



As we approach the end of the 2023, I become overwhelmed with how grateful I am for all that you make possible. Our achievements have been remarkable, and it's all thanks to each and every one of you.

Your selfless contributions take many forms - providing thoughtful monetary and in-kind donations, volunteering of your precious time and awesome talent, attending and joyfully participating in our events, introducing us to others by forwarding emails and interacting with us on social media...the list certainly goes on! Your selfless gifts of time, talent, and treasure amplify our mission and make it possible for us to work alongside over 1,500 survivors each year, helping create stronger communities where people have the power to navigate fair systems and overcome violence.

We simply cannot do what we do without you!

In the spirit of giving, if you haven't had a chance to already, I invite you to **make a donation** to further advance our mission. Your contribution directly impacts our holistic efforts to empower individuals and families by standing beside them in ways that create a ripple effect of positive change.

Your support is not just a donation; it's a commitment to building a safer, more compassionate world for everyone. Together, we can continue to make a meaningful difference.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyous holiday season filled with warmth, kindness, and gratitude.



Most Sincerely,
Christyn
Christyn Schnell
Director of Development

Start My
Gift

Job Opportunities

*Communications Manager
*Staff Attorney - Immigration



To Take Care of Others, You Must
First Take Care of Yourself

We are always learning and striving to improve ourselves so we can provide our best holistic and legal services to the community. We do that through our various staff committees and thoughtful staff members.

Director of Human Resources and Trainings, Chavon Martin, hosted a Mental Health First Aid Training to staff where we learned what to do in situations where someone's mental health becomes a safety threat to themselves and others.
Our **JEDI Committee** (Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) hosted a Unconscious Bias staff training in December.
Our **Vicarious Trauma Committee** hosted their Monthly Debrief where staff can openly discuss experiences or issues and support one another through difficult times.
Our **Culture Committee** hosted a staff/Board/Young Professionals Board potluck in November and a Holiday Staff party just before taking some much needed time off from Monday, December 25th until Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

Achievements



On October 18th Executive Director, Margaret Duval, accepted the **2023 Women's Bar Association of Illinois' Top Woman Lawyer in Leadership award**. This well-deserved recognition comes after Margaret was awarded **The Carole K. Bellows Women of Influence Award** from the Illinois Bar Association in September.



Meet Rosa

A strong mother of three who decided that enough was enough.

Enduring physical and sexual violence from her husband throughout their sixteen year relationship, Rosa lived in constant fear, intimidated by threats of deportation and losing custody of her three children. Her turning point came when she discovered a gun in her husbands car, prompting her to flee with her children to a shelter. She sought assistance from Ascend Justice, providing her with support in successfully obtaining an Order of Protection, securing her location, limiting her husband's contact with the children, and issuing a warrant