

Stanford
Law School

Stanford Public Interest
Law Foundation

our purpose
our impact
our future

Spring 2020

*from
our
board*

Dear Supporters,

We owe you one.

Thanks to donors like you, hundreds of Stanford law students are able to provide legal services to communities and individuals in need, year after year. Student-led organizations, funded by grants from SPILF, provide SLS students with hands-on opportunities to enrich our legal education with practical experience. For many, those experiences have had a lasting impact. For me, they have made all the difference.

SPILF funds an organization called the Stanford Prisoner Advocacy and Resources Coalition (SPARC), a group that provides legal services to prisoners in a local jail. Through SPARC, I have spent many hours over the past two years listening to prisoners' stories, answering their questions, and researching thorny legal issues. Those hours have been among the most fulfilling I've spent in law school.

My work with SPARC led me to other public interest opportunities: the Three Strikes Project, where I advocated on behalf of individuals serving life sentences for non-serious, non-violent crimes; bail advocacy in Santa Clara County; aiding asylum-seekers at the border in Tijuana; and internships with public defender offices. I can honestly say that the depth and breadth of public interest opportunities at the law school, made possible in large part by SPILF funding, shaped my career trajectory in ways I never would have imagined, and motivated me to commit to a career serving others as a public defender.

My story is not unique. SPILF-funded organizations have inspired and empowered countless students like me to pursue careers in the public interest. Contained in these pages are a few examples of the impact SPILF has had on our community, and the communities we serve.

These stories inspire me. I hope they will inspire you, too.

Sincerely,

Maddy Bullard | *Class of 2020* | SPILF Co-President & Co-Chair, 2020 SPILF Charity Auction

on behalf of the SPILF Student Board:

Tyler Bishop, Co-President
Taylor Benninger
Sarah Mitchell Ediger
Brian Erickson
Jason Fernandes

Bonnie Henry
Brock Huebner
Diana Li
Andrew Lubash
Katelyn Masket

Shawn Musgrave
Ariella Park
Daniel Quintana
Jenn Teitell
Elisa Wulfsberg

how it works

SPILF impacts public interest initiatives at SLS in two main ways.

First, we fund student-led, service-oriented groups who organize clinics and trips to provide services to specific communities and constituents, as well as individual student projects in the public interest realm.

Second, we provide bar study grants to graduating public interest students, to mitigate the substantial costs of bar study and registration for those without a private sector salary.

Supporting these initiatives requires significant financial resources. SPILF gives tens of thousands of dollars to support public interest initiatives every year, yet demand for resources always exceeds our supply. We depend on donors like you to help us grow the public interest community.

SPILF's two sources of income are direct monetary donations from firms and individual donors, and revenue from our annual Bid for Justice Auction. Revenue from the Auction comes in the form of bids on donated items. Firms and businesses can donate anything from tickets to a sporting event or concert, to high-value electronics, to a weekend travel package.

Firms and businesses also have the option to give at one of our pre-arranged sponsorship levels (see below), which provide significant exposure at the Auction. Faculty and students comprise the majority of attendees, making the event a prime networking opportunity.

This year's Auction will take place on May 15th, 2020. We hope you'll join us!

Sponsorship Tiers

- Bronze Level** (\$500) printed ad in our event program
- Silver Level** (\$1000) printed ad; two tickets to the Auction
- Gold Level** (\$2000) printed ad; online ad in our online bidding platform (including a spot on SPILF's "Our Sponsors" web page); three tickets to the Auction
- Platinum Level** (\$3000) printed ad; online ad; four tickets; a dedicated cocktail table; and an acknowledgment at the Live Auction

*by the
numbers:
fall 2019*

Impacting Communities

This fall, SPILF gave grants to eight student initiatives. These initiatives collectively engaged nearly **100 SLS students** in public interest work providing direct services to communities in need. During the fall quarter, SPILF-funded student initiatives provided legal services to **hundreds of clients**. Plus, an estimated **300 students** attended on-campus public interest programming, organized by student groups and funded by SPILF, during the fall quarter.



Impacting Students

“Because of SPILF, the pro bono organization I co-founded, the Election Law Project, was able to connect **more than 50 students** with opportunities to serve as election officers and poll monitors during the 2018 election. That experience is what **solidified my drive to pursue a career in voting-rights litigation.**”

- Tyler Bishop, JD 2020

Impacting Public Interest Graduates

SPILF awarded bar study grants to **36 students** in the Class of 2019 pursuing careers in the public interest. These grants covered registration fees and bar study costs for individuals without firm sponsorship. We gave **\$45,000** to support these graduates, with an **average award of \$1,250** per student.

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Impact | Serving the Yurok Tribe

For several years running, SPILF has provided funding to NALSA, Stanford Law School's Native American Law Students Association, to travel to the Yurok Reservation in Northern California to provide direct legal services to Native communities in need.



fostering lasting connections.

