

HOPE STARTS HERE.



ANNUAL REPORT 2014

IT STARTS WITH
OPPORTUNITY.

IT STARTS
WITH JUSTICE.

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Cristian
with *pro bono*
attorney
Jack Ross

ON THE COVER:

Christian's mother fled her abusive husband in El Salvador for safety in the U.S. when he was just 9. She thought Christian would be safe continuing to live in El Salvador with his grandparents. But Christian became trapped between his father's domestic abuse and the criminal violence that has swept Central America. Gang members threatened him on his way to school, and in 2012, at age 16, he also fled to the U.S.

Pro bono attorney Jack Ross of Lewis Brisbois Bisgaard & Smith LLP took on Christian's immigration case, and he received asylum in September 2014. Now 19, Christian hopes to pursue his dream of a college degree.

"It's some of the most compelling legal work you can do, because the stakes are so high," said Ross, who is a member of Public Counsel's Associate Leadership Board.

Public Counsel hired a team of attorneys and support staff in 2014 to represent unaccompanied minors like Christian who are fleeing gang and family violence, and to recruit more *pro bono* attorneys to help.

We also filed *J.E.F.M. v. Holder*, a class-action lawsuit on behalf of children who are unrepresented in immigration court. Studies show that nearly half of all undocumented children qualify for protection from violence in their home countries, yet they have no understanding of how to navigate the courts. We are working to change that.

Public Counsel has much more than a legal strategy to close the justice gap—it has **a humanitarian vision** for a better community.

THE LAW CAN BE A POWERFUL FORCE FOR GOOD IN PEOPLE'S LIVES.

Yet, too many people face the fight of their lives alone. Too many people go into court without an attorney when they risk losing their home or life savings. Too many children attend schools that fail to meet our nation's promise of opportunity. Too many veterans return from war to battle for benefits they have earned.

Public Counsel's lawyers and social workers help children find stable homes through adoption. They help veterans bounce back from homelessness after their military service. They make sure students can attend schools that prepare them for the future and toddlers can receive quality early care education, no matter how much money their parents make. They deliver on America's promise of protection to children fleeing violence in their home countries.

But even they cannot do it alone. They are assisted—leveraged—by the *pro bono* power of the nation's top law firms, in-house corporate counsel, and leading law schools. Together, Public Counsel and its *pro bono* volunteers are changing laws and changing people's lives for the better.

In these pages, you will learn how more than 75 staff attorneys and social workers and 5,500 *pro bono* partners made a direct impact in the lives of nearly 30,000 clients. You will see the impact that our Opportunity Under Law project made through litigation on behalf of students at high-needs schools, and how our asylum lawyers have met the challenge of thousands of unaccompanied migrant children fleeing gang violence in Central America.

Thank you to all the individuals and groups who supported Public Counsel's vision in 2014 through your time, energy, donations and grants.



Daniel Clivner
Chairperson
Public Counsel Board of Directors



Kaylani and Nautika celebrated their adoption by Robert and Jorge Martinez-De Jesus.

CLIENT PROFILE: ADOPTION

FOR A CHILD IN FOSTER CARE, adoption is the beginning of a new story. But it's not the end of the legal help we deliver. Last year, Public Counsel completed its 8,000th adoption and offered every adoptive family 360-degree support from a team of lawyers and social workers.

"You read so much about the breakdown in family values, but the sense of family on adoption day is so strong and powerful that you can feel the love," said Bill Quicksilver, managing partner at **Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP** and a Public Counsel board member, who helped a woman finalize the adoption of her grandson in November.

Whether families need mental health support, special education advocacy, or benefits to overcome developmental disabilities, we've got them covered. We offer the same support to families becoming legal permanent guardians of children who have lost their parents.



Jefferson High School seniors Armani Richards and Jason Magaña spent weeks sitting in the auditorium without classes they needed to graduate.

CLIENT PROFILE: CRUZ V. CALIFORNIA

STUDENTS ATTENDING HIGH poverty California schools are being robbed of something students at most schools take for granted: time to learn.

Assigned to euphemistically-named "service periods" instead of courses they need to graduate or be college eligible, they run menial errands. Students assigned to "home periods" are often required to leave their campuses as early as 10:30 AM. Students can have as many as six of these faux classes.

