



ASCEND JUSTICE

## A word from our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

When we ask our clients about their goals, we often hear about a desire to be validated as parents. Whether they have been denigrated by an abusive partner or unfairly labeled by the child welfare system, the impact – typically on mothers – is enormous. Ascend Justice advocates for mothers year-round, helping them attain goals that include safety, a path to citizenship, and that sense of validation that is so important.



This month, I hope you will support our work and pay tribute to the mothers, mother-figures, or moms-to-be who are important to you. Your generosity helps more of our clients attain their goals, whatever they are.

Sincerely,

**Margaret R. Duval**  
Executive Director  
Ascend Justice

## Staff Updates

**We continue to grow!**  
**Meet the newest members of our team:**



### Chavon Martin

A big welcome to our new Director of Human Resources & Training, Chavon Martin! Chavon has hit the ground running since she started in March and is a welcome addition to the Ascend Justice team. As we continue to grow as an organization, her role is *crucial* to our continued success.

We are SO happy to have you as part of our team, Chavon!

### Andrea Carrillo

Andrea is our new Public Benefits Enrollment Coordinator and, in this newly created position, she will be working with clients to deliver services related to applying for and maintaining public benefits. This means that, when a client seeks our help, including those who are immigrants, Andrea will assist them to get set up to receive things such as health insurance, food and cash assistance cards, etc. Her position is a part of the holistic services that sets Ascend Justice

Check out our current job postings [here](#).

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## Celebration of Courage - Thursday, June 8



Ascend Justice's biggest fundraising event of the year is just around the corner! Have you purchased your tickets yet?

**This one is not to be missed!!**

**Mugo Odigwe** of CBS 2 Chicago will be our emcee for the evening and our Champion of Justice award recipient is **Judge Grace Dickler**! We are so grateful and honored to these two amazing women for being a part of this important evening.

**Tickets are on sale** for the June 8th event that will be hosted again on the rooftop of The Old Post Office with a view that you just *have* to see!

Did you see our social media posts?  
The raffle is now OPEN! You don't have to attend the event to participate in the raffle so be sure to **check out the amazing and unique items** up for grabs.

**See you in June!**

[Buy Your Tickets](#)

[Check Out The Raffle](#)

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## 2023 Celebration of Courage Champion Sponsor



**McDermott  
Will & Emery**

[Meet All Our Amazing  
Sponsors](#)

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[Learn about this year's Celebration of Courage  
event](#)

ASCEND JUSTICE'S YOUNG PROFESSIONALS BOARD PRESENTS

# Trivia Night 2023

Sponsored by  
**Skadden**  
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

MARCH 29TH • 5:30 PM

Trivia Hosted by  
**whaddayaknow?**

Our amazing Young Professionals Board hosted a successful Trivia Night on the evening of Wednesday, March 29th.

The SOLD OUT event was held at [Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom](#) and led by [Whaddayaknow? Free Bar Trivia](#) in a beautiful room that held all 16 teams that was filled with laughter, cheers, and friendly competition.

The A-Team walked away with the win but graciously donated their \$300 prize back to Ascend Justice.

With over \$5,700 raised to support the mission of Ascend Justice, we think you'll agree that everyone walked away a winner that night!

**Thank you to all who attended and contributed to this always popular event!**

We are excited to host the next Trivia Night event in mid- to late- October.

We hope to see you there!!

[View photos of the event](#)

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## Special Announcements



### Mother's Day is Sunday, May 14th!

Show your mom, a motherly figure in your life, or someone who could use some love this Mother's Day with a gift to Ascend Justice.

With your gift made by Friday, May 12th, we will send that special someone an eCard of your choice will be emailed on Mother's Day along with your personalized message. Every gift made to Ascend Justice supports our mission and uplifts mothers and families throughout the community by providing the tools they need to secure safety and be together on special days like Mother's Day.

Be sure to make your gift by Friday, May 12th to ensure that Mom receives your gift - a gift that lets her know that you support her and all the other moms out there.

Celebrate "Mom"

## Worth Noting

### Case Update

#### Resolution of the Nicole P. et al. v. DCFS Class Action

Seven years after the Family Defense Center and pro bono attorneys from Jones Day filed suit in Nicole P. et al. v. DCFS, the case concluded last month. Nicole P. was a class action suit that challenged one of the standards DCFS had used to indicate thousands of parents and caregivers for child neglect. In a 2018 settlement agreement, DCFS agreed to revise the previous, overly broad standard of "inadequate supervision" to more specific, objective language that allows parents more discretion over reasonable parenting decisions. For the past five years, a diligent team at Ascend Justice and Jones Day has worked to enforce the provisions of the settlement agreement, making sure that impacted parents and caregivers learned of their right to a special review of past indicated findings. With the notifications and reviews complete, the case – which resulted in over 100 class members having findings of neglect expunged – concluded. Each of these expungements represents a tremendous step toward healing and justice, and Ascend Justice is proud to have played a role in this important case.

Learn more about the Nicole P. case [here](#).

Many advocacy opportunities have come up since you last received a newsletter from us.

As quickly as we can, we communicate via email and all of our social media platforms when these opportunities arise. Many times this involves signing a [Witness Slip](#) which shows legislators the number of people who are Proponents or Opponents of a specific bill.

Don't miss an opportunity to be a voice for survivors of gender-based violence and those impacted by the child welfare system.

A graphic consisting of a teal square with the text "Advocacy Opportunity" in white, centered within a red square, which is itself centered within a yellow square.

Advocacy  
Opportunity

Become An Advocate

Learn More

Be sure you are following us on social media!



### Recent Bills that were presented as Advocacy Opportunities

#### House Bill 3973 Juvenile Court Act Domestic Violence Amendments

This bill amends the Juvenile Court Act to more effectively respond to families experiencing domestic violence.

#### House Bill 3596 Crime Victim's Compensation Accessibility Amendments

This bill amends the Crime Victims Compensation Act to make it more accessible and equitable, especially for survivors of gender-based violence and community violence.

### Senate Bill 2260 Gender-Based Violence Resentencing Act Clean Up ,

This bill provides that a person is not guilty of an offense they perform under the threat or imminent infliction of death or great bodily harm, if they reasonably believe death or great bodily harm will be inflicted upon themselves, or upon their spouse or child, if they don't perform that conduct.

### Senate Bill 1478 Juvenile Court Act Amendments

This bill amends the Juvenile Court Act to establish a statutory right to counsel for youth in DCFS care, so youth in care are treated like every other party to the DCFS court case who benefit from legal counsel to navigate system complexities and ensure legal rights are protected.

### House Bill 2954 Civil Liability for Doxing Act

Authorizes a court to issue an order to prevent the publication of personally identifiable information or sensitive personal information ("doxing") if certain requirements are met.

Interested in being more involved with Ascend Justice?  
Want to learn more about becoming a member of Ascend Justice's  
Board of Directors or Young Professionals Board?

We would be happy to speak with you!

#### Board of Directors

Contact: Margaret Duval  
Executive Director  
[mduval@ascendjustice.org](mailto:mduval@ascendjustice.org)

#### Young Professionals Board

Contact: Christyn Schnell  
Director of Development  
[cschnell@ascendjustice.org](mailto:cschnell@ascendjustice.org)

The work that we do at Ascend Justice is only possible because of donations made from supporters like you.

Make a difference in the lives of those impacted by gender-based violence or the child welfare system.

Help them achieve safety and stability through the holistic legal advocacy and system reform Ascend Justice provides with a donation today.

Make a One Time Donation

Become a Monthly Donor

legal advocacy. transforming lives.

