

EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS

Texas Access to Justice Foundation

1999 – 2016



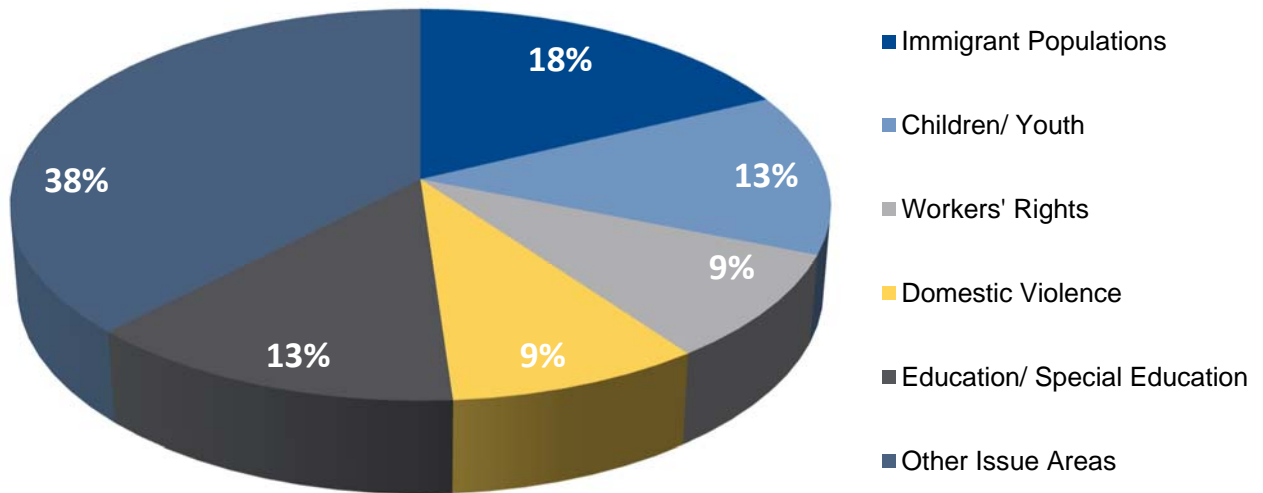
1730 M Street, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036



Equal Justice Works and the Texas Access to Justice Foundation celebrate 17 years of partnership.

Equal Justice Works would like to thank the Texas Access to Justice Foundation for the tremendous contributions the Foundation has made to America's largest postgraduate legal fellowship program. The Texas Access to Justice Foundation is **the premier supporter of Equal Justice Works Fellowships in Texas.** Since 1999, the Texas Access to Justice Foundation has **funded 45 two-year fellowships.** These Fellows have delivered critically needed legal services **at nearly twenty nonprofit host organizations in the state of Texas,** working on numerous issue areas ranging from education to immigration. Among the Texas Access to Justice Foundation's previous Fellows, **nearly three-quarters remain in public interest today,** and they serve as Staff Attorneys, Directing Attorneys, government attorneys, and clinical law professors. This compendium demonstrates the impact that the Texas Access to Justice Foundation has had **in launching the public interest careers of 45 young attorneys.** Equal Justice Works thanks the Texas Access to Justice Foundation for this outstanding commitment to **ensuring equal access to the justice system for society's most vulnerable individuals and communities.**

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellows by Fellowship Issue Area



Words of thanks from Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellows...

“When I heard the Texas Access to Justice Foundation had agreed to support a project to increase access to legal services for undocumented survivors of domestic violence in Laredo, I was delighted. I'd like to thank the Texas Access to Justice Foundation for their support as we worked to increase access to legal services for survivors of violence in the Laredo-Webb County area. Together we played an important role in empowering survivors!”

- Adriana Rodriguez, 2011 Equal Justice Works Fellow

“I would like to thank the Texas Access to Justice Foundation for sponsoring my Equal Justice Works fellowship with Family Violence Prevention Services, Inc. (FVPS). The sponsorship of the Texas Access to Justice Foundation provides me with the opportunity not only to deter violations of court orders regarding domestic violence, but also to enable victims and their families to attain stability and safety. I am very excited about the opportunity to build on FVPS's history of providing comprehensive rehabilitative services to victims of domestic violence in San Antonio.”

