

Create Change

Levin Center Hosts Trina Grillo Public Interest Retreat on “Global Social Justice Lawyering”

Over 160 law students, academics, lawyers, and activists attended the 11th Annual Trina Grillo Public Interest and Social Justice Retreat at Stanford Law School on February 20th and 21st. Co-sponsored by the Levin Center and Seattle University's Access to Justice Institute, the Retreat featured a series of workshops, trainings, and panels through which participants explored new initiatives to apply human rights frameworks to domestic legal issues and learned about cross-border, collaborative social justice advocacy models. Many panelists discussed the innately global and interdisciplinary nature of progressive lawyering and emphasized the importance of a transnational context in achieving economic and social justice.

The Retreat began with a panel on international human rights careers. Afterwards, Stephanie Wildman, Professor of Law and Director of the Center for Social Justice and Public Service at Santa Clara Law School, reflected on the legacy of Trina Grillo, whose compassion and vision inspired a generation of lawyers and law professors.



PHOTO: DIANA SINGLETON

Trina Grillo Retreat co-chairs Susan Feathers, Executive Director of the Levin Center, and Diana Singleton of Seattle University School of Law's Access to Justice Institute pose for a photo.

Kyong-Whan Ahn, Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea, delivered the keynote address to a crowd of over 100 students.

The following day featured a series of panels that focused on the intersection of international human rights law and criminal justice, environmental law, and reproductive rights. Speakers included Jennifer Martinez, Professor of Law at Stanford Law School; Ronald Slye, Associate Professor of Law and Director

of International and Comparative Law Programs at Seattle University School of Law; Raven Lidman, Clinical Professor Law at Seattle University of Law; Constance de la Vega, Professor of Law and Academic Director of International Law at University of San Francisco School of Law; Martha Davis, Professor of Law at Northeastern Law School; and Svitlana Kravencko, Professor of Law at University of Oregon School of Law.

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Executive Director's Note



This issue of Create Change highlights key public service programs and offers a glimpse into the growing culture of service at Stanford Law School. It has been a great year for the Levin Center for Public Service and Public Interest Law. More than 200 students contributed nearly 7,500 hours of law-related service, and a record 138 students—a 30 percent increase from last year—are pursuing public interest internships nationally and internationally. Our growing pro bono program successfully launched several innovative new projects in mediation, low-income tax preparation, and rural legal services, and our Social Security Disability Project, now in its second year, trained 29 law students who in turn provided legal assistance to 40 mentally disabled clients. And finally, the Levin Center hosted nearly 100 programs and trainings to support students pursuing public interest work.

Next month, I will be returning to my native New York to serve as the Assistant Dean for Students and a Professor in the Academic Support Program at Albany Law School. It has been an honor to serve as the Levin Center's Executive Director for the past two years and I look forward to collaborating with many of you as part of the larger pro bono and public interest community. I'm confident that my successor, as well as my predecessor—fellow Northeastern Law School graduate, Diane Chin—will make the Levin Center among the leading public interest law programs in the nation.

Susan J. Feathers

More Than Just Disability Benefits: SSDP Students Ensure Housing and Access to Medical Care for Their Homeless Clients

The Levin Center's in-house pro bono project—the Social Security Disability Project—has had a series of recent successes for local homeless individuals. As a result of SLS students' pro bono advocacy in administrative hearings and appeals over the past six months, ten homeless and mentally disabled clients are now receiving monthly cash benefits and large retroactive payments. Others have successfully challenged overpayments and suspensions. But, for these needy clients, the results go far beyond a monthly income and can be quite life-changing. In fact, as a result of the students' legal victories, SSDP clients have secured and maintained long-term housing, gained access to much needed medical care, and enjoyed new support from previously estranged family members.