The result, predictably enough, is that students learn nothing useful for their academic careers. What they do learn is that the State of California does not regard them as worthy of a full schedule of instructional classes.

In May 2014, Public Counsel, the ACLU of Southern California, and the *pro bono* firms **Arnold & Porter LLP** and **Carlton Fields Jordan Burt** filed *Cruz v. California* on behalf of students from high-need schools in the Bay Area and Southern California.

Students at Jefferson High School in Los Angeles got a first-hand lesson in the crisis of lost learning time. Hundreds of students spent weeks in the auditorium or were told not to show up because no classes were available. When students finally received course schedules, many were hopelessly behind, stuck in classes they had already taken or put into any classroom that had spare seats.

A Superior Court judge ordered the state to fix what he called the "shocking loss of instructional time" at Jefferson High School. *Cruz v. California* marks the first time a court has ruled that both the content and the availability of classroom time are aspects of the fundamental constitutional right to education.

“Some people think that because Jefferson is in South Central, we don't care about school. But **I care about my future** and so do my classmates.”

—JASON MAGAÑA, JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

JANUARY

► After data showed that African American and Latino students comprise 77% of those suspended in San Francisco schools, Public Counsel helped draft new policies that will cut the racial gap in school discipline. We also helped create new protocols to reduce student arrests on campus as part of our Fix School Discipline effort that promotes alternatives to harsh discipline and school police.

FEBRUARY

► The U.S. Education and Justice Departments criticized Contra Costa County Juvenile Hall over its treatment of youth with disabilities. According to Public Counsel's federal class action lawsuit filed in August 2013 with Disability Rights Advocates and **Paul Hastings LLP**, Contra Costa County Juvenile Hall locks young people with disabilities in solitary confinement for up to 23 hours a day and deprives them of education. The federal statement of interest in our case said that Contra Costa has "a legal obligation to avoid placing students with disabilities in restrictive security programs on the basis of their disabilities."

MARCH

► We set a new record with more than 600 participants in the Run for Justice at the ASICS LA Marathon and LA Big 5K.

APRIL

► Public Counsel and a coalition of advocates for Los Angeles's most vulnerable communities announced a settlement agreement in *Guillory et al. v. Los Angeles County* that will benefit

"This settlement represents the first significant reform of the General Relief program in decades."

— GARY BLASI, SPECIAL COUNSEL,
SPEAKING ABOUT *GUILLORY ET AL. V. LOS ANGELES COUNTY*

thousands of people in the General Relief program. The program provides up to \$221 a month in cash aid to the poorest Angelenos, many of whom are homeless, for basic needs like food and shelter. Our agreement creates a \$79 million fund to compensate people whose benefits were improperly cut off and provides safeguards to ensure participants are not removed from the program illegally. Public Counsel special counsel Gary Blasi and board member Dan Grunfeld of **Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP** negotiated the agreement, and *California Lawyer* magazine recognized the team with its Attorneys of the Year award.

► Public Counsel announced the settlement of *Reed v. State of California*, which we filed with the ACLU of Southern California in 2010 as California's budget crisis led to massive teacher layoffs affecting some of the state's lowest-performing schools. The settlement will lead to major new investments in critically needed administrative and teacher support at 37 schools that struggle with high teacher turnover and student drop-out rates and low API scores.

MAY

► Public Counsel and partner groups filed *Cruz v. California* on behalf of students attending nine of California's most disadvantaged schools. The lawsuit accuses the state of California of failing to address the factors that reduce actual learning time and slowly rob students at high-poverty schools of an equal education.

JUNE

► We honored former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton with the 2014 William O. Douglas Award. More than 1,300 people attended our William O. Douglas Dinner, where **Arnold & Porter LLP** received the Law Firm *Pro Bono* Award, **Qualcomm** received the Corporate Achievement Award, and renowned attorneys Rand April and Roman Silberfeld received the Founders Award.

"I applaud the contributions that Public Counsel makes to our communities and our values."

— HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON,
FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE AND RECIPIENT
OF THE 2014 WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS AWARD

JULY

► Public Counsel and a coalition of groups filed *J.E.F.M. v. Holder*, a nationwide class-action lawsuit challenging the federal government's failure to provide legal representation for thousands of children who face deportation proceedings on their own. Many of these children have come to the United States from Central America fleeing violence or persecution.

