

GREATER BOSTON
LEGAL SERVICES



... and justice for all

2011 Annual Report

Greater Boston Legal Services

OUR MISSION

Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) provides free civil (noncriminal) legal assistance to low-income people in Boston and thirty-one cities and towns to help them secure the most basic necessities of life. The assistance GBLS offers ranges from legal advice to full case representation, depending on client need.

Throughout its proud history, GBLS has remained committed to its mission of providing high-quality services to as many poor people as possible. Founded in 1900, it is the oldest and largest legal services program in New England. In 2010, GBLS served over 16,100 people.

To learn more about GBLS' major areas of work, please visit our website: www.gbls.org.

*Cover photo credits: Consumer Rights
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Linda Lank, Maria Mendonca-Costanzo*

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OUR SERVICE AREA



*Greater Boston Legal Services serves the following cities and towns. Those towns marked with an * are served only by the Elder, Health and Disability Unit.*

Acton*	Hingham	Scituate
Arlington	Holbrook	Somerville
Bedford*	Hull	Stoneham
Belmont	Lexington*	Stow*
Boston	Lincoln*	Wakefield
Boxborough*	Malden	Waltham
Braintree	Maynard*	Watertown
Brookline	Medford	Weymouth
Burlington*	Melrose	Wilmington*
Cambridge	Milton	Winchester
Canton	Newton	Winthrop
Carlisle*	North Reading*	Woburn
Chelsea	Norwell	
Cohasset	Quincy	
Concord*	Randolph	
Everett	Reading*	
Harvard*	Revere	

IN MEMORIAM



Credit: Brooks Family

John G. Brooks was a champion for access to legal services for the poor.

John G. Brooks *1994-2012*

GBLS dedicates this 2011 Annual Report to the memory of John Brooks, a champion for access to legal services for the poor.

In 1955, John joined the Board of Directors of the Boston Legal Aid Society, which later became Greater Boston Legal Services. He was the President of GBLS' Board of Directors from 1969 to 1972 and continued to serve on its board until 1993 when he was appointed by President Clinton to serve two terms on the Board of Directors of the federal Legal Services Corporation.

John was a revered member of Boston's legal community for his unwavering commitment to ensuring that the poor have equal access to the justice system. Boston's strong network of legal services provider agencies is one of John's enduring legacies for which we are truly grateful.

Greater Boston Legal Services

2011 Was a Year of Transition

Executive Director Bob Sable retired in July after leading the organization for 20 years, and was succeeded by Deputy Director Jacquelynne (Jacqui) Bowman. GBLS' Board selected Jacqui Bowman after a six-month national search. For 15 years, she has been a key player on GBLS' senior management team, overseeing program operations and assisting in setting and defining the organization's strategic direction.

As Bob Sable stated, "[Jacqui] has committed her career to legal services for the poor. Jacqui is a nationally-recognized expert in domestic violence law. She is a great manager and a passionate spokesperson for the rights of the poor. There is no one better qualified to become the new leader of GBLS and to move the organization to achieve even greater advances for our clients."

Upon reflecting upon her goals for the organization in the near future and over the next 5-10 years, Ms. Bowman listed the following among her main priorities: increasing community collaborations to enable us to respond quickly to emerging issues, maintaining and retaining staff diversity, developing and securing GBLS' future leadership.

She said, "I relish the opportunity to lead GBLS as we move further into our second century. Bob left GBLS as a great organization with dedicated advocates providing the highest-quality legal assistance. Each of my predecessors built upon the platform of the one before them and I intend to do the same. We have economic challenges but I have no doubt that with the continued support of our Board, staff and the justice community, we will continue to thrive."



GBLS Executive Director
Jacquelynne J. Bowman

Credit: David Rentsch

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Greater Boston Legal Services, 2000 to date

- Executive Director (Aug. 2011 to date)
- Acting Executive Director (Sept. 2009 - April 2010)
- Deputy Director (June 2000 - Aug. 2011)
- Associate Director (May 1997 - June 2000)

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Advocate for Family and Children's Law Issues
(Nov. 1991 - May 1997)

Greater Boston Legal Services

- Managing Attorney, Family and Individual Rights Unit (Jan. 1987 - Nov. 1991)
- Acting Senior Manager (Sept. 1995 - Aug. 1996)
- Senior Attorney, Family and Juvenile Law (Sept. 1984 - Jan. 1987)

West Tennessee Legal Services, Inc.
Staff Attorney (June 1979 - Sept. 1984)

National Urban League: George Edmund Haynes
Fellowship Program (June 1982 - June 1983)

EDUCATION

Antioch University School of Law,
J.D. Degree May 1979
University of Chicago, The College,
AB Degree, American History

BAR ADMISSIONS

Tennessee; Massachusetts; Federal Court for the
Western District of Tennessee and the Federal
District Court of Massachusetts

GBLS Attorneys Preserve Affordable Housing Units in Cambridge

Attorneys in GBLS' Cambridge and Somerville office (CASLS), along with fellow housing advocates and tenants, worked to preserve 239 affordable housing units at three different developments in Cambridge, Massachusetts:

- 116 apartments at Inman Square Apartments in Inman Square;
- 98 apartments at Cambridge Court Apartments near Central Square; and
- 25 apartments at Chapman Arms in Harvard Square.

Time-limited affordability restrictions had been placed on these properties in return for mortgage interest subsidies and/or other benefits for the owners. Once these restrictions expired, the tenants would be faced with the possible loss of their

long-term affordable homes. However, through organizing, educating stakeholders (including city council), and intensive advocacy, these elderly, disabled, and low-income households were able to remain in their affordable homes and in their neighborhoods as a result of new rental subsidies being tied to the apartments and, in some cases, the buildings being sold to a non-profit owner.