For one 45 year-old SSDP client, for example, receiving disability benefits has meant moving into his own apartment for the first time in his life. The client, who had been homeless since he left a Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school at the age of 20, began receiving disability benefits for his disabling mental health condition after three SSDP students—Tyler Pool, JD '09, Andy Stewart, JD '09, and Kevin Papay, JD '10—won a fully favorable decision from an administrative law judge. *(Continued on page 8)*

News Briefs

Students Attend Annual Rebellious Lawyering Conference at Yale Law

In February, students Nicole Daro, JD '10, Jordana Mosten, JD '10, and Sonia Valdez, JD '10, received Levin Center fellowships to attend Yale Law School's Annual Rebellious Lawyering Conference, a student-run event that brings together practitioners, law students, and community advocates from around the country to discuss innovative, progressive approaches to law and social change. At the conference, they discussed issues of human rights, immigration, food policy, criminal justice, and the role of public interest lawyers under the new administration.

SLS Celebrates Public Interest Awards

On April 15, the public interest community gathered in the Law Lounge to celebrate the end of the year and present awards to students who have made outstanding contributions to public interest at Stanford Law. Ling Lew, JD '09; Alexa Van Brunt, JD '09; and Larisa Bowman, JD '09, were named the 2009 Deborah L. Rhode Public Interest Award winners. Jacqueline de Armas, JD '11, received the Lisa M. Schnitzer Memorial Scholarship, which was established in the memory of Lisa Schnitzer, a first-year student who was very committed to public interest law and died in a car accident in 1987. The celebration also honored a record number of third-year students (67) graduating with pro bono distinction for providing 50 or more hours of service during their time at SLS.

SLS Students Win California Bar Foundation Scholarships

The California Bar Foundation has chosen all five of Stanford Law School's nominees for the state-wide Public Interest Law Scholarships. Alvaro Huerta, JD '10; Alexandra Lampert, JD '11; Esther Pun, JD '10; Nina Robertson, JD '10; and Joanna Shalleck-Klein, JD '10, were all recognized for their outstanding public service and received between \$2,500 and \$7,500 in scholarships. Earlier in the year, the California Bar Foundation awarded Emily Maglio, JD '09, and Tamika Butler, JD '09, the Rosenthal Bar Exam Scholarship, which provides \$2,000 toward bar expenses.

Alumni Spotlight:

Family Law Advocate Finds Balance as Professor & Clinic Director

Leigh Goodmark, JD '94, says she has the greatest job in the world: she is a law professor who teaches Family Law and supervises students representing clients at the University of Baltimore's Family Law Clinic.

She explains, "You are doing casework you love, you have the time to think [about broader implications of the work], and you get to be there when student attorneys really get what it means to represent someone else, when they understand that they CAN. It's an amazing moment when they realize that they can really be lawyers, after sitting through 1.5 to 2 years of law school."

Goodmark contrasts that to the experience she had when she was a legal services lawyer, doing 70-80 family law cases at a time. "It was a huge caseload, but we prided ourselves on never turning anyone away. I was in court all day everyday and just didn't get a chance to think." Her current job offers her the best parts of practice and teaching, provides time to analyze the issues and trends, and enables her to have a more balanced lifestyle.

When pressed, she will admit that the only disadvantage is that one might miss being a trial lawyer. She misses having direct relationships with her clients, but points out she still has direct relationships with her students.

Goodmark's journey to become an associate professor and director of the Family Law Clinic originally started with an interest in working with children, which is what led her to law school. At Stanford, Michael Wald, the Jackson Eli Reynolds Professor of Law, Emeritus, was one of her mentors and he brought her out to Washington, D.C., to intern with him when he was appointed deputy general counsel at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Wald then connected Goodmark with an

old friend of his who served as the executive director of the nonprofit where she ultimately did the first year of her Skadden Fellowship project. She says, "Michael is responsible for every good thing that has ever happened to me."

