law Center and Amy Laura Cahn in particular. The legal issues we deal with are challenging and often require us to balance legal considerations with strategic objectives. The best part of the work, other than dealing with the great people at The Village and the Law Center, is that we have the opportunity to achieve meaningful and tangible results."

"Beginning in law school, I have consistently demonstrated a commitment to pro bono efforts. My work with pro bono clients has been incredibly rewarding and has provided me with an opportunity to help advance the interests of various non-profit organizations, as well as individuals with little resources, in the local community. Additionally, pro bono matters often implicate challenging and interesting issues that I would not otherwise encounter in my daily practice. I feel honored to represent The Village and look forward to continuing to build our relationship."

"Josh and Mike have been instrumental in helping The Village navigate and resolve various, complex legal issues related to our many art parks and gardens—community assets that were built with, for and as neighbors to our constituents. Their knowledge, guidance and unwavering responsiveness is only matched by their compassion and support of The Village's mission. The Village's Board, staff and community are so lucky to have the Reed Smith team in our corner as we celebrate our 30th anniversary. We are so grateful to Amy Laura Cahn and the Public Interest Law Center for arranging this partnership, and for their expert advice and support today, and over many years—it has been valuable beyond measure, to The Village and to the City of Philadelphia."

## **2016 PRO BONO ATTORNEYS**

# Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP

W. Stewart Wallace Gregory Wallance

Blank Rome LLP Molly Crane

#### **Boies Schiller & Flexner LLP**

Carl E. Goldfarb Lauren F. Louis Thomas McCawley Pascual Oliu Joshua Riley Stuart H. Singer

Community Legal Services of Philadelphia Michael Carroll

#### **Covington & Burling LLP**

Jonathan Cloar Rachel Fried Grant Johnson Jeffrey Lerner

#### **Dechert LLP**

Richard Berkman Gary Green Fred Magaziner Michelle Nguyen Susan Nieto Erin Reimer Rachel Rosenberg Catherine Wigglesworth Barton Winokur

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#### **Duane Morris LLP**

Erin Duffy Michael J. McCalley Katharyn Christian McGee

#### **Education Law Center-PA**

Alex Dutton Deborah Gordon Klehr Cheryl Kleiman Maura McInerney

#### Kairys, Rudovsky, Messing & Feinberg LLP

David Rudovsky

Kawalski, Fletcher & Kirkpatrick, P.C. Taylor Fletcher

Kline & Specter, P.C. Andra Laidacker

#### Langer, Grogan & Diver P.C. Irv Ackelsberg Ned Diver

#### Law Offices of David J. Berney Morgen Black-Smith

Peter Leckman

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law Jon Greenbaum Mateya Kelley

#### Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP

John Lavelle, Jr. Michael Peterson K. Catherine Roney Richard Umbrecht

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Cheryl-Lyn Bentley Adam Klein Christopher McNerney Ossai Miazad Lewis Steel

#### **Pepper Hamilton LLP**

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#### Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity

Michael Hardiman Michael Lee

#### **Reed Smith LLP**

Jordan M. Ellis Michael C. Falk Joshua M. Peles

#### Saul Ewing LLP

Andrew Bollinger Brittany McCabe Kyle Nocho Carol Pane-Russell Ned Rahn Malia Rogers Mary Beth Schluckebier Frederick Strober Ryan White

#### Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis LLP

Joyce Sun

## Steve Harvey Law LLC

Rachel Gallegos Steve Harvey

#### White and Williams LLP

Primitivo Cruz Thomas Fiddler Kimberly Havener Sarah Mirsky Daryn Rush

#### Willig, Williams and Davidson Ryan Hancock

Ralph Teti

#### **Solo Practitioners and Others**

Barbara Adams Hon. Phyllis Beck Paul Boni Dana Bazelon Susan DeJarnatt Jules Epstein Richard Feder Sue Frietsche Benjamin Hinerfeld Seth Kreimer Howard Levinson Jennifer McIntyre David Sciarra Bharati Sharma-Patel

# THOMAS K. GILHOOL ENDOWMENT

This year our Board of Directors established the *Thomas K*. *Gilhool Disability Rights Center Fund*. This endowment is housed at The Philadelphia Foundation and will be grown until it can pay for a new generation of lawyers who will propel our work of empowering children and adults with disabilities to live, work and play in the community deep into the 21st century.

# PLANNED GIVING: THE NED WOLF SOCIETY

We invite you to leave a legacy of commitment to social justice by considering a charitable gift annuity, charitable trust, bequest or other planned gift to the Public Interest Law Center.