- Meghan Kempf, 2012 Equal Justice Works Fellow

“I am very grateful to Texas Access to Justice Foundation for providing me with the opportunity to found the Austin Medical-Legal Partnership, through which I work to address socio-legal issues causing or exacerbating health problems. I wake up excited every morning about my ‘dream job’—about the chance to learn something new and help someone in need. Words cannot express my gratitude to TAJF for making my Equal Justice Works Fellowship possible, so I will keep it simple: Thank you.”

- Keegan Warren-Clem, 2012 Equal Justice Works Fellow

“I will be forever grateful to the Texas Access to Justice Foundation for making it possible for me to begin my legal career at the Texas Civil Rights Project. Their support and generosity allowed us to greatly expand access to interpreters around the state.”

- Abigail Frank, 2009 Equal Justice Works Fellows

Fellow Profiles

Ms. Ilyce Shugall	7
Ms. Amy Magee	7
Ms. Sheri Tolliver	8
Ms. Barbara Stalder	8
Mr. Matthew Seymour	9
Mr. Sean Pevsner	9
Ms. Bernadette Segura	10
Judge Ramey Ko	10
Mr. David Sadegh	11
Mr. Dustin W. Rynders.....	11
Ms. Jessica Alas.....	12
Ms. Jennifer Landau.....	12
Ms. Corinna Spencer-Scheurich	13
Mr. Jacob Wedemeyer.....	13
Ms. Colleen Elbe	14
Ms. Helena (Coronado-Salazar) Venturini	14
Ms. Amber VanSchuyver	15
Ms. Sarah Bellinger Beebe	15
Ms. Jessica Cassidy	16
Ms. Abigail Frank	16
Ms. Patricia Freshwater	17
Ms. Kristin (Connor) Kimmelman	17
Ms. Celina Moreno	18
Mr. Andrés Durá.....	18
Ms. Adriana Rodriguez	19
Ms. Michelle Smith	19
Ms. Meghan Kempf	20
Ms. Sarah Loeffler	20
Ms. Christine Nishimura.....	21
Ms. Keegan Warren-Clem	21
Mr. Peter McGraw.....	22
Ms. Amanda Pfeiffer	22
Ms. Emily Schools.....	22
Ms. Stephanie Truong.....	23
Ms. Olivia (Barvin) Mathias	23
Mr. Mani Nezami	23

Mr. Gonzalo Serrano.....	24
Mr. Jonathan Silva.....	24
Ms. Esther Kim	25
Ms. Tovah Pentelovitch	25
Ms. Hannah Alexander	26
Ms. Brooke Bischoff	26
Ms. Hannah Herzog.....	27
Mr. Ted Evans	27
Ms. Beatrice Roger	28

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Ilyce Shugall

Year: 1999

Host Organization: ProBar

City/State: Harlingen, Texas

Issue Area: Immigrant Populations

Co-Sponsor: American Immigration Lawyers Association

Project Description: Provide all immigration detainees at the nation's largest Immigration and Naturalization Service detention center with legal services, education, and increased access to counsel.

Where is she now? After completing her Fellowship, Ms. Shugall joined Van Der Hout, Brigagliano & Nightingale, LLP, a private firm with a notable practice in immigration and nationality law in San Francisco, where she practiced for over ten years. Ms. Shugall then returned to the public interest field in 2012 and is currently the Directing Attorney for the Immigration Program at Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto, California. Ms. Shugall was recently appointed to the State Bar Commission on Immigration and Nationality Law and received the Silicon Valley Business Journal's Women of Influence award in 2015. She also serves as the coordinator for the Volunteer Immigration Program of the Northern California Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Ms. Amy Magee

Year: 2002

Host Organization: South Texas Civil Rights Project

City/State: Austin, Texas

Issue Area: Education/Special Education

Project Description: Engage in a statewide Title IX reform effort using education and litigation to provide communities with the foundation necessary to address youth education inequities.

Where is she now? After her Fellowship, Ms. Magee joined the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), where she serves as Community College Counsel. Ms. Magee's work focuses mainly on community college and special education issues. As part of her role, Ms. Magee develops and reviews community college districts' legal and local policies. She is a frequent presenter on a number of legal topics, including the First Amendment, technology in schools, and student issues.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Sheri Tolliver

Year: 2002

Host Organization: Texas Civil Rights Project

City/State: Austin, Texas

Issue Area: Education/Special Education

Project Description: Engage in a statewide Title IX reform effort using education and litigation to provide communities with the foundation necessary to address youth education inequities.