The preservation of the affordable units at Chapman Arms was particularly important given the paucity of affordable rental housing in the high rent and highly-desirable Harvard Square area. In addition, Chapman Arms was the first building preserved through the new state expiring use law, Chapter 40T, which gave a local non-profit housing provider the right to purchase this building before being sold on the open market. (GBLS/CASLS attorneys played

a significant role in the drafting and implementation of Chapter 40T.)

In the other two buildings, affordability was preserved through the use of an innovative process of attaching new special “enhanced” vouchers to the apartments, at a tenant’s election. This was possible because of the Cambridge Housing Authority’s authority to operate free of most federal regulations under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s “Moving to Work” program. CASLS attorneys were instrumental in developing this pilot program, which is currently being used in a 32-unit development in Cambridge and is under consideration as a state-wide affordability preservation model.

Latinas Know Your Rights Project Empowers Immigrant Domestic Violence Victims to End Abuse and Create Social Change

Immigrant women are particularly vulnerable to abuse. Generally, they have fewer resources, stay longer in their relationships, and sustain more severe physical and emotional consequences as a result of abuse than do non-immigrant battered women. Studies have shown that immigrant women and their children are at higher risk of dying at the hands of their abusive partners than U.S.-born women. When immigration enforcement goes beyond federal agents and becomes linked with local police action, victims of domestic violence become more susceptible to abuse in the home due to the immense fear that one phone call reaching out for help could separate them permanently from their children.

Since 2006 the Latinas Know Your Rights Project, an active collaboration between GBLS and REACH Beyond Domestic Violence, has improved the lives

of immigrant victims who live in Waltham and surrounding areas through community education, outreach, and systemic advocacy.

GBLS attorney Mithra Merryman oversees and staffs the project, providing legal assessments, representation, and referral on matters crucial to members' economic independence such as obtaining immigration visas and citizenship; restraining orders, child support and custody; access to food stamps and cash benefits; and access to MassHealth benefits. In 2011 alone, over 100 clients were assisted, the majority with multiple legal issues (e.g. family law and immigration matters or family law and benefits issues).

LKYR also offers eight-week education and leadership programs twice per year for Latinas in Waltham. These programs educate members on

their legal rights and the U.S. legal system, domestic violence and its impact on children, immigration remedies for battered women, and resources available to end domestic violence. Members who graduate then work to educate and assist other community women. They also work together to overcome systemic barriers that impact the ability of Latina battered women to access the legal system.

Working together, Latinas Know Your Rights Project members and their advocates are removing the legal and social barriers that keep these battered women from living free of violence.

Latina Victim of Abuse Obtains Legal Immigration Status and Child Custody with GBLS' Help

After the Department of Children and Families (DCF) social worker recovered from the shock of a district court judge denying a restraining order to protect “Victoria” and her three-year-old autistic daughter from an abusive and alcoholic husband, she assured Victoria that there was still hope.

Victoria was not sure anyone could help. She had learned through experience that some judges were prone to believe her abuser, a U.S. citizen, instead of her, an undocumented immigrant. The year before, she had fled to a battered women’s shelter but her husband obtained custody of their child right before Christmas, despite evidence that he let the child wander near a busy street while he was drunk. The family court judge cited Victoria’s undocumented status as the main

reason. Defeated, Victoria returned and endured more violence to protect her child.

The DCF worker called GBLS attorney Mithra Merryman who has extensive experience working with undocumented victims of domestic violence. This time, Victoria didn’t face the court alone and with the help of her GBLS attorney she was awarded sole custody, the child is protected with supervised visits, and Victoria now has legal immigration status to remain in the United States.

Victoria shared her story as the keynote speaker at a September 2011 conference at Suffolk University Law School that provided training on how immigration status, race, and ethnicity impact the Probate and Family court process in Massachusetts.



Credit: Mithra Merryman

Thanks to Family Law Unit Senior Attorney Mithra Merryman, domestic violence victim “Victoria” was awarded sole custody of her daughter, the child is protected with supervised visits, and Victoria now has legal immigration status to remain in the United States.

2011 Systemic and Legislative Advocacy Victories

With your support, in 2011 GBLS represented clients on several impact efforts that will make a significant difference in the lives of thousands of Massachusetts residents. Thank you.

More Safeguards for Massachusetts Homeowners in Foreclosure

GBLS attorneys joined a private attorney in representing client Antonio Ibanez in *U.S. Bank v. Ibanez*, a Land Court case challenging the right of lenders to foreclose without having the proper assignment of the mortgage prior to foreclosure. In January 2011, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) ruled against foreclosing lenders and those who purchased foreclosed properties in Massachusetts. The SJC upheld a lower court's decision that the two banks involved in the Ibanez case did not hold proper title to the property and therefore did not have standing to foreclose. The Court's ruling has broad implications nationally. GBLS' goal in working on the Ibanez case was to create more safeguards for homeowners in the foreclosure process and ensure compliance with Massachusetts foreclosure law.

New Law Providing Greater Protections from Debt Collectors for Low-Income Consumers

GBLS attorneys Dan Bartley, Wynn Gerhard, and Alex Mitchell-Munevar along with the National Consumer Law Center, Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, and other groups worked to pass legislation to increase protections for low-income debtors. GBLS began pursuing these efforts several years ago due to the increasing numbers of elder clients, many living in subsidized housing, who were contacting GBLS for help because they were being harassed by debt collectors and had no resources to pay off their debts. In many cases their only income was Social Security or Supplemental Security Income. They were fearful of answering the phone due to the harassment, and some even feared going to debtors' prison.

GBLS' efforts included drafting and filing proposed legislation, meeting with legislators to obtain support, and adding a section to the bill focusing on protections for elders and the disabled. The bill, filed by Senator Pat Jehlen, passed in December 2010 and Governor Patrick signed it into law in January 2011. It became effective April 7, 2011.