During her Skadden fellowship at Bread for the City and Zacchaeus Free Clinic, a holistic neighborhood service center, Goodmark created a school-based legal services clinic. The clinic was one of the first two legal clinics at a school in the country and the first one at an elementary school.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LEIGH GOODMARK

She explains, "When I was there, I was seeing what basic legal services looked like. I had done more class action work at summer internships, having worked at the ACLU of Southern California doing welfare work and at the Youth Law Center doing a variety of issues like special education, conditions of confinement, and other class action issues. Doing my Skadden was the first time I was able to see legal services on a daily basis. I loved it, loved my clients, loved being in a school, and being part of that community."

Her clinic originally handled anything clients brought her, whether it was landlord/tenant law, welfare benefits, or family law. While she thought that her interest was on children's rights, it turned out that what she really enjoyed was doing family law cases with parents.

When Goodmark started doing domestic violence work, it quickly became her focus.

After leaving Bread for the City, Goodmark taught at Catholic University Columbus School of Law's Families and the Law Clinic where she supervising law students representing battered women. She then served as Director of the Children and Domestic Violence Project at the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law before joining the faculty of the University of Baltimore Law School.

Goodmark emphasizes that students interested in working on family law issues must understand the personal toll of this kind of work. She explains, "You need to be really aware of the potential for secondary traumatization. You need to be open to learning what that is and thinking about how to deal with that in yourself. That's why a lot of lawyers who do this work don't have a very long career in it. It's very difficult work, not because of the law but the stories of how people are treated on a day-to-day basis and then seeing how little the legal system can do to remedy those things and how callous the legal system is toward women who have been battered can really take a toll on you. Students need to know that, monitor for that, and be prepared to deal with it."

She shares a story about one of her most memorable cases. It involved a mother whose child was conceived as result of rape and who was sued for custody by the father of child. The state had sued the man asking him to pay child support, so in response he filed for custody. "On the day of the trial, I was working with the student attorney who was negotiating for a settlement, but the client said, 'No, no, no.' We were really worried, as the judge was an unknown entity but his father was known to be a huge (Continued on page 6)

Tamika Butler, JD '09, Named 2009-2011 Skadden Fellow at the Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center in San Francisco

Tamika Butler, JD '09, has been selected by the Skadden Fellowship Foundation to be one of its 28 distinguished 2009-2011 Skadden Fellows. The prestigious fellowship will enable Butler to work for two years at the Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center in San Francisco, where she will focus on workers' rights issues.

Described as a "legal Peace Corps" by the Los Angeles Times, the Skadden Fellowship program was established by the law firm Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom in 1988 to address the need for greater funding for graduating law students who wish to devote their professional lives to providing legal services to the poor. To apply, students must create their own projects at public interest organizations with the help of at least two lawyers.

For her project at the Employment Law Center, Butler will start two workers' rights clinics in San Francisco's historically black neighborhoods, Bayview-Hunters Point and Western Addition, that will offer legal advice, counseling, and representation on employment law issues.

"The clinics will be a one-stop shop for people to come in and ask about employment issues," she explains. "They will run like pro bono programs at SLS, with a supervising attorney and law students who come in to do intake."

In addition to establishing the clinics, the other major component of Butler's project involves community outreach. She will not only conduct "know-your-rights" workshops at local churches and schools and encourage people to seek assistance at the clinics, but will also consult minority-owned small businesses about fair employment practices.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JUDITH ROMERO

"Though the African-American population in San Francisco is smaller than in other large cities, it is still there and vibrant," she says. "It is under-resourced. People just don't know where to go when they need help."

The Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center is an ideal sponsor for her project. "It is visible and well-known in the community, which is huge to getting clients in the door," she explains. "It's a great organization who has hosted Skadden Fellows in the past. I'm excited to work with the amazing group of attorneys and to learn a lot there."

Key to securing the highly competitive fellowship was "getting together with the right organization at the right time," she emphasizes. "To design my project, I first had to figure out where the need for services was." Then, she looked to other workers' rights clinics in the city that focused on different populations as models.