Where is she now? Ms. Tolliver now practices at her own firm, the Law Office of Sheri Tolliver.

Ms. Barbara Stalder

Year: 2003

Host Organization: Lone Star Legal Aid

City/State: Houston, Texas

Issue Area: Children/Youth

Project Description: Create a start-up children's law program providing legal services to abused and neglected children in Harris County, Texas.

Where is she now? After completing her Fellowship, Ms. Stalder worked as an attorney for Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse providing direct legal services to victims of domestic violence. She then joined the Civil Practice Clinic at University of Houston Law Center, where she served as a supervising attorney. Ms. Stalder now practices family law at Stalder & Associates. In 2004, Ms. Stalder received the University of Houston Law Center Alumni Association Rising Star Award and in 2005 received the TYLA President's Award of Merit for her work on the publication "What to Expect in Family Court." Ms. Stalder was recently selected as a member to the Burta Rhoads Ryaburn Family Law Inns of Court and was appointed to the State Bar of Texas Civil Legal Services to the Poor Committee.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Mr. Matthew Seymour

Year: 2004

Host Organization: Dallas Legal Hospice

City/State: Dallas, Texas

Issue Area: HIV/AIDS

Project Description: Provide civil, health-related legal representation to persons living with HIV/AIDS and terminal illness in rural North Texas.

Where is he now? After completing his Fellowship, Mr. Seymour worked with the Human Rights Initiative of North Texas, Inc. In 2007, Mr. Seymour moved to the Dallas County Public Defender's Office where he serves as an Assistant Public Defender.

Mr. Sean Pevsner

Year: 2005

Host Organization: Advocacy Inc.

City/State: Austin, Texas

Issue Area: Disability Rights

Project Description: Assist students with disabilities obtaining the proper accommodations in their educational and employment careers.

Where is he now? After his Fellowship, Mr. Pevsner continued to assist clients with disabilities, including obtaining services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for clients with cerebral palsy. Mr. Pevsner founded the law firm Whitburn & Pevsner, PLLC, where he has developed a vibrant special education practice and worked on other aspects of education law, as well as guardianship and other probate proceedings.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Bernadette Segura

Year: 2005

Host Organization: Texas RioGrande Legal Aid

City/State: San Antonio, Texas

Issue Area: Housing/Homelessness

Project Description: Provide legal representation, advocacy, and outreach to San Antonio's homeless population.

Where is she now? After her Fellowship, Ms. Segura remained with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, where she is currently a Senior Attorney with specializations in state and federal benefits and federally subsidized housing, as well as a team manager for the organization's Medical Legal Partnerships for El Paso. Ms. Segura also serves as a board member at Project BRAVO, an organization that works to improve the quality of life of El Paso County's low income families by providing crisis intervention and case management assistance aimed at building long-term economic self-sufficiency.

Judge Ramey Ko

Year: 2006

Host Organization: Texas RioGrande Legal Aid

City/State: Weslaco, Texas

Issue Area: Housing/Homelessness

Project Description: Provide legal advocacy to victims of domestic violence facing discrimination in public, subsidized and private housing.

Where is he now? Judge Ko is a member of The Ko Law Firm, PPLC. He previously served as an Associate Judge of the City of Austin Municipal Court and a Lecturer at the University of Texas at Austin's Center for Asian American Studies. President Obama appointed Judge Ko to serve on the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in 2010, and he served in that role for nearly four years. Judge Ko also serves on the board of the Asian American Resource Center and as an advisory board member of the Texas Asian American Chamber of Commerce.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Mr. David Sadegh

Year: 2006

Host Organization: Lone Star Legal Aid

City/State: Houston, Texas

Issue Area: Housing/Homelessness

Project Description: Provide low-income tenants in Harris County with the information and legal resources they need to keep their homes.

Where is he now? After his Fellowship, Mr. Sadegh remained at Lone Star Legal Aid as a Staff Attorney until 2011. He later founded the Law Offices of David J. Sadegh, where he focuses on landlord-tenant cases. Mr. Sadegh has conducted numerous presentations and CLE trainings on landlord-tenant law, including classes for the People's Law School, the NAACP legal clinic, and the Poverty Law section of the State Bar of Texas.