Among other protections, the new law makes exempt from collection or seizure more of the assets low-income consumers need to survive. These protected assets include: 85%, or 50 times the minimum amount of weekly wages (up from \$125); \$2,500 in rent money (up from \$200); \$500 for utility payments (up from \$75); \$2,500 in a bank account (five times the previous level); up to \$15,000 in value household furniture; a stove, refrigerator, and hot water heater; and automobiles worth up to \$7,500 wholesale, and for disabled or elderly consumers, worth \$15,000 (up from \$700). Another new important protection relates to when a creditor files a collection action in court. If the elderly or disabled debtor defaults, the case will be automatically dismissed if the court determines that the defendant has only income and assets that are exempt under the new law.

Restoration of TAFDC Children's Clothing Allowance Amount

Thanks to the team efforts of GBLS attorney Elizabeth Toulan, staff from Massachusetts Law Reform and Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless, and other advocates, a basic benefit of tens of thousands of children in low-income households was restored in September 2011. The team's legislative and administrative advocacy helped secure passage of a supplemental budget restoring the Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) Children's Clothing Allowance from the grossly-inadequate \$40 per child back to the long-standing \$150 per child—a major victory in these especially tough fiscal times.

Saving the Nursing Home Bed Hold Program for Residents

The nursing home “bed hold” program was slated to be cut from the FY12 state budget on November 1, 2011 as a cost-saving measure. The program pays nursing homes to hold residents' beds for up to 10 days after brief hospital stays or family visits. The continuation of the program is important for the quality of life of residents. Bed hold provides stability and comfort, particularly to patients with dementia, allowing residents to return to a familiar room many of them consider home.

In November 2011, after weeks of meetings with legislators and MassHealth staff, elder advocates from GBLS, in coalition with other advocacy groups such as Massachusetts Advocates for Nursing Home Reform, Cape United Elders, and nursing home representatives, were successful in preventing the end of the nursing home bed hold program. Legislators reinstated the program in a spending plan that Governor Patrick signed into law on Veterans Day.

Massachusetts families can feel secure in the knowledge that their loved ones in nursing homes will be able to return to the comfort of their familiar rooms, and residents' quality of life will not be diminished after brief absences. Special thanks to Senator Mark Montigny, Senator Pat Jehlen and Representative Alice Wolf for their work on this issue!



Credit: Linda Lank

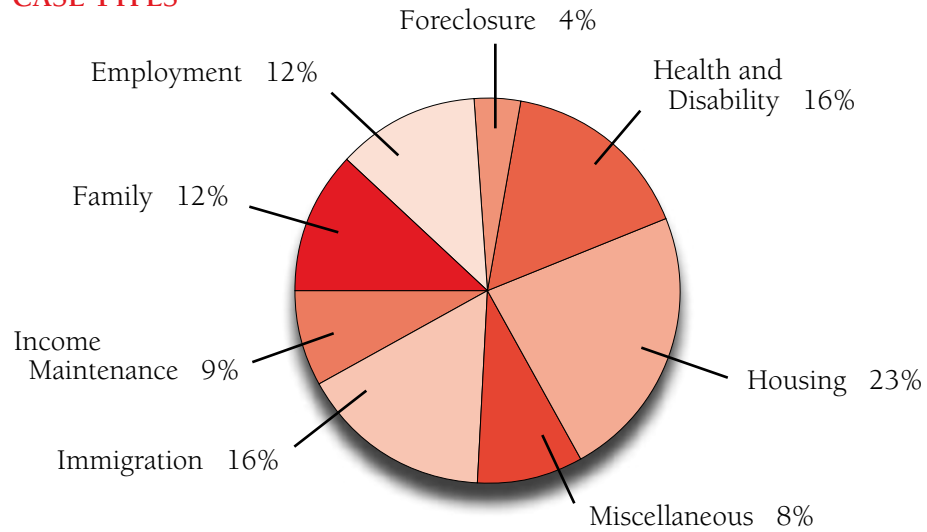
Samuel Jones, right, is a homeless elder who has no income. Wynn Gerhard, Elder, Health and Disability Unit Senior Attorney, is assisting him in appealing the denial of his Social Security benefits.

Greater Boston Legal Services

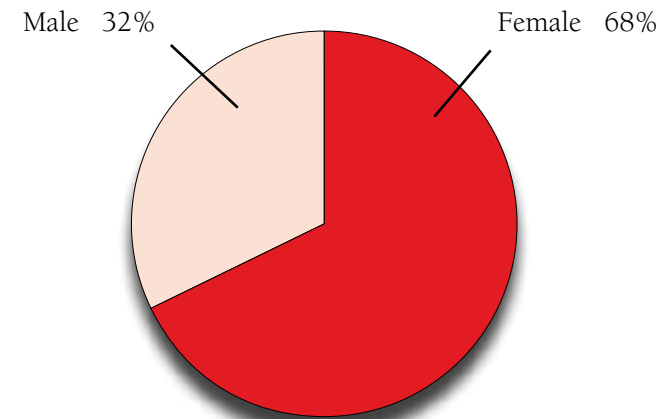
DID YOU KNOW?

In 2011, GBLS assisted over 15,200 clients.