Butler's active involvement in the SLS public interest community undoubtedly also contributed to her selection as a Skadden Fellow. Throughout her

three years, she participated in many pro bono opportunities, including the Volunteer Attorney Program, the Domestic Violence Pro Bono Program, and the Equality Program Bono Program with the National Center for Lesbian Rights. She also held numerous student leadership positions in the Law Association, Outlaw, the Black Law Students Association, the Women of Stanford Law, and the Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Journal. During her summers, she worked at the Human Rights Campaign and at the ACLU's LGBT & AIDS Project.

As a young SLS graduate who entered law school straight out of college, Butler is "not really certain" about her plans after completing her fellowship. She's not even sure if she will continue to practice law in the long-term. "I came to law school to create positive change," she says, "and in that sense, law school was the right thing to do and gave me invaluable training. No matter what though, my career will focus on civil rights and the empowerment of under-represented and minority communities." ■

Mills Legal Clinic Continues to Positively Impact Clients and Communities

Editor's Note: The following is a summary of email announcements sent by Professor Larry Marshall, Associate Dean for Public Service and Clinical Education.

Supreme Court Litigation Clinic

At the end of April, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled for the clinic's client in *Cone v. Bell*. Mr. Cone is a Vietnam veteran who was convicted of murder two decades ago in Tennessee and was sentenced to death. Mr. Cone's central argument at sentencing for avoiding the death penalty was that he was in a PTSD-induced methamphetamine high at the time of the killings. Although this would not, of course, provide a defense to the crime, it was relevant, he asserted, to the jury's decision between imposing a life sentence and a sentence of death. The State called this defense "baloney," arguing that all the evidence disproved Mr. Cone's claim that he was in an impaired state at the time of the crime. Years after his trial, however, Mr. Cone's lawyers discovered that the State had suppressed evidence that supported his defense. Mr. Cone sought relief in the Tennessee courts and was turned away. He then sought relief from the federal courts. The Sixth Circuit ultimately held that his claim was procedurally barred and suggested that it lacked merit anyway.

The clinic successfully sought certiorari from this decision and, at the end of April, the Supreme Court vacated it by a 6-3 vote. The Court held that the State had misrepresented the case's procedural history to the federal courts and that Mr. Cone's claim was not, in fact, procedurally defaulted.

The Court further held that Cone's Brady claim (attacking the State's withholding of evidence supporting Mr.

Cone's claim) appeared meritorious and warranted a full evidentiary hearing in the district court.

This was a particularly challenging project, both because the case was so procedurally complicated and because the record was so voluminous. The students in the clinic were not only able to master this material, but also presented it so compellingly that the Court was moved to expend its scarce resources to correct the injustices below—a type of "error correction" in which it rarely engages. Team members at various times included Scott Stewart, JD '08, Barbara Thomas, JD '09, and Alan Mouristen, JD '09, (on cert), and Ruthie Zemel, JD '09, Jess Oats, JD '09, and Dave Muraskin, JD '09 (on the merits). Josh Friedman, JD '09, and Dan Matro, JD '08, worked on the case as well last summer. Clinic instructor Tom Goldstein headed up the project and argued the case, backed by clinic instructors Pam Karlan, Jeff Fisher, Kevin Russell, and Amy Howe. Joanne Newman provided outstanding support.

Criminal Defense Clinic

The students, staff, and faculty of the Criminal Defense Clinic secured an extraordinary victory in April on behalf of their client, Charles Ramirez.

Until April 22, 2009, Mr. Ramirez was serving a life sentence for having committed a third strike of stealing a car radio from a parked car in 1995. During a contested hearing at the Torrence branch of Los Angeles Superior Court, Kathleen Fox, JD '10, and Annie Osborn, JD '10, argued that Mr. Ramirez should never have been sentenced to life and that he should be released under a plan they had put in

place for him to live in a transitional home supported by the Los Angeles Archdiocese until he is back on his feet.