AUGUST

► Nearly 1 in 4 California students is an English learner, and being able to read and write in English can determine a student's success in school. Los Angeles

County Superior Court Judge Chalfant validated charges filed by Public Counsel, the ACLU of California, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, and the law firm of **Latham & Watkins LLP** that California is failing to live up to its responsibility to ensure the delivery of meaningful educational support to thousands of the state's English learners. *California Lawyer* recognized Mark Rosenbaum, director of our Opportunity Under Law initiative, as Attorney of the Year for his work on *D.J. v. California*.

SEPTEMBER

► Governor Jerry Brown signed important laws sponsored or supported by Public Counsel, including AB 420 and AB 388. AB 420 will end school suspensions for students in grades K-3 and all expulsions for minor misbehavior that is known as "willful defiance." AB 388 will help reduce arrests of foster youth who live in group homes, taking many youth off the jailhouse track.

► Public Counsel announced the Opportunity Under Law initiative and the hiring of litigators Mark Rosenbaum, Anne Richardson and Gary Blasi. Opportunity Under Law combats economic injustice in all its forms through litigation and other means.

"Every challenge the world has, we have right here in Los Angeles. There's not an organization like Public Counsel in terms of the breadth of services and the number of cases it takes."

— MARK HADDAD, PUBLIC COUNSEL
BOARD MEMBER, SIDLEY AUSTIN LLP

"Each day, we are contacted by children in desperate need of lawyers to advocate for them in their deportation proceedings."

— KRISTEN JACKSON, SENIOR STAFF ATTORNEY
AND CO-COUNSEL IN *J.E.F.M. V. HOLDER*

OCTOBER

► A judge ordered the state of California to restore lost learning time to nearly 2,000 students at Jefferson High School in Los Angeles who had missed weeks of the school year because of improper courses.

► For the first time a federal judge ordered the U.S. to screen people in immigration detention for mental disabilities and provide legal representation to those who cannot represent themselves. The order came in *Franco v. Holder*, the class action lawsuit we filed on behalf of Jose Franco, who was held for nearly five years without a fair hearing.

NOVEMBER

► Public Counsel President and CEO Hernán D. Vera announced he was leaving Public Counsel after nearly 13 years, including nearly seven years as president, to return to private practice. "I am enormously proud of the contribution Public Counsel makes every day to giving our clients a chance they would otherwise not have and to fighting aggressively the many forms of injustice that our communities face," said Vera. "It has been a singular honor to have led this great organization." Public Counsel has launched a nationwide search for his successor. Rand April, a former Board Chair and previously the Managing Partner of the Los Angeles office of **Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP**,

agreed to serve as interim President and CEO commencing January 2015.

► Public Counsel celebrated our largest adoption day ever with more than 80 children joining new families.

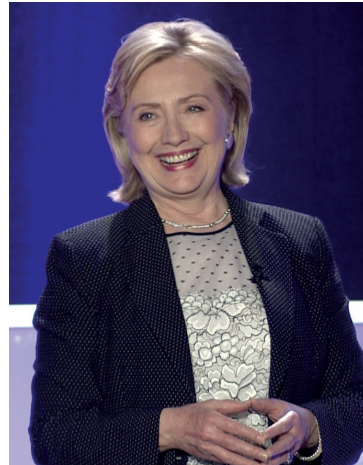
DECEMBER

► The West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Medical Center was historically a refuge for aging veterans, but today it has no permanent housing for Los Angeles' more than 4,000 homeless veterans. The lawsuit *Valentini v. McDonald*, filed in 2011, challenged lease deals that turned over VA grounds to a college baseball stadium, a hotel laundry facility, a private school and other non-veteran uses. In December the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals halted construction of an amphitheater project while the lawsuit continued. In January 2015, Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Bob McDonald and attorneys announced a landmark settlement to the lawsuit that opens the campus to supportive housing and paves the way for ending veteran homelessness in Los Angeles by the end of 2015.

"The V.A. and Secretary McDonald are saying to severely disabled vets that you have a home in America."