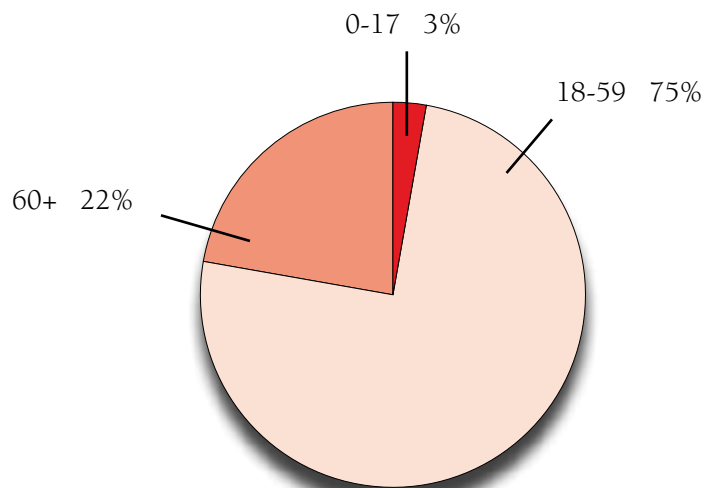
CASE TYPES



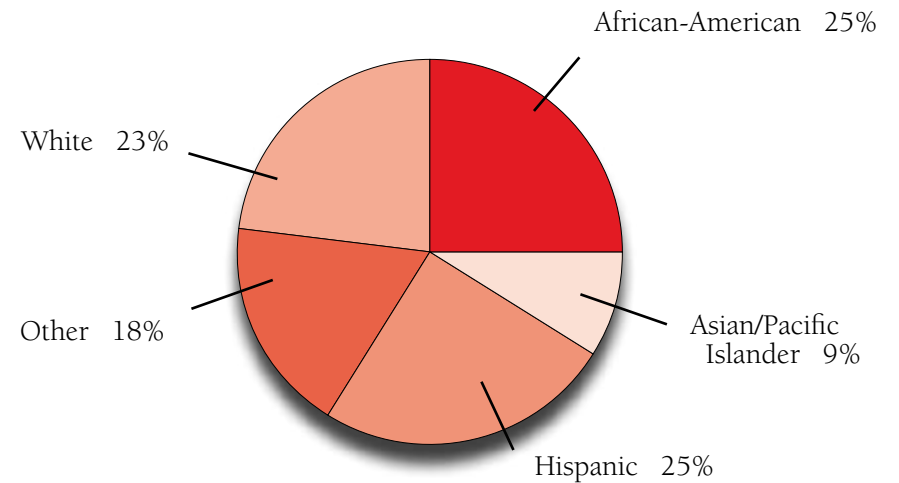
GENDER



AGE



RACE



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

INCOME	2011	2010
Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation	3,512,327	3,566,852
Law Firms and Attorneys	3,430,432	3,080,403
Cy Pres Awards	505,742	299,011
Foundations/Corporations	1,611,098	2,016,570
Government Grants	1,556,295	2,072,288
Individual Contributions	1,335,643	881,756
United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley	457,449	432,242
Miscellaneous	1,077,340	994,760
TOTAL INCOME BEFORE DONATED SERVICES	13,486,326	13,343,882
Volunteer Services	6,828,844	6,850,194
TOTAL INCOME	20,315,170	20,194,076
EXPENSES	2011	2010
Salary and Benefits Subtotal	10,747,327	11,527,123
Non-Personnel:		
Occupancy	454,485	439,437
Equipment and Supplies	196,351	253,631
Contract Services	647,743	587,752
Library and Litigation Expenses	275,985	281,054
Transfer to Capital	295,000	65,000
Miscellaneous	397,475	378,414
Non-Personnel Subtotal	2,267,039	2,005,288
TOTAL EXPENSES BEFORE DONATED SERVICES	13,014,366	13,532,411
Volunteer Services	6,828,844	6,850,194
TOTAL EXPENSES	19,843,210	20,382,605
CUMULATIVE OPERATING NET ASSETS	4,887,677	4,415,717

Greater Boston Legal Services

THANK YOU! LEGAL COMMUNITY DONORS

The legal community demonstrates a special commitment to GBLS and its mission of ensuring access to justice regardless of income. Every year individual attorneys, law firms, and corporate law departments show the extent to which they respect and value the legal assistance GBLS provides to impoverished residents of greater Boston. Their support is provided in a variety of ways.

LAWYERS FUND DRIVE

Leadership League

(\$700 or more per Boston attorney)

Choate, Hall & Stewart
Collora, LLP
Davids & Cohen, P.C.
Dechert LLP
Edwards Wildman Palmer
Englander, Leggett, & Chicoine, P.C.
Goodwin Procter
Goulston & Storrs
Hemenway & Barnes
Kimball Brousseau
Meehan, Boyle, Black
& Bogdanow, P.C.
Nixon Peabody LLP
Ropes & Gray
Skadden
Sugarman and Sugarman, P.C.
Sunstein Kann Murphy
& Timbers LLP
WilmerHale

Pacesetter League

(\$600-\$699 per Boston attorney)

Bingham McCutchen LLP
Brown Rudnick Berlack Israels, LLP
Sullivan & Worcester LLP

Reginald Heber Smith League

(\$500-\$599 per Boston attorney)

Foley Hoag LLP

President's League

(\$350-\$499 per Boston attorney)

Allen & Hollander, LLP
Davis, Malm & D'Agostine, P.C.
DLA Piper LLP (US)
Klein Hornig LLP
Mintz Levin
Nutter, McClennen & Fish, LLP

Supporter League

(\$200-\$349 per Boston attorney)

Broderick, Bancroft & Goldberg
Cooley Manion Jones LLP
Day Pitney LLP
Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow,
Garrett & Dunner, LLP
Fish & Richardson, P.C.
Janet E. Bostwick, P.C.
Landay & Leblang
Murtha Cullina, LLP
Robinson & Cole LLP

Friends League

(up to \$199 per Boston attorney)