If you would like to make any type of gift, contact Barb Grimaldi, Director of Development & Communications, at 267-546-1304 or bgrimaldi@pubintlaw.org.

## **INTERNS & VOLUNTEERS**

In 2016, 41 interns and volunteers gave 4155 hours of their time to support our mission.



Rita Woods has been a volunteer receptionist with us since the summer of 2016. She is the welcoming voice that answers our phone! Rita's warmth and dedication has been an invaluable asset to our organization.

"I really enjoy working with the Public Interest Law Center's staff. I was disabled for seven years and I have been volunteering in order to re-enter the workforce. I felt insecure coming back into the workplace because of my age, but the staff has accepted me and has helped me build skills I did not have before. I really appreciate the work that I do here answering the phone and talking to people that need help."



Jin Hwan Jung is a graduate of Swarthmore College who is planning to head to law school this year. He spent two semesters interning with us.

"It has been a privilege to work as an intern at the Public Interest Law Center. I have enjoyed each and every experience, from policy research to administrative projects, and also found them very rewarding. The highlight of my experience was definitely getting to work with such a vibrant, accomplished, and congenial group of staff. I will never forget the invaluable experiences here and will carry them with me for the rest of my life."



**2016 Interns & Volunteers** 

Chloe Adams Matthew Aikens Nick Bellos Camara Brown Eve Cohen Erin Cosgrove Claire Daly Alison Diciurcio Lara Dorfman Maura Douglas Erik Federman Wei-Chen Jeffrey Hung Khalia Jackson Joseph James Jin Hwan Jung Weronika Kapica Alyssa Kennedy Brianna Leahy Chang Liu Kevin Myers Karen Ojeda Sandra Okonofua Roman Olchowecky Dana Palmieri David Peters Jadee Pope James Rathz Elizabeth Riehl Beth Robinson Mansi Shah Rupali Singhal Janiel Slowly

Ben Stollman Zoe Topaz Jacqueline Weiss Melissa Wojtylak Rita Woods Weixin Yang Jon Young Carol Zhang Ruchao Zhang

## **INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS**

#### \$10,000+

Kenneth and Andrea Frazier H. Laddie Montague, Jr. Marc and Jacqueline Topaz

#### \$5,000-\$9,999

Anonymous Richard Berkman and Toni Seidl William Ewing Steven and Ellen Friedell/ **Reaching Agreement** ADR LLC Anthony Gay F. John Hagele Michael and Cindy **McKeever** Mimi and Jim McKenzie Ellen Meriwether and Steven Goldfield Tina and Matthew Palumbo **Richard and Nancy** Pasquier Pam and Tony Schneider David and Gayle Smith Karen Vaughn Phillip and Suzanne Wilson

#### \$2,500-\$4,999

Thomas Chapin Abbi Cohen and Thomas O'Connell Brian Feeney Jeffrey Golan and Frances Vilella-Velez Lea and Claude Knight Kathleen Meriwether and Thomas Mahoney Paul and Susan Saint-Antoine Flora Barth Wolf and Laslo Boyd

#### \$1,000-\$2,499

Irv Ackelsberg and Patricia Urevick Barbara B, and Theodore R. Aronson **Richard and Eileen Bazelon** Elliot and Lisa Berton Wilson and Anne Browne David and Jodi Caputo Leo Carlin **Christopher Chimicles** Nicholas and Kathleen Chimicles Lisa Clark J. Gordon Cooney Alexandra Edsall and **Robert Victor** Joseph and Elizabeth Fay John Harkins **Benjamin Hinerfeld** Donald and Harriet Joseph

Howard Langer and Barbara Jaffe Michael Lehr and Linda Pennington Jeffrey Moller Carlos Montoya and **Elizabeth McManus** Benjamin and Meta Neilson Arthur Newbold Jon and Karen Richter Darvn Rush Will Sachse Marian Schneider and George Cotsarelis Joe and Detta Tate Lane Taylor **Richard and Anne** Umbrecht Melissa Wojtylak

#### \$500-\$999

David F. Abernethy Michaela Ahearn **Susan Bartovics** In honor of Robin Mann Paul Bonney Henry and Anna Bryan Kevin Call Michael Churchill and Tasha Stonorov Thomas and Robin Clarke JoAnne Epps **Dianne Coady Fisher** Hannah Fishman Carol Fixman and Stephen Kobrin Rachel Gallegos and Michael McCarthy Nancy Gellman James T. Giles Wendy and Richard Glazer Ruthanne Gordon and John Burroughs Katherine Hatton and **Richard Bilotti Fund** of the Princeton Area **Community Foundation** Tim and Anne Hunter H. Ronald Klasko Kenneth Kulak and Katherine Hovde Margaret Larson Roberta Liebenberg Charisse R. Lillie John and Linda Macholz Robin Mann Albert Parker Don Perelman and Elise Singer Mary Platt Michael Reed Eric and Jill Green Rothschild Jeffrey and Carol Lee Savery