Mr. Dustin W. Rynders

Year: 2006

Host Organization: Advocacy Inc. of Texas

City/State: Austin, Texas

Issue Area: Children/Youth, Education

Project Description: Represent low-income students disadvantaged by "zero tolerance" discipline policies and advocate for systemic reform.

Where is he now? After his Fellowship, Mr. Rynders remained at Advocacy, Inc. in Austin where he became the agency's resident expert on voting rights policy and provided support in the areas of special education and juvenile justice. In 2009, Mr. Rynders returned to Advocacy Inc.'s Houston office, working on a new project providing attorney ad litem representation to foster children with disabilities who are placed or at risk of being placed at large institutional settings in the Texas Youth Commission or State Supported Living Center systems. Mr. Rynders is currently a Supervising Attorney on the Education Team of Disability Rights Texas (formerly Advocacy Inc.), representing students and parents in special education litigation.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Jessica Alas

Year: 2007

Host Organization: Montgomery County Women's Center

City/State: Conroe, Texas

Issue Area: Pro Se

Project Description: Provide civil legal services and pro se clinics to qualifying individuals while building a pro bono volunteer network among area attorneys.

Where is she now? After completing her Fellowship, Ms. Alas began working with Lone Star Legal Aid in Houston, where she remains a Staff Attorney.

Ms. Jennifer Landau

Year: 2007

Host Organization: Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services

City/State: El Paso, Texas

Issue Area: Immigrant Populations/Minorities

Project Description: Provide legal representation to immigrants facing removal proceedings before the Executive Office for Immigration Review at the satellite El Paso, Texas holding facilities, with a special focus on refugees and victims of crime, torture, domestic violence and trafficking.

Where is she now? Following her Fellowship, Ms. Landau remained with Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services, the largest provider of free and low-cost immigration-related legal services in West Texas and New Mexico. She then co-founded the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center, where she is currently the Executive Director. Ms. Landau is a past chair of the Immigration and International Section of the State Bar of New Mexico and a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association and the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild. She has served as an Adjunct Professor at the University of New Mexico School of Law's Medical-Legal Alliance.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Corinna Spencer-Scheurich

Year: 2007

Host Organization: Texas Civil Rights Project

City/State: Austin, Texas

Issue Area: Consumer Rights, Community/Economic Development

Project Description: Establish and coordinate a self-education and self-organization effort by low-income, Spanish-speaking, rural *colonia* residents along the Texas-Mexico border for consumer rights and economic justice.

Where is she now? After her Fellowship, Ms. Spencer-Scheurich remained at Texas Civil Rights Project and became the director of the South Texas Civil Rights Project. She then moved to Oregon and is currently the Deputy Director of the Northwest Workers' Justice Project, which provides high quality legal support and education to workers and their organizations.

Mr. Jacob Wedemeyer

Year: 2007

Host Organization: Texas RioGrande Legal Aid

City/State: Weslaco, Texas

Issue Area: Immigrant Populations/Minorities, Workers' Rights

Project Description: Protect eligible Texas workers and temporary foreign workers in the H-2A, H-2B and proposed H-2C guest worker visa programs from employer abuse of the visa process and employment relationship.

Where is he now? After his Fellowship, Mr. Wedemeyer served as an Assistant County Attorney for Val Verde County in Del Rio, Texas and later at the El Paso County Attorney's Office, where he worked as an Assistant County Attorney in the General Counsel Unit. Mr. Wedemeyer then returned to Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, where he serves as an Attorney and the Branch Manager of the Del Rio office.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Colleen Elbe

Year: 2008

Host Organization: Advocacy Inc.

City/State: Lubbock, Texas

Issue Area: Children/Youth

Project Description: Provide legal representation, advocacy, and training to children with unmet special education needs involved in the Lubbock County Juvenile Court or probation departments.

Where is she now? After her Fellowship, Ms. Elbe remained at Advocacy Inc. (now Disability Rights Texas), where she continues to practice special education law and civil rights law. Ms. Elbe represents students with disabilities who are denied appropriate special education services or are illegally restrained, secluded, or disciplined as interventions to manifestations of their disability. Additionally, she works with inmates at the county jail level to ensure appropriate access to mental health services.

Ms. Helena (Coronado-Salazar) Venturini

Year: 2008

Host Organization: Equal Justice Center

City/State: Austin, Texas

Issue Area: Workers' Rights

Project Description: Provide innovative legal representation to open new access to the justice system in Texas allowing working poor people to fully collect unpaid wages that they have earned but been denied.