— MARK ROSENBAUM, DIRECTOR OF THE
OPPORTUNITY UNDER LAW INITIATIVE
AND LEAD COUNSEL ON *VALENTINI
V. MCDONALD*, IN THE *NEW YORK TIMES*.

OUR EVENTS



▲ Hillary Rodham Clinton at the William O. Douglas Dinner.



▲ Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti at the Douglas Dinner.



▲ Douglas Dinner emcee Mike Farrell, Corporate Achievement Award recipient Donald Rosenberg of Qualcomm, and Ted Danson.



▲ Associate Leadership Board members Pat Kennell, Cory Baskin, Michael Chait, Melanie Tory, and Jason Hamilton with former President and CEO Hernán Vera (third from left), Board Chair Dan Clivner (fourth from left), and Pro Bono Director David Daniels (third from right) at the 2014 board retreat.



▲ Former Board Chairs Roman Silberfeld and Rand April (with spouses Pat Klous and Carol April) received the Founders Award at the Douglas Dinner.



▲ Tanya Russell of Katten Muchin Rosenman with team members Janine Burris and Mela Harris at the Run for Justice at the ASICS LA Marathon. More than 600 participants from 42 teams joined our annual fundraiser.



▲ Children's Rights Director Martha Matthews, pro bono attorney Katherine Paradero, and staff attorney Nicole Rivera Vazquez at the Public Counsel Pro Bono Awards.

HUGH WILLIAMS FOR PUBLIC COUNSEL; ASSOCIATE LEADERSHIP BOARD PHOTO BY IAN FOX FOR PUBLIC COUNSEL

OUR SUPPORTERS

2014 DOUGLAS DINNER

Last year we honored former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton with the William O. Douglas Award. Qualcomm received the Corporate Achievement Award, and Arnold & Porter LLP received the Law Firm *Pro Bono* Award. Renowned attorneys and former Public Counsel board chairpersons Rand April of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Roman Silberfeld of Robins Kaplan LLP received the Founders Award for their commitment to justice for all. The following individuals and organizations generously supported our annual William O. Douglas Dinner, which raised more than \$2.4 million.

GUARDIANS OF JUSTICE - \$100,000

DIRECTV
Suzanne & David Johnson
Qualcomm Incorporated

SENTINELS OF JUSTICE - \$75,000

Tom & Janet Unterman

MILLENNIUM FOUNDERS - \$50,000

Arnold & Porter LLP
Association of Corporate Counsel-Southern California Chapter (ACC-SoCal)
Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP
Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP
Proskauer
Robins Kaplan LLP
Sidley Austin LLP
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP
Strange & Carpenter

FOUNDERS - \$35,000

Abacus Credit Counseling
Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP
Irell & Manella LLP
Kirkland & Elllis LLP
Latham & Watkins LLP
Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP
Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP
O'Melveny & Myers LLP
Paul Hastings LLP
Sullivan & Cromwell LLP

UNDERWRITERS - \$25,000

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
Alston & Bird LLP
Arent Fox LLP
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DLA Piper US LLP
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K&L Gates LLP
Liner LLP
Loeb & Loeb LLP
Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP
Panish Shea & Boyle LLP
Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP
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The Walt Disney Company
Winston & Strawn LLP
Ziffren Brittenham LLP

BENEFACTORS - \$15,000

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PARTNERS - \$10,000

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DOUGLAS SOCIETY

Legacy gifts through the Douglas Society will help sustain Public Counsel for generations to come.

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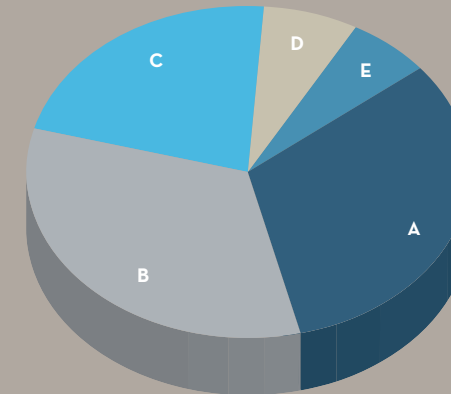
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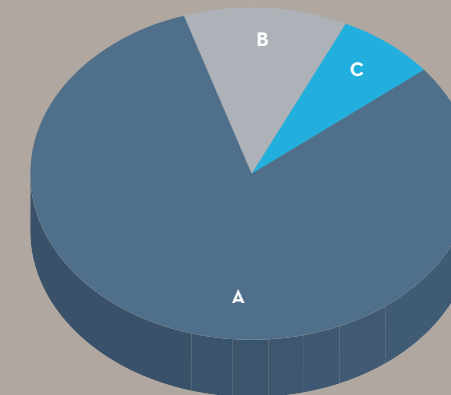
FINANCIALS