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< Jerry Balter and Michael Churchil

Jerry Balter with > client and whistle blower Shanon Doyle



# **CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF JERRY BALTER**

In 2016 a dear member of our community, Jerome Balter, died at the age of 94. His 28-year contribution to our organization and to the development of environmental justice was extraordinary.

Jerry was originally an industrial engineer and activist. Born in New York City, he served in World War II, where he was a prisoner of war. After the war he married Ruth, and they later moved to Rochester, NY where he designed supermarkets. He was also a civil rights activist, an anti-Vietnam war activist, an anti-war candidate for Congress, and an advocate for Attica prisoners.

Jerry started at the Law Center in 1978 at age 54, shortly after graduating from Rutgers Law School. His first major project was drafting and shepherding through to passage Philadelphia's "Right To Know" ordinance so the public and city safety officials could know what chemicals were being used or stored by businesses in the city. It was the first such ordinance in the country and became a model for such ordinances in numerous other states and cities.

Jerry's second major impact came when he tried to enforce the Clean Air Act against the state of Pennsylvania, raising significant issues of states' rights and federalism. Jerry fought an epic battle when the state attempted to stop a tailpipe emission inspection program in counties with the worst air pollution. Ultimately, because of Jerry's work, the state decided to implement emission inspection stations in every county. All of us breathe cleaner air because of his work.

Under Jerry's leadership we filed more Clean Air Act enforcement cases than any other private entity, and the impact was substantial. Trash incinerators and sewage treatment plants across Philadelphia were shut down or improved. Private industry stopped using the city's storm sewers as dumping places for chemicals. And, the city improved its sewage treatment plant.

At the end of the 1980s Jerry began to find ways to raise issues of environmental injustice, in particular of racial disparities regarding who was being affected by permits granted or permits not being enforced. His innovative strategies included working with municipalities to pass zoning ordinances to limit new permits in minority communities. He also persuaded the Environmental Protection Agency to make the first "cumulative impact study" in its history to see not just how a proposed permit would affect residents, but how all the current polluting sources were already affecting the community. Jerry also worked to expose the Agency's record of inaction.

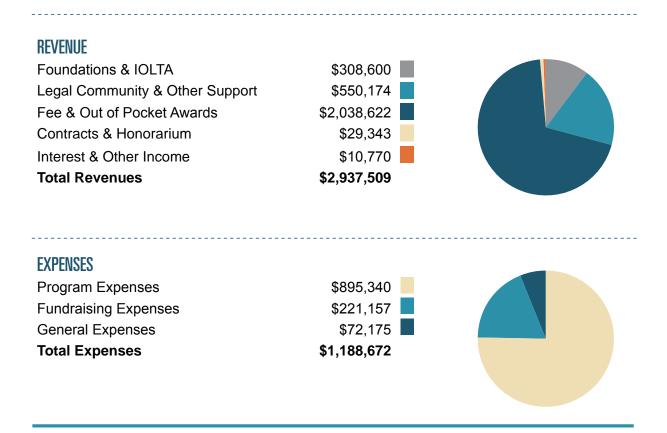
Many of Jerry's cases came to him when public officials told citizens to seek his help. As public officials knew, Jerry was about getting problems fixed. But as client after client would say, Jerry

was more than just technical solutions, he was a friend, a support for communities without much hope, and an inspiration about what activism, organizing, and optimism could accomplish.

## **FINANCIALS**

January 1, 2016 - December 31, 2016

#### SUMMARY OF REVENUE & EXPENSES\*



### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Current Assets	\$834,882
Other Assets	\$1,553,706
Fixed Assets (net of depreciation)	\$27,814
Total Assets	\$2,416,402
Current Liabilities	\$81,826
Prior Year Net Assets	\$601,616
Current Year Change	\$1,732,960
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$2,416,402
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$1,947,111
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$235,109

\*Audited financial reports will be available on our website in May. Not included are recognized contributions in professional services.

#### **STAFF**



Jennifer R. Clarke Executive Director



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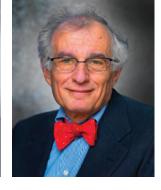
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