“SPILF's financial and ideological commitment to NALSA has been *absolutely vital* to helping us create a relationship with the Yurok Tribe that facilitates cultural and legal learning for the students, and brings top quality legal services to the tribe at a larger scale than they would normally be able to do.”

– Carra Rentie, Class of 2020 & former Co-President, NALSA

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“As a former president of NALSA, and a former participant of this trip, I am grateful for the experience, as well as the ties that we have created, and was *proud to see non-Native students learning about and engaging in Native issues in hands on ways* they may not have considered before this trip.”

- Carra Rentie, Class of 2020 & former Co-President, NALSA



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Impact | LawNY



In early September 2019, SPILF funded a group of eight SLS students to spend a week in rural western New York to work with LawNY, a civil legal aid organization. The trip's focus was to deliver legal services in a rural context, and experience rural practice. Students worked on proceedings in housing court, attended client meetings, and observed criminal and family courts. The group also met with local lawyers and officials, including Judge Philip Roche, who shared his experiences, which include serving as a public defender, an assistant district attorney, and ultimately a judge. SLS's partnership with LawNY is in its third year.

“There aren't a lot of opportunities in law school to actually see what client-centered lawyering looks like in practice. Specifically, there are a few areas that Stanford's curriculum doesn't cover much—family law and personal bankruptcy, for example—that we got to learn about by working with LawNY's attorneys. Working with low-income clients going through the bankruptcy process and seeing how the law impacts their ability to preserve their assets was eye-opening. This year was the third time that SLS sent a contingent to LawNY to volunteer, and we consistently have an excellent experience. And SPILF funding was incredibly helpful—getting to rural New York was quite a trek (where we went was about two hours from the closest airport), and ***the trip wouldn't have been possible without SPILF funding.***”

- Diana Li, Class of 2021

“The week in western New York opened my eyes to the ways in which rural public service lawyering crosses over many of the lines preconceived in the legal settings that we frequent. The county's public defender had been a district attorney previously, and an FBI agent before that. The aging legal aid bankruptcy lawyer had devoted much of his life to native rights. The civil legal aid office committed much of its attention to the local area's attorney for the child programs. The veterans project attorney spent much of her day on tenants' rights. SPILF funding allowed us to cross these lines, to learn in chambers, antique homes converted to law offices, and local bar association happy hours about how the rural lawyer's identity centers more on doing good than winning.”

- Brett Diehl, Class of 2021



“The Western New York legal services trip was definitely a highlight of my summer. So much of our law school experience is oriented around litigation in elite settings, where the practice of law is deified as an end in itself, rather than a means by which we can pursue justice. Working with LawNY attorneys was a refreshing and eye-opening contrast. It was an extreme counterexample to the type of law many of us imagine we’ll be practicing—for instance, we helped LawNY attorneys prepare for cases in front of courts whose judges hadn’t even gone to law school. It was great to feel as though we were building skills in law school that could tangibly improve people’s lives. And it was a tremendously well-run trip—the student organizers were fantastic, and the LawNY attorneys and staff were a pleasure to work with.”

- Jason Fernandes, Class of 2021

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Impact | Workers' Rights Pro Bono

“In my 1L year as a member of the Workers' Rights Pro Bono Project, after our very first clinic assisting people with employment law issues, I had the opportunity to represent a client in an unemployment insurance appeal hearing before an administrative law judge in San Jose. My teammate and I met with the client several times, pulled together her case over the weekend, and then helped her get the unemployment insurance to which she was entitled, notwithstanding her ex-employer's objections. *This hands-on experience just a few weeks into my 1L year was a highlight of my first year of law school*, particularly because I know the benefits our client received made a difference for her.”

– Cody Kahoe, Class of 2021 & Student Leader, Workers' Rights Pro Bono



SLS student volunteers and Legal Aid at Work attorneys partner up to serve clients seeking to enforce their rights in the workplace.

About the Organization.

The Workers' Rights Pro Bono Project teams up with Bay Area nonprofit Legal Aid at Work to provide free and confidential information to workers about their legal rights. In addition to direct client services, Legal Aid attorneys teach students about topics in employment and labor law, including denial of wages, discrimination, work and safety issues, unemployment benefits, harassment, and wrongful termination. Clinics take place quarterly. SPILF provides the Workers' Rights pro bono with key funding on a biannual basis.

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“Workers’ Rights Pro Bono immediately transformed my law school experience.”

“Workers’ Rights Pro Bono immediately transformed my law school experience. ***The clinic showed me that I was learning useful skills that could tangibly improve people’s lives;*** it helped ground my classroom experience, which otherwise seemed totally disconnected from the reasons I came to law school in the first place. Within my first few clinic sessions, I helped a woman prepare for an unemployment insurance denial appeal hearing (which she won), helped someone identify a potential disability discrimination cause of action, and helped someone file a wage theft claim against an employer that vanished before paying her. The supervision at the clinic from Legal Aid at Work attorneys is also fantastic. ***Overall, it’s been an incredible experience, made possible via SPILF funding, and it’s only solidified my desire to pursue public interest law with a focus on economic justice.”***

- Jason Fernandes, Class of 2021

“Without SPILF’s funding for our clinics, our project would not attract the passionate students we need to do this great work.”