Adler, Cohen, Harvey, Wakeman
& Guekguezian LLP
Bernkopf Goodman LLP
Beveridge & Diamond
Boyle, Shaughnessy & Campo
Burns & Levinson LLP
Carney & Bassil
Casner & Edwards, LLP
Cesari and McKenna
Cetrulo & Capone
Conn, Kavanaugh, Rosenthal,
Peisch & Ford, LLP
Craig & Macaulay
Donoghue, Barrett & Singal
Fitzhugh & Mariani
Greenberg Traurig
Hagens Berman
Healy, Fiske, Richmond & Matthews
Holland & Knight LLP
K&L Gates LLP
Kotin, Crabtree & Strong, LLP
Krokidas & Bluestein LLP
Looney & Grossman LLP
McDermott, Will & Emery
McGregor & Associates

Morrison Mahoney LLP

Morse, Barnes-Brown & Pendleton
Ogletree Deakins
Petrucelly, Nadler & Norris P.C.
Pierce, Davis & Perritano
Posternak, Blankstein & Lund LLP
Proskauer Rose
Rackemann, Sawyer & Brewster
Seyfarth Shaw LLP
Sheehan Phinney Bass & Green
Sugarman, Rogers, Barshak
& Cohen, P.C.
Taylor, Duane, Barton & Gilman, LLP
Verrill Dana LLP
Wolf Greenfield

CORPORATE LEGAL DEPARTMENTS

Analog Devices	LPL Financial
Arbella Insurance Group	The Millipore Foundation
Charitable Foundation	Old Mutual
Biogen Idec	Pioneer Investment
Bose Foundation	Management USA Inc.
Children's Hospital Boston	Putnam Investments
Citizens Bank	Reit Management
Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.	Sovereign Bank
Eastern Bank	State Street Foundation, Inc.
EMD Serono, Inc.	Anonymous
Fidelity Investments	
Houghton Mifflin	
InterSystems	
Liberty Mutual Insurance Company	

2011 CY PRES* AWARDS

We wish to acknowledge and thank the following law firms who facilitated the award of class action lawsuit residuals to GBLs.

Cafferty Faucher LLP
 Lichten & Liss-Riordan, P.C.
 Roddy Klein & Ryan
 Shapiro Haber & Urmy LLP

** Cy Pres awards are residual funds arising from damages awarded in successful class action cases, that are unclaimed or cannot be distributed to all the class members or beneficiaries who were the intended recipients.*



Credit: Margaretta Homsey Kroeger

Social Security Administration (SSA) informed Benjamin that his daughter Wendy's Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits were terminated and that the family owed over \$10,000 in overpayments. Wendy has Down's syndrome, and despite extremely limited finances, her parents have worked tirelessly to cover the significant expenses necessary to manage her health issues. Her parents turned to GBLs' Children's Disability Project (CDP) for help after their efforts to resolve the issues with SSA were unsuccessful.

After working for over a year to help the family, CDP achieved a waiver of the full overpayment amount. The Administrative Law Judge agreed with CDP that the family was not at fault for causing the overpayment. Wendy, her brother, and parents Benjamin and Reina are pictured above with CDP attorney Sarah Burns (far left) and project director Taramattie Doucette (far right).

Greater Boston Legal Services

LAW FIRM FELLOWSHIPS

In addition to their 2011 Lawyers Fund Drive contribution, the following firms provided funding to support the salaries of GBLS attorneys.

Goodwin Procter
Ropes & Gray
Skadden
WilmerHale

DEFERRED/LOANED ASSOCIATE FELLOWSHIPS

In addition to their 2011 Lawyers Fund Drive contribution, the following firms provided law firm associates to work full time at GBLS.

Bingham McCutchen LLP
Dewey & LeBoeuf
Hogan Lovells
K&L Gates
Ropes & Gray
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP
WilmerHale

MATCHING GIFTS – ASSOCIATES’ DRIVE

Donations were matched by the firms or by individual partners.

Anderson Krieger LLP
Burns & Levinson LLP
Collora LLP
Cooley LLP
Craig & Macauley
Davis, Malm & D’Agostine, P.C.
Day Pitney LLP
DLA Piper LLP (US)
Donnelly, Conroy & Gelhaar
Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge LLP
Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, LLP
Fish & Richardson, P.C.
Foley Hoag LLP
Greenberg Traurig
Hemenway & Barnes
Holland & Knight LLP
K&L Gates LLP
Krokidas & Bluestein LLP
Lando & Anastasi
McCarter & English
McDermott, Will & Emery
Nutter, McClennen & Fish, LLP
Peabody & Arnold LLP
Prince Lobel Tye LLP
Sally & Fitch
Sherin and Lodgen LLP
Skadden
Sullivan & Worcester LLP
Sunstein Kann Murphy & Timbers LLP
WilmerHale
Wolf Greenfield

Thanks to the Generosity of Boston Law Firm Associates, GBLS Helps a Mother Regain Physical Custody of Her Son from Her Abusive Partner

Every year, Boston law firm associates conduct a fundraising drive to support legal assistance to domestic violence (DV) survivors. In 2011, associates contributed more than \$315,000, a record, for which GBLS is deeply grateful. “Mary” is just one example of the women GBLS was able to assist due to the generosity of Boston associates. Mary is a client who was severely physically and verbally abused by her partner “Ralph”. When Mary suffered from post-partum depression after the birth of their son “Sam”, Ralph convinced Mary to sign over custody of Sam. He then proceeded to throw Mary and her older son out of the house. Ralph went on to use Sam as a way to control Mary. If Mary “behaved” by doing what Ralph demanded, she could live in the house and take care of Sam. If she did not, Ralph would use the custody order to prevent Mary from seeing Sam.

Over time, Mary realized that Sam was not progressing and his pediatrician thought Sam should be evaluated. Ralph did not believe his child had any problems and refused to agree.