2014 REVENUES



A. CONTRIBUTIONS	\$3,431,924	32%
B. GRANTS	\$3,520,794	33%
C. CONTRACTS FOR LEGAL SERVICES	\$2,298,463	22%
D. INVESTMENT/MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	\$727,572	7%
E. ATTORNEY FEES/CY PRES	\$640,943	6%
TOTAL	\$10,619,696	

2014 EXPENSES



A. PROGRAM	\$8,580,672	81%
B. FUNDRAISING	\$1,291,699	12%
C. ADMINISTRATION	\$722,670	7%
TOTAL	\$10,595,041	



Our grants

Public Counsel received grants from the following organizations in 2014, in addition to our generous support from law firms, corporations and individuals:

The Ahmanson Foundation	The Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation
Akonadi Foundation	The Kenny Nickelson Memorial Foundation for Homeless Veterans
American College of Bankruptcy	Los Angeles County Bar Association
Annenberg Foundation	Macy's
The Annie E. Casey Foundation	Max Factor Family Foundation
Atlantic Philanthropies	May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust
Beverly Hills Bar Association	MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
The Burton G. Bettingen Corporation	Metabolic Studio
California Bar Foundation	Pritzker Foster Care Initiative
California Community Foundation	Proskauer
The California Endowment	The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
The California Wellness Foundation	Reed Elsevier
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation	Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern California
Carl & Roberta Deutsch Foundation	Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation
The Eisner Foundation	The Rose Hills Foundation
The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation	Rotary Club
Elizabeth Dole Foundation	Rx for Reading
The Everychild Foundation	Services for the UnderServed
Families in Schools	State Bar of California Legal Services Trust Fund
Ford Foundation	Stuart Foundation
Frederick R. Weisman Philanthropic Foundation	UniHealth Foundation
The Green Foundation	United Food and Commercial Workers International Union
The Hearst Foundations	United Way of Greater Los Angeles
Herman Family Foundation	van Löben Sels/RembeRock Foundation
Hispanics in Philanthropy Impact Fund	W. M. Keck Foundation
In-N-Out Burger Foundation	Walter S. Johnson Foundation
The Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation of California	Weingart Foundation
John M. Lloyd Foundation	Yellow Ribbon Fund
John W. Carson Foundation	

CY PRES AWARDS

The following law firms have designated Public Counsel as a cy pres beneficiary

Alston & Bird LLP	Khorrami, LLP	Sidley Austin LLP	The Trueblood Law Firm
Kemnitzer Barron & Krieg, LLP	Littler Mendelson P.C.	Strange & Carpenter	



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publiccounsel.org

How we deliver hope, justice and opportunity

We run the nation's leading **Appellate Law** project to assist Californians filing *pro se* appeals in state court and federal litigants who are representing themselves.

We expand **Children's Rights** and **Education Rights** through litigation, lobbying and legal help to thousands of foster youth, students, legal guardians and adoptive children.

We foster nonprofits and **Community Development** by cutting through red tape and supporting affordable and healthy neighborhoods.

We champion **Consumer Rights** for families who risk losing their homes and provide legal advice to people facing bankruptcy.

We work with providers of **Early Care and Education** to expand their businesses and make sure children get an educational head start with quality early care.

We assist families and individuals in Los Angeles through the **Homelessness Prevention** project to avoid and escape life on the streets.

We are a national leader for **Immigrants' Rights** and represent children, victims of domestic violence and people fleeing torture.

We believe in **Opportunity Under Law** and combat economic injustice in all its forms through litigation and other means.

We help military veterans overcome trauma, escape homelessness and provide for their families through our **Center for Veterans Advancement**.



▲ National Adoption Day 2014.