Where is she now? Ms. Venturini most recently practiced at Watson, Caraway, Midkiff & Lunningham, LLP, where she focused on health care professional liability defense, school law, landlord-tenant law, and civil litigation.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Amber VanSchuyver

Year: 2008

Host Organization: Texas RioGrande Legal Aid

City/State: Weslaco, Texas

Issue Area: Domestic Violence

Project Description: Enhance economic self-sufficiency for survivors of domestic violence through community education, litigation, and job creation by a worker-owned cooperative.

Where is she now? After her Fellowship, Ms. VanSchuyver remained at Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, where she serves as the Domestic Violence/Family Law Team Manager in the Edinburg office.

Ms. Sarah Bellinger Beebe

Year: 2009

Host Organization: Advocacy Inc.

City/State: Houston, Texas

Issue Area: Education/Special Education, Disability Rights, Children/Youth

Project Description: Create a pro bono Special Education Clinic consisting of lawyers from the private bar to provide advice and representation to low-income students entitled to special education services.

Where is she now? Following her Fellowship, Ms. Beebe remained with Disability Rights Texas (formerly Advocacy Inc.), where she continues to provide direct representation to students with disabilities in need of legal services in Houston and the surrounding areas. Ms. Beebe conducts outreach and provides educational presentations and training to parents, lawyers, advocates, and all interested parties on the topic of special education law. She also works on systemic litigation and projects that help students with disabilities across the State of Texas.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Jessica Cassidy

Year: 2009

Host Organization: Texas Legal Services Center

City/State: Austin, Texas

Issue Area: Domestic Violence

Project Description: Develop the economic self-sufficiency of victims of domestic violence with children so they are not compelled to return to their batterers for financial support.

Where is she now? Following her Fellowship, Ms. Cassidy remained at Texas Legal Services Center as a Staff Attorney, focusing primarily on consumer, health, and family law. Ms. Cassidy is currently in private practice in Texas.

Ms. Abigail Frank

Year: 2009

Host Organization: Texas Civil Rights Project

City/State: Austin, Texas

Issue Area: Civil Rights/Civil Liberties

Project Description: Serve the needs of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals in civil proceedings by educating judges and county policy makers about improving interpretation services and developing litigation to effect systemic change.

Where is she now? Ms. Frank remained with the Texas Civil Rights Project as a Staff Attorney after her Fellowship. She continues the work started during her Fellowship to improve language access in a variety of settings including courts, hospitals, and jails.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Patricia Freshwater

Year: 2009

Host Organization: Catholic Charities of Dallas

City/State: Dallas, Texas

Issue Area: Immigrant Populations

Co-Sponsor: Baker & McKenzie

Project Description: Provide legal services to detained immigrants by educating them regarding their rights and offering training and support to pro bono attorneys willing to represent detained immigrants.

Where is she now? Following her Fellowship, Ms. Freshwater started a private immigration law practice at Schwamkrug, Freshwater & Lopez PLLC. Her practice areas include family based visa petitions, deportation and removal defense in Immigration Court, appeals to the Board of Immigration Appeals and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, asylum, waivers, Violence Against Women Act and U visa cases for victims of crimes, and deferred action for childhood arrivals.

Ms. Kristin (Connor) Kimmelman

Year: 2010

Host Organization: Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services

City/State: El Paso, Texas

Issue Area: Immigrant Populations

Co-Sponsor: Greenberg Traurig LLP

Project Description: Provide abandoned, abused, and neglected immigrant youth in west Texas and southern New Mexico a path to citizenship through legal advocacy, community outreach, and organizational capacity building.

Where is she now? Ms. Connor is a research and writing specialist with the Federal Public Defender's Office for the Western District of Texas in El Paso. She continues to work on her former Fellowship project on a pro bono basis.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Celina Moreno

Year: 2010

Host Organization: Texas RioGrande Legal Aid

City/State: San Antonio, Texas

Issue Area: Education/Special Education

Project Description: Obstruct the school-to-prison pipeline in San Antonio and nearby areas by informing families of their rights, collaborating with schools, fostering policy reform, and offering direct representation.