Credit: Linda Lank

Patricia Levesh, Managing Attorney of the Family Law Unit

Mary convinced Ralph to go the doctor’s office with her and Sam. Unfortunately, Ralph had been drinking since early that day. While driving home, they argued about Sam’s needs. Ralph became so infuriated, he slammed Mary’s face into the steering wheel. When they arrived at Ralph’s house and got inside, in front of Sam Ralph grabbed Mary by the hair, slammed her on the floor, and tried to strangle her. He then took ice and tried to shove it down her throat and kicked her repeatedly. When she tried

to leave, Ralph told her that if she left, he would kill her and her older son. Mary fled to the pizza parlor across the street, where someone saw the condition of her face and called the police, who arrested Ralph.

Mary had enough and filed to regain physical custody of Sam. Ralph, in turn, filed for full custody. That is when Mary turned to GBLS for help. Family Law Unit attorney Patricia Levesh represented Mary in a highly-contested custody case. Mary gained what she wanted: physical custody of Sam, a fixed visitation schedule, child support, and she and Ralph having joint legal custody. Since then, Mary and Ralph have been able to co-parent and cooperate with the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families and medical providers for the benefit of Sam.

“ ... I wanted to thank you from the bottom of my heart. Pat I want you to know I will be forever grateful for all your help in that extremely horrible time in my life. You helped me to gain my self-respect and independence. I am so proud to have known you and so happy with the positive changes in my life. I did not squander the opportunity and effort put forth by you for me and have built a wonderful life and am very happy.”



Credit: Consumer Rights Unit staff

Thanks to Managing Attorney Nadine Cohen of the Consumer Rights Unit, Michael Blackwood's foreclosure case was settled, he was able to get his house back after two years, and his mortgage was reduced by approximately \$300,000. Mr. Blackwood's house was foreclosed upon while he was still being reviewed for a loan modification. GBLS filed suit to reverse the foreclosure and assisted in getting Boston Community Capital to buy Mr. Blackwood's property from the bank and sell it back to him with an affordable mortgage.

Thanks to Your Support, GBLS Attorneys Prevent Eviction and Regain Benefits of Mother with Severe Learning Disabilities

"Charlene", a single mother of a 14-year-old daughter, came to GBLS when she was desperate. She was facing eviction for not paying her rent as a result of her Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) benefits being terminated through no fault of her own.

Charlene had been having trouble with the TAFDC work requirement and told the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) about her learning disability. DTA evaluated Charlene and found that she had two learning disabilities and that her IQ is at the threshold of mild mental retardation. However, because of a series of DTA errors, Charlene was not told about the disability exemption from the work requirement for which she qualified. Since she remained unable to meet the work requirement, DTA terminated her TAFDC benefits. Charlene then was unable to pay her rent and the landlord started eviction proceedings.

After hearing her story, GBLS housing attorney Mac McCreight immediately went to work on her housing case and was able to stop the eviction. At the same time, Welfare Law Unit attorneys Rebecca Harlow and Lizbeth Ginsburg took on the TAFDC issue and succeeded in getting Charlene's benefits restored with the disability exemption and also obtained several hundred dollars in retroactive payments for her.

As a result of the legal advocacy of her GBLS attorneys, Charlene and her daughter were able to remain in their home and avoid possible destitution. Charlene now is seeking an appropriate job that will provide her with the accommodations to which she is entitled by law, which will help her succeed in supporting herself and her daughter.

Oak Foundation Award Helps GBLS Keep Foreclosed Homeowners In Their Homes

Many thanks to the Oak Foundation that in May 2011 awarded GBLS \$634,000 over a three-year period, as part of a larger grant which includes community organization City Life/Vida Urbana and the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau. The grant supports GBLS' partnership with those organizations and with nonprofit bank Boston Community Capital to represent families who were victims of unscrupulous lenders and whose homes have been foreclosed. A key part of the project is helping homeowners to buy back their homes on reasonable terms.

GBLS Paralegal Assists Domestic Violence Victims through Unique Project at Middlesex Probate and Family Court

Unrepresented domestic violence (DV) victims seeking abuse prevention orders at the Middlesex Probate and Family Court in Cambridge, Massachusetts, can count on a very experienced and compassionate advocate: paralegal Paula Starr. She staffs the Middlesex Probate and Family Court Domestic Violence Project and is the only victim services provider at this court.

Three days a week, paralegal Starr provides counsel and advice, brief service, safety planning, referrals, and support to clients who otherwise would have to navigate alone the daunting process at Family and Probate courts. Often, DV victims are afraid and their self-esteem has been diminished by years of abuse. With an advocate by their side, they are better able to articulate their situations and the danger that threatens them every day, and with Paula Starr's assistance can explain why they need protection from the court.

In 2011, paralegal Starr assisted 102 project clients, and was instrumental in obtaining about one third of all the abuse prevention orders issued by the court. She has well-developed relationships with

judges and other court personnel, the Middlesex District Attorney, and local police departments, and is often consulted by them regarding cases. All of this helps more battered women obtain protection from abuse and to move forward with their children to a life without violence.

Paralegal Starr recently worked with a young 22-year-old single mother who had experienced a particularly violent relationship and where the abuse continued even after the break-up. The young mother successfully obtained a protective order and paralegal Starr worked with her on an extensive safety plan. After the hearing, the client asked if she could give paralegal Starr a hug, and commented that, "When I came into this building this morning I didn't think anyone would really care, but you did and I thank you so much for myself and my child."

GBLS is grateful to the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance for its long-standing granting of SAFEPLAN funding which partially funds this project.



Credit: Linda Lank

Senior Paralegal Paula Starr assists and advocates for victims of domestic violence so they can obtain protection from their abusers.