The Los Angeles District Attorney opposed these efforts, but at the end of the hearing, the judge granted relief to Mr. Ramirez, resentencing him to 6 years. Because he has already served 13 years (more than twice the reduced sentence), Mr. Ramirez was released within the several days of the decision.

Kathleen's and Annie's work was the culmination of a two-year project in which clinic students investigated the case, secured a new sentencing hearing, and finally succeeded in winning Mr. Ramirez's release. Jennifer Martinez, JD '08, Jennifer Robinson, JD '08, and Caeli Higney, JD '09, represented Mr. Ramirez in these earlier phases and habeas proceedings.

Mr. Ramirez was convicted and sentenced to life under the Three Strikes Law in 1995. The police determined that he was under the influence of heroin at the time he stole the car radio. His previous strikes were two previous non-violent residential burglaries that had occurred within one week of another and for which he had served four years in prison. Although Mr. Ramirez had requested substance abuse treatment in the aftermath of those convictions, he never received it. Instead, he picked up another charge and received a life sentence.

Despite being certain he was to spend his life in prison, Mr. Ramirez spent his time in prison taking advantage of every program that was made available to him to better himself. He actively participated in narcotics anonymous, worked diligently at school, and voluntarily worked with a therapist to strengthen *(Continued on page 7)*

Alternative Spring Break Trips Provide Students with Valuable, Firsthand Lawyering Experiences

With travel scholarships from the Levin Center and SPILF, eighteen SLS students forewent traditional spring breaks at the beach and instead participated in week-long pro bono placements during their time off. First, for the fourth year in a row, Stanford sent eight students to New Orleans through the Student Hurricane Network to volunteer with the New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation. Another seven students also spent the week in New Orleans at the Orleans Office of the Public Defender, where they interviewed clients, researched various legal issues, and observed courtroom proceedings. Finally, three additional students traveled to Washington D.C. to work at the nation's premier public defender office, the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia.

Though immersed in a variety of practices areas—from domestic violence to fair housing law to juvenile services to criminal defense—all participants agreed that the experience was “valuable,” “rewarding,” and “informative.” As Joelle Emerson, JD '11, who worked with a Family Law and Domestic Violence attorney in New Orleans, commented, “It gave me great insight into the day-to-

day responsibilities of public interest/direct services attorneys and inspired me to do more direct service work.” Joseph Giovannetti, JD '11, also noted that his experience at the Orleans Public Defender was “a helpful reminder of the real-world application of all that I have been studying throughout my 1L year.”

Those students who worked at the two public defenders' offices particularly appreciated witnessing the realities of criminal law. “Being in a courtroom in New Orleans was a surreal and depressing experience,” Evan Berquist, JD '11, reflected. “I learned a lot about the enormous impacts that judges' and prosecutors' discretion can have on the fate of defendants. Overall, the experience confirmed and deepened my interest in criminal law and helped me see the value of having competent, publicly-provided counsel on both sides of the proceedings. I came away with increased respect for the difficult work of criminal defenders and prosecutors.”

Giovannetti agreed that the week was “a unique opportunity to...get a sense of the important role that public defenders play in representing [clients'] interests. The legal system *(Continued on page 7)*

Retreat Promotes Dialogue on Global Social Justice

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In addition to panels, the Retreat featured a pro bono training workshop as well as a break-out session for faculty. Freedom Now's founder, Jared Genser, and executive director, Maran Turner, offered an interactive training on “Freeing Political Prisoners.” Over 50 students from eight law schools learned the basics of international human rights law, various approaches to applying political pressure on offending governments, and the most effective ways of publicizing cases. Neta Ziv, Professor of Law at Tel Aviv University, and Raquel Aldana, Professor of Law at William S. Boyd School of Law, also lead a workshop for faculty that explored the unique institutional and pedagogical challenges of teaching international human rights law.

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive. “Inspirational, informative, and meaningful,” one participant commented. “Amazing and refreshing...probably keeping a lot of first-year students from dropping out of law school,” another said. The Levin Center is honored to have hosted such a successful and informative event. ■

Balance in Clinic-Based Family Law Advocacy

(Continued from page 3) sexist. Yet our client said, ‘No, I am not settling and am going to take my chances.’”