Where is she now? After her Fellowship, Ms. Moreno continued working at Texas RioGrande Legal Aid on school-to-prison pipeline issues, as well as broader education and juvenile justice cases. Ms. Moreno is currently a Legislative Staff Attorney for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) in San Antonio. In that role, Ms. Moreno analyzes legislation and advocates for the protection and promotion of Latino civil rights in the areas of political access, education, immigration, employment and access to justice for that Region. Ms. Moreno assists with MALDEF's litigation as well as testifies in state legislative hearings on issues ranging from public school finance reform to immigrant rights. She continues to work with key stakeholders on school-to-prison pipeline issues at MALDEF.

Mr. Andrés Durá

Year: 2010

Host Organization: Equal Justice Center

City/State: Austin, Texas

Issue Area: Workers' Rights

Project Description: Provide innovative legal representation to open new access to the justice system in the San Antonio area for working poor people who labor in construction jobs and are denied the wages they have earned.

Where is he now? Following the completion of his Fellowship, Mr. Durá started his own law firm in Austin where he works with foreign entities seeking to do business in Texas. A large focus of his work is developing strategic business plans and economic development models, as well as consulting on the business effects of immigration matters.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Adriana Rodriguez

Year: 2011

Host Organization: Texas RioGrande Legal Aid

City/State: Laredo, Texas

Issue Area: Immigrant Populations

Project Description: Provide legal representation and access to services for undocumented Texans who are victims of intimate partner violence and suffer from mental illness, including substance abuse.

Where is she now? Ms. Rodriguez remains at her host organization, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, where she serves as a Staff Attorney. She continues to work closely with community stakeholders to improve outcomes for victims of intimate partner violence.

Ms. Michelle Smith

Year: 2011

Host Organization: Texas Civil Rights Project

City/State: Austin, Texas

Issue Area: Prisoners' Rights, Civil Rights/Civil Liberties

Project Description: End the "accidental death penalty" for individuals confined in Texas jails, prisons, and detention centers through education, implementation, and advocacy.

Where is she now? After her Fellowship, Ms. Smith accepted a position as an Assistant County Attorney for Montgomery County, Texas where she works in the Child Protective Services Division helping children who have been abused or neglected.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Meghan Kempf

Year: 2012

Host Organization: Family Violence Prevention Services, Inc.

City/State: San Antonio, Texas

Issue Area: Domestic Violence

Project Description: Provide legal advocacy to victims of domestic violence to address the inadequate enforcement of civil family law court orders in San Antonio, Texas through litigation services and a community education program.

Where is she now? Ms. Kempf currently serves in the Policy Section of the Office of Chief Counsel at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, which provides legal and policy expertise relating to Human and Health Agency Programs. Ms. Kempf focuses on women's health, refugee services, and Medicaid-managed service delivery.

Ms. Sarah Loeffler

Year: 2012

Host Organization: Montgomery County Women's Center

City/State: Conroe, Texas

Issue Area: Domestic Violence

Co-Sponsor: The John M. O'Quinn Foundation

Project Description: Provide permanent legal solutions to victims of domestic violence in Montgomery County, Texas through direct representation, public education, and community involvement.

Where is she now? Ms. Loeffler is currently the Acting Deputy in the Client Services Division at the Fort Lee Office of the Staff Judge Advocate.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Christine Nishimura

Year: 2012

Host Organization: Disability Rights Texas

City/State: Austin, Texas

Issue Area: Children/Youth, Education/Special Education

Co-Sponsor: Greenberg Traurig LLP

Project Description: Provide legal advocacy and teacher and attorney training to ensure minority special education students at risk of the juvenile justice system receive academically and culturally appropriate literacy programs and other necessary special education services in order to improve educational and life outcomes for these students.

Where is she now? Ms. Nishimura is currently the Director of Legal and Policy Services at the Texas Charter Schools Association, an organization focused on expanding public charter schools across Texas. Ms. Nishimura is also an adjunct professor at The University of Texas School of Law teaching trial skills courses. She also sits on both a local and national alumni board for Teach For America.

Ms. Keegan Warren-Clem

Year: 2012

Host Organization: Texas Legal Services Center

City/State: Austin, Texas

Issue Area: Health Care/Medical Legal Partnership

Project Description: Create a medical-legal partnership (MLP) in the underserved community of Dove Springs in Austin, Texas, to assist patient-clients with legal issues causing or exacerbating their medical conditions.