"When I came into this building this morning I didn't think anyone would really care, but you did and I thank you so much for myself and my child."

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THE MARSHALL PLAN



Chief Justice
Margaret H. Marshall

The Marshall Plan for GBLS was launched in the name of Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall, former Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, to help ensure that as many poor people as possible have access to the legal assistance they require in this time of great need. Donors to the Marshall Plan have thus far pledged \$2.42 million dollars over 3 years, enough to preserve 11 advocacy positions and provide legal services that will benefit 8,800 people who would otherwise not be served during that time. The Emerging Leaders Society is the result of a special initiative on the part of attorneys admitted to the bar in 1995 or later.

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GBLS Settlement To Obtain Wages for Chinese Immigrant Workers Cheated by Employer

In 2011 GBLS' Asian Outreach Unit ("AOU") settled a class action lawsuit against Super 88, on behalf of low-wage workers who were illegally denied the minimum wage and overtime pay, for approximately \$730,000 to pay owed wages. Super 88 once was the largest Asian supermarket chain in the region. In the fall of 2008, scores of Super 88 workers approached GBLS about their legal rights when they were abruptly laid off. GBLS surveyed more than seventy-five workers, and determined that most worked 60 hours per week and were paid sub-minimum wages, with no overtime or Sunday premiums as required by law.

Accordingly, in 2009 AOU Managing Attorney Cynthia Mark and attorney Indira Talwani, a partner at Segal Roitman LLP, filed a lawsuit seeking compensation for these workers. The attorneys determined that on average, Super 88 workers who worked overtime were underpaid \$175 per week for a number of years. This works out

to \$9,100 per year, per worker. Under the settlement agreement, which was approved by the Massachusetts Superior Court on December 20, 2011, approximately \$730,000 from the sale of the Super 88 South Bay store in Dorchester was set aside to pay the workers' claims.

Superior Court Judge Macdonald presided over the case and praised attorneys Mark and Talwani for their diligent representation of the Super 88 workers. These attorneys have already spent more than 1,000 hours combined on the case.

After the settlement was announced, Cyndi Mark stated, "This is a very significant victory for immigrant workers. I'm thrilled that many Super 88 workers will receive additional compensation for their hard work over the years. Although only two workers were named class representatives, 48 workers filled opt-in claim forms. This lawsuit would not have been pos-



Credit: Karen Chen

Former Super 88 supermarket workers, Asian Outreach Unit Managing Attorney Cyndi Mark, and Segal Roitman, LLP partner Indira Talwani were honored with a Social Justice Award at the Chinese Progressive Association's 35th Anniversary celebration. Attorneys Mark and Talwani filed a class action lawsuit in 2009 on behalf of low-wage workers who were illegally denied their wages by Super 88. The settlement agreement was approved in December 2011.

sible without these workers who were willing to stand up for their rights."

In addition to obtaining for these workers the wages they are illegally denied, through this class action

lawsuit GBLS is sending a message to both employees and unscrupulous employers that all workers are protected under wage and hour laws.

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We are more than halfway to our goal of raising \$300,000 to support the Asian Outreach Unit. This campaign especially appreciates the challenge grant from the Harry H. Dow Memorial Legal Assistance Fund which so successfully kicked off this effort.

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Boston Foundation Grant Supports GBLS Project that Assists Youth and Adults with CORI

In 2011, The Boston Foundation awarded GBLS a \$75,000 grant for the Young Offender CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) Initiative. This unique project, staffed by Employment Law Unit attorney Pauline Quirion, helps both youth and adults from Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan overcome CORI-related barriers to gainful employment, housing, and other opportunities to achieve economic stability. In assisting these predominantly minority clients, GBLS has partnered with the Legal Advocacy Resource Center, Youthbuild Boston, Boston StreetSafe, the Union of Minority Neighborhoods, New England Law and other law students, and volunteer lawyers.

GBLS is the only program that (1) represents CORI clients on a large scale in court; (2) runs onsite CORI clinics at the Roxbury and Dorchester courthouses; and (3) handles appeals and motions to reconsider when a sealing petition is denied. GBLS is unique in addressing institutional practices of the court system related to the process for sealing of cases by judges or through the Commissioner of Probation. GBLS also provides education and advice to community agencies on CORI, juvenile record sealing, employment problems and consequences of criminal records. GBLS is also updating CORI information on the popular Masslegalhelp.org website.



Credit: Union of Minority Neighborhoods Staff

GBLS Lead Attorney Pauline Quirion (right) and CORI Project Organizer Todd Avery of the Union of Minority Neighborhoods help clients overcome CORI-related barriers and achieve economic stability.

Congratulations to Our Staff, Board Member, and Volunteer Attorneys!

A selection of 2011 Awards and Honors

Boston Bar Association John G. Brooks Legal Services Award: Family Law Unit Senior Attorney **Manisha Bhatt** was honored at the BBA's Annual Meeting in October 2011. The Brooks Award recognizes career legal services attorneys for outstanding work on behalf of indigent clients in greater Boston.

In addition, Attorney Bhatt spearheaded the South Asian Bar Association of Greater Boston (SABA GB) "Know Your Rights" program, for which SABA GB won the 2011 Outstanding Program Award in August 2011 at the North American South Asian Bar Association annual convention. The program served to educate members of the South Asian community about their basic legal rights and strengthen their professional and personal connections.

Centro Presente Special Recognition: Employment Law Unit Senior Attorney **Audrey Richardson** was honored in July 2011 for collaborating with Centro Presente on their Workers Rights Campaigns and providing legal advice to workers, and also for empowering workers to take a

proactive role in their own campaigns. The organization is dedicated to the self-determination and self-sufficiency of Massachusetts' Latin American immigrant community.