– Cody Kahoe



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Impact | Asylum-Seekers at the Border



SLS students first started traveling to Tijuana to provide legal services to asylum-seekers at the border in 2018. SPILF has been instrumental in funding these trips from the beginning, and participation has increased each trip. Upon arrival in Tijuana, SLS students partner with Al Otro Lado, a US-based legal aid organization with a field outpost across the border. SLS participants consistently report that their work at the border is both transformative and impactful. Without funding from SPILF, these trips would not be possible. We are proud to support their efforts.

Before coming to law school, I was a teacher for four years in a Denver elementary school with a large immigrant and refugee population. I came to law school to fight for our community; to fight for the rights of immigrants and people with disabilities. Law school can feel extremely disorienting, especially during the first year, and I feel privileged and honored to have had the opportunity to travel to Tijuana and work with asylum seekers during my first quarter. My work at Al Otro Lado not only regrounded me in my reasons for coming to law school, but also showed me that when the law operates as a tool of systematic disenfranchisement, activists and lawyers can come together to wage war against, and hopefully one day upend, such unjust systems.

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- Sam Becker, Class of 2022

During my time at Stanford, I've been to Tijuana three times, and I am deeply grateful for each of those experiences and the perspective they have offered. I've spoken with refugees fleeing gang violence in the Northern Triangle, a civil war in Cameroon, and homophobia in Russia, all of whom have traveled for months, in many cases entirely on foot, to arrive in Tijuana with the sole and simple purpose of seeking asylum in the United States. I have filled out forms, scanned evidence into a secure drive for remote access, and participated in direct actions to force CBP to take custody of asylum seekers rather than leaving them exposed to danger in Mexico. Over time, the government's restrictions have tightened, and the work has grown harder and the hope fainter. But Al Otro Lado remains, and today they are more organized than ever and continue to provide valuable services. On my most recent trip, they served around a hundred asylum seekers and their families over the course of a weekend, and I am proud to have played a small part in that effort.

- Nicholas Eckenwiler, Class of 2020



Working with Al Otro Lado was, for me, an energizing and intense experience. Luis, the On the Ground Coordinator, describes AOL an organization run on love (for those seeking asylum, and for fellow volunteers) and hate (of the oppressive power structures, illegal list system, and indifference in the face of tragedy). I am honored to have worked with individuals and families who have escaped unspeakable brutality through their own determination, and to get to know other SLS students committed to social justice and volunteers from across America who have been inspired to donate their time and learn about the real, humanitarian crisis at our border.

- Bryan Thomson, Class of 2021



Volunteering in Tijuana was the most rewarding experience of my 1L Fall. I was able to help two families with strong cases for asylum fill out their I-589 forms, and I translated evidence late into the evening with other volunteers to support other cases. It was a SPILF grant supporting the SAIR Asylum Project that made my participation possible. At a time when I was buried by my doctrinal classes and filled with 1L doubts, this experience helped me remember why I enrolled in the first place, and that was, to me, the most valuable thing of all.

- Philip Issa, Class of 2022

Volunteering for four days with Al Otro Lado was the most meaningful legal experience I've had here at the law school. Our group of students helped clients living largely in homeless shelters prepare to present themselves for asylum in America. Many of the people I worked with had so much in common with me that it was difficult to comprehend how differently the U.S. government was treating us. I met a man who'd spent 46 years living minutes from where I went to high school in California, only to be deported as an adult from the only country he'd ever known, and a teenage boy from Central America fleeing gang violence who shared my birthday. I am deeply grateful to have had the chance to work with an incredible organization that is unselfishly and unpretentiously dedicated to serving those in need.

- Jake Sonnenberg, Class of 2020

*thank
you.*

Your generosity means a great deal, not only to us, but to the communities we serve. If you found these stories inspiring, and want to contribute to SPILF in a capacity beyond the sponsorship and donation options described herein, we would love to hear from you. Please don't hesitate to reach out.

We cordially invite you to SPILF's 28th Annual Bid for Justice Auction. This year's Auction will take place on Friday, May 15th, 2020, at 6:00 PM. The Auction will be held at the Traitel Building on Stanford's campus, at 435 Lasuen Mall.

For more information, to buy tickets, or to connect with current SPILF leadership, please contact us via email.

Thank you.

Very sincerely,

Maddy Bullard | [SPILF Co-President & Co-Chair, 2020 Auction](#) | mbullard@stanford.edu
Taylor Benninger | [Co-Chair, 2020 Auction](#) | tbennin1@stanford.edu