Where is she now? In addition to serving as a staff attorney at Texas Legal Services Center, Ms. Warren-Clem founded the Austin Medical Legal Partnership (AMPL), a project which is dedicated to improving access to legal services in a way that supports efficient healthcare delivery. AMPL focuses on the appeal of denials by the Social Security Administration (including SSDI and SSI), public and private health insurance, and public benefits programs. Ms. Keegan is also an adjunct professor of law teaching an interprofessional course for graduate and doctoral students at The University of Texas at Austin.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Mr. Peter McGraw

Year: 2013

Host Organization: Texas RioGrande Legal Aid

City/State: Corpus Christi, Texas

Issue Area: Criminal Law

Co-Sponsor: Greenberg Traurig LLP

Project Description: Assist residents of South Texas with mental health conditions through legal advocacy and community outreach to prevent civil collateral consequences of criminal justice involvement.

Where is he now? At the conclusion of his Fellowship, Mr. McGraw remained at his host organization, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, as a Staff Attorney.

Ms. Amanda Pfeiffer

Year: 2013

Host Organization: Lone Star Legal Aid

City/State: Houston, Texas

Issue Area: Family Law

Project Description: Provide family law services to refugee families and immigrant victims of domestic violence by creating a direct referral program between Lone Star Legal Aid and local immigration legal aid organizations.

Ms. Emily Schools

Year: 2013

Host Organization: Legal Aid of North West Texas

City/State: Abilene, Texas

Issue Area: Children/Youth

Project Description: Create a juvenile division in the Abilene office of Legal Aid of North West Texas that provides education and advocacy for youth struggling with homelessness and the barriers created by their prior involvement with the justice system.

Where is she now? Ms. Schools currently serves as a law clerk at Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Stephanie Truong

Year: 2013

Host Organization: South Texas College of Law

City/State: Houston, Texas

Issue Area: Children/Youth

Project Description: Provide legal advocacy and support to youth aging out of foster care in Harris County, Texas to improve their social, education, and occupational opportunities as adults.

Where is she now? At the conclusion of her Fellowship, Ms. Truong joined Beacon Law, a nonprofit organization serving the poor and homeless in Houston and Harris Counties, as a Staff Attorney.

Ms. Olivia (Barvin) Mathias

Year: 2014

Host Organization: Catholic Charities Cabrini Center

City/State: Houston, Texas

Issue Area: Immigrant Populations – Trafficking/Slavery

Project Description: Provide holistic legal representation to victims of human trafficking in Houston and create a framework through which nonprofits and pro bono attorneys can meet victims' wide-ranging legal needs.

Where is she now? At the conclusion of her Fellowship, Ms. Mathias stayed on at her host organization, Catholic Charities Cabrini Center.

Mr. Mani Nezami

Year: 2014

Host Organization: Earl Carl Institute

City/State: Houston, Texas

Issue Area: Children/Youth

Co-Sponsor: Greenberg Traurig LLP

Project Description: Address the issue of disproportionate minority contact through a holistic approach by providing legal representation to children who are in the criminal justice, mental health and foster care systems.

Where is he now? At the conclusion of his Fellowship, Mr. Nezami stayed on at his host organization, the Earl Carl Institute, as a Staff Attorney in the Juvenile Justice Project.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Mr. Gonzalo Serrano

Year: 2014

Host Organization: Equal Justice Center

City/State: Dallas, Texas

Issue Area: Workers' Rights

Project Description: Bring wage recovery and employment justice legal services to low-wage immigrant working men and women in Dallas/Ft. Worth, the largest urban area in the nation that lacks legal services of this kind.

Where is he now? At the conclusion of his Fellowship, Mr. Serrano remained at his host organization, Equal Justice Center.

Mr. Jonathan Silva

Year: 2014

Host Organization: Lone Star Legal Aid

City/State: Houston, Texas

Issue Area: Veterans

Project Description: Advocate and appeal on behalf of returning veterans who are being denied the full benefits that their service and/or level of service-related injury merit.

Where is he now? At the conclusion of his Fellowship, Mr. Silva stayed on at his host organization, Lone Star Legal Aid, as a Staff Attorney.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Esther Kim

Year: 2015

Host Organization: Lone Star Legal Aid

City/State: Houston, Texas

Issue Area: Family Law

Project Description: Provide the Asian community in Harris and Fort Bend Counties with legal services in guardianship and domestic violence cases through direct representation, outreach and collaboration with local organizations.