Community Change Leadership Award: Immigration Law Unit Lead Attorney and Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinic Instructor **John Willshire Carrera** and GBLS board member and Client Caucus vice-chair **Magalis Troncoso Lama** were honored with Drylongso Awards at the Community Change Leadership Awards event in November 2011. Community Change, Inc. is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote racial justice and equity by challenging systemic racism and acting as a catalyst for anti-racist learning and action.

Jerry Hildebrand Unemployment Insurance Champion Award: Employment Law Unit Lead Attorney **Monica Halas** was honored for her statewide advocacy around unemployment insurance reform, at the National Employment Law Project annual conference in December 2011. The award is named after the

late Gerard W. "Jerry" Hildebrand, chief of the legislation division at the U.S. Department of Labor's office of unemployment insurance.

Massachusetts Bar Association Legal Services Award: Litigation Director **Daniel Manning** was honored in May 2011 for his leadership and contributing to the "provision of low-income legal services beyond his required job responsibilities."

Massachusetts Bar Association Pro Bono Publico Award: Immigration Law Unit volunteer attorney **Eleanor Newhoff** was honored in May 2011 for "being instrumental in developing, implementing and supporting *pro bono* programs for the MBA, a local bar association, law firm or agency."

Massachusetts Councils on Aging and Senior Center Directors Advocate of the Year award: Elder, Health and Disability Unit Senior Attorney **Diane Paulson** was honored in October 2011. This award goes to the individual who "by way of message, achievement, legislation, coalition building, speaking up for seniors, helping seniors to speak up,

courage, patience, and persistence has helped seniors find empowerment, enrichment and fulfillment."

Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC) Honor: Executive Director **Bob Sable** was honored by MLAC at their May 2011 Annual Meeting in recognition of four decades of fighting for the rights of the poor.

Top Women of the Law: *Pro bono* attorney for GBLS' Children's Disability Project **Vasiliki Kalaitzidis**, of EMD Serono, and GBLS Board member **Melissa Bayer Tearney** were honored by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly in September 2011.

Women's Bar Association Pro Bono Award: Housing Law Unit Senior Attorney **Barbara Zimbel** was honored in May 2011 for her volunteer work with women prisoners at Massachusetts Correctional Institution: Framingham, the state's prison for women.

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While we made every effort to include all donors in this report, if we have inadvertently omitted any donor, please accept our apologies and contact Zoe Cronin, Director of Annual Giving, at 617-603-1643 or zcronin@gbls.org for record correction.

Building the Foundation for the Future

GBLS has always had the good fortune of strong support by members and institutions of the Boston legal community. From the prominent attorneys who founded the Boston Legal Aid Society to those who have led The Marshall Plan for GBLS, as well as the law firms, corporate law departments, bar associations, and individual lawyers in between, there is a strong history of commitment among Boston lawyers to ensure that access to justice is not limited only to those who can afford it.

That passion for justice and fairness is found in equal measure among “junior” members of the bar as well. These young attorneys are building a foundation to ensure that GBLS can continue to serve the poorest members of our community.



Credit: Anna Marie Ventura

Many thanks to the **Corporate Counsel Drive** Steering Committee for reaching out to 116 of their in-house colleagues in the second year of this new effort. Left to right: Martha A. Mazzone, Fidelity Investments; John D. Norberg, Wellington Management; Melissa A. Reed, EMD Serono; John J. Hitt, Fidelity Investments; Christopher R. Bohane, MFS Investment Management; Anne K. Trinque, Grantham, Mayo, Van Otterloo & Co. LLC.



Credit: John Kennard

Thank you to the Chairs of the **Associates Drive** Jennifer L. Antoniazzi (Holland & Knight), Zachary Coseglia (DLA Piper), David A. Kluft (Foley Hoag), Rory P. Pheiffer (Nutter McClennen & Fish), and Edward M. Thomas (Ropes & Gray), pictured with the firm captains who were honored for outstanding efforts in the 2011 drive. *Firm captains are recognized in the Annual Fund Donors list on pages 22-32 for their fundraising leadership as well as their personal donation.*



Credit: John Kennard

A special event for The Marshall Plan was held at Fenway Park's EMC Club on May 1, 2012, thanks to the Boston Red Sox and Ed Weiss, General Counsel of Fenway Sports Ventures. Attorneys admitted to the bar after 1995 were invited to participate in the **Emerging Leaders Society** by members of the Event Committee, pictured here with several guests of honor: John T. Montgomery (Marshall Plan Co-Chair), Thomas Gunning (Marshall Plan Co-Chair and GBLS Board Member), Robert A. Sable (Executive Director Emeritus of GBLS), Jay deYoung, Marc Gary (Marshall Plan Co-Chair and GBLS Board Member), Jacquelynne J. Bowman (Executive Director of GBLS), Martha A. Mazzone, Alison F. Reif, Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall, Peter N. Kochansky, Geoffrey A. Howell, David A. Kluff, Vasiliki Kalaitzidis, Jerome B. Tichner, Jr., host Edward J. Weiss, and John J. Hitt. (Not pictured: Lia Der Marderosian, Robert G. Jones, Neil G. McGaraghan, and Anne Trinquet.)

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Credit: K.C. Bailey

GBLS Latino clients protesting being taken advantage of by a private attorney who promised them loan modifications requiring that they pay between \$3,000 and \$12,000, and in many cases not getting the modifications they were promised. In some cases clients lost their homes to foreclosure or short sale as a result of this attorney's unfair, deceptive, and discriminatory practices.

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The following individuals, in addition to many law students, volunteered substantial commitments of time in 2011 to GBLS and its clients. Their service, as reported in the Financial Statements, was valued at \$6,828,844. We are also very grateful to the many pro bono attorneys, too numerous to list here, who handled GBLS cases at their firms.

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