Goodmark adds, “We go into court and the man's entire case theory is, ‘Day 1 we met, day 2 I asked her to move in and we had consensual sex, and then on day 3, she was getting too many phone calls from other men so I kicked her out.’ Our client said in response, ‘Day 1, he was my landlord, day 2 he raped me, and day 3 I got out of there.’”

The trial proceeded along and when the opposing counsel said, “The father should have custody...” the judge cuts him off and says, “Unless I find he's a rapist and a liar.”

Goodmark exclaims, “It was so incredible because the judge got it. It is amazing to see when a judge GETS it. Plus, the student attorney did a fantastic job to help him get it. I was so proud of her. More importantly, the client was totally right. She was right to not

negotiate any of her rights, right to stick to her guns. Even though her lawyers were nervous, she was RIGHT and in the end, the judge didn't give him custody, didn't give him visitation, and dismissed the case entirely and that was the best result ever.”

She concludes, “I am so lucky. I have worked with so many amazing women and some amazing men, and my students and my student's clients are the absolute high point of my job each and every day.” ■

ASB Inspires More Pro Bono Work

(Continued from page 6) can seem mechanical and blind to the particular circumstances of the individuals who get caught up in it. In large part, it is the public defenders' job to listen to the stories of indigent clients and make sure that those stories are heard and understood by the court."

The alienating nature of criminal proceedings also surprised Mira Serrill-Robins, JD '11. "On my first day I tried to help public defenders find their clients and vice versa in the mayhem of the first appearances courtroom. I was struck by the fact that the defenders had not met, or even seen, most of their clients before representing them in court. It was troubling that defendants and their families for the most part seemed to have no idea what was going on, and no one to ask, and I was glad to have the opportunity to make their day in court a little less grueling."

For Stephen Dekovich, JD '11, working in the Juvenile Services Program (JSP) of the D.C. Public Defender Service revealed just how important defense attorneys are for young defendants. "Based on my observations of a few [revocation] hearings, JSP attorneys are sorely needed at this stage in a youth's involvement with the juvenile justice system in order to make sure that the juveniles are not detained illegally or for specious reasons. The attorneys advocate vigorously on the juveniles' behalf and ensure that they understand and exercise their rights, and they maintain contact with family members and other caregivers throughout the process."

Beyond providing valuable firsthand glimpses into real-life lawyering, many students' experiences had a direct bearing on their academics. "I [was] in Evidence [that] semester," Sarah Edwards, JD '11, noted, "and actually seeing all of the rules in play made a huge

difference for me in understanding how they work together. There is something about seeing it in action, and not just in a book, that really helped me understand the class as a whole."

Serrill-Robins's observations at the Orleans Public Defender were similarly helpful to her classwork. "Our evidence reading over break was the "Daubert" trio of cases...While we were in New Orleans, we got to see the beginning of a Daubert hearing, before the judge cut it off because to make his determination about the admission of expert testimony, he wanted more information. He laid out which Daubert factors are most important to him, and we saw firsthand, and perfectly-timed, how expert testimony is evaluated."

Finally, students' learning experiences were not just limited to their legal work. "Although I learned a lot at the New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation," Jessica Brooks, JD '11, remarked, "I learned even more on my time off. People in New Orleans have been through so much and are more than willing to educate visitors about their experiences. Visiting the ravaged areas of the city was eye opening and made me realize how important the work at NOLAC truly is. I will never forget this experience or the value that it brought to my legal education. It is important to sometimes step outside of the law school and remember why we are here and who we can help by being here."

Beth Derby, JD '09, agrees. "Much better than any vacation, I have really gotten to know the city and people of New Orleans by doing pro bono work there during my last two spring breaks. It's an incredibly special place that has benefited from increased attention by the American legal community in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, and it's important not to turn that attention away now." ■

(Continued from page 5) his life management skills. Both his teachers and his therapist from the prison wrote letters to the judge supporting Mr. Ramirez's release.