Project Goals:

- Develop deep understanding of substantive family law, especially regarding guardianships, domestic violence, and child custody
- Build relationships with Asian community organizations
- Provide direct representation to victims of domestic violence and those in need guardianships

Ms. Tovah Pentelovitch

Year: 2015

Host Organization: Texas RioGrande Legal Aid

City/State: Austin, Texas

Issue Area: Education/Special Education

Co-Sponsor: Greenberg Traurig LLP

Project Description: Curb problematic use of Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs in Austin and underserved regions through outreach and representation of the most at-risk students in school disciplinary proceedings.

Project Goals:

- Activate a network of service providers to build a client base in Austin, Texas and begin building a network in Laredo and Del Rio using contacts already established by regional TRLA attorneys
- Develop and disseminate user-friendly “Know Your Rights in School Disciplinary Proceedings” materials
- Provide direct representation in school disciplinary proceedings in Austin

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Hannah Alexander

Year: 2016

Host Organization: Equal Justice Center

City/State: Dallas, Texas

Issue Area: Workers' Rights

Project Description: Provide representation to help low-wage, immigrant janitorial workers challenge and prevent workplace sexual assault, theft-of-wages, employer fraud schemes, and similar severe employment abuses.

Project Goals:

- Provide direct representation to individual janitorial workers in federal and state court litigation to obtain remedies for sexual assault, wage theft, and fraud
- Devise and spearhead community legal education and outreach campaigns to educate the client community of women and men who work as janitors, empowering them with new hope and understanding about how they can use the justice system to protect themselves
- Prevention of sexual assault, wage theft, and fraud through client empowerment and employer accountability

Ms. Brooke Bischoff

Year: 2016

Host Organization: Texas Civil Rights Project

City/State: El Paso, Texas

Issue Area: Immigrant Populations

Project Description: Challenge currently unaddressed civil rights violations in immigrant communities, including detention center conditions, due process violations, and the arbitrary denial of U visa certifications by law enforcement agencies.

Project Goals:

- Provide Know Your Rights trainings to community members
- Begin to identify civil rights violations in El Paso and surrounding communities
- Research and collect affidavits and reports on the conditions at local detention centers
- Work with local coalitions to respond to due process violations in immigration proceedings
- Develop strategy to combat U visa denials by Texas Child Protective Services

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Hannah Herzog

Year: 2016

Host Organization: Texas Civil Rights Project

City/State: Houston, Texas

Issue Area: Civil Rights/Civil Liberties

Project Description: Address and remedy the refusal of Texas officials to identify, accommodate, and treat people with mental health needs in institutions through litigation, outreach, direct services, and advocacy.

Project Goals:

- Work with Texas Civil Rights Project attorneys on existing relevant cases
- Investigate areas of deficiency and policy non compliance
- Conduct outreach with mental health advocates

Mr. Ted Evans

Year: 2016

Host Organization: Disability Rights Texas

City/State: Houston, Texas

Issue Area: Disability Rights

Co-Sponsor: Eversheds Sutherland (US) LLP

Project Description: Provide legal advocacy and community outreach to people with disabilities isolated in work shelters earning pennies an hour in poor work conditions, and shut down the school-to-work shelter pipeline.

Project Goals:

- Identity and contact pro bono partners and community groups
- Compile training materials about legal rights, administrative complaint procedures, legal claim process, remedies, and federal and state government services
- Create a preliminary monitoring plan with the goal of monitoring between 2 and 5 facilities in each identified region: Upper Rio Grande; West Texas; High Plains; South Texas; Central Texas; Northwest; Metroplex; Upper East; Southeast; and Gulf Coast

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Fellow Profiles

Ms. Beatrice Roger

Year: 2016

Host Organization: Lone Star Legal Aid

City/State: Houston, Texas

Issue Area: Pro se and other legal representation systems

Co-Sponsor: Greenberg Traurig LLP

Project Description: Provide legal advocacy to crime victims, address the cyclical nature of crime by acknowledging and managing trauma, and diminish juvenile crime by incorporating restorative practices into schools.

Project Goals:

- Become familiar with existing Lone Star Legal Aid clients and cases, and with local statutes and regulations
 - Start creating a client base by doing extensive community outreach to local churches, schools and community centers
 - Create referral systems with local criminal law offices and the public defender's office
 - Reach out to schools about implementing restorative practices, develop training materials and host workshops for school faculty and administration.
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