This is the fourth inmate this year to secure relief from a life sentence through the work of the Criminal Defense Clinic. This is an astonishing accomplishment, due to the wonderful efforts of the clinic's many students, its faculty—Mike Romano and Galit Lipa—and its wonderful paralegal, Lynda Johnston.

Immigrants' Rights Clinic

The students, faculty, and staff of the Immigrants' Rights Clinic achieved a wonderful series of results on behalf of their clients this semester. Here are a few highlights:

Tina Cheng, JD '10, and Brian Goldman, JD '10, successfully prevented the deportation of Phong Nguyen, a lawful permanent resident who was placed in removal proceedings due to a one-time drug conviction that involved no jail time. They pursued a two-pronged legal strategy to secure relief for Mr. Nguyen. First, they convinced an Alameda County Superior Court judge to expunge their client's offense; next, they persuaded an Immigration Judge to terminate their client's removal proceedings.

Ling Lew, JD '09, and Mindy Jeng, JD '09, recently obtained relief under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) for a clinic client who suffered physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her U.S. citizen spouse. To prepare the client's VAWA application, Ling and Mindy conducted extensive interviews with her, interviewed witnesses, marshaled documentary evidence, and wrote a persuasive letter-brief. Thanks to Ling and Mindy, the client can now stay in the United States and is on a path to receiving a green card. ■

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For two other clients, success at administrative hearings has meant the security of knowing that they will not be homeless again. Both of these clients were residents of the Opportunity Center when students began working with them. However, their housing there was temporarily subsidized by a local non-profit organization and they faced future eviction when their subsidies expired. Students Vivian Wang, JD '10, Peter Conti-Brown, JD '10, Thomas Scott, JD '10, and Paul-Jon Benson, JD '10, were able to obtain benefits for both clients at administrative hearings, ensuring that both will be able to live in their apartments indefinitely. One client was so intent on simply staying housed that he had no interest in hearing the amount of his monthly cash benefit or his retroactive award: his sole focus was on being able to keep his apartment. When he received his first check, this client, who is in very poor health, called to thank his team. "I have the check in my pocket," he said. "It really sunk in today that I'll be able to keep my housing. I don't think I'd survive being homeless again. I don't think my body could take it."

For another client, who struggles to cope with symptoms of her mental illness, success at an administrative hearing has meant not only moving out of the creek, where she has lived in a tent for three years, but also reconnecting with previously estranged family members. Ever since Valerie McConnell, JD '10, and Elisabeth Oppenheimer, JD '10, secured disability benefits for this client, her family members have stepped forward to help her secure housing, manage her funds, and drive her to appointments with her psychiatrist, case manager, and Social Security administrators. In speaking to her family members, they say that her access to regular funds has opened doors to community-based

services and has given them tools to help her. Additionally, the judge's determination that her mental illness was disabling made family members see her in a different light—as their disabled daughter/sister, who needed a leg up to access programs.

Finally, for another client, success at an administrative hearing has meant access to much needed medical care. This client received disability benefits after Doru Gavril, JD '11, Brigid Kelly, JD '11, and Valerie McConnell, JD '10, represented him at an administrative hearing. He will receive cash benefits and a large retroactive award, but his first priority is getting urgently needed medical care with his new Medi-Cal benefits. In addition to a fractured back and other impairments, this client suffers from poorly managed diabetes with neuropathy in both of his feet. He has developed a severe infection requiring treatment that he has been unable to receive. While he has received primary care from a free clinic, he has had no access to the type of specialists who can treat his foot or his diabetes-related vision deterioration. His first question after his hearing was "How soon can I go see a doctor that takes Medi-Cal?"

All SSDP students are supervised by director and supervising attorney, Lisa Douglass (BA '93, MA '94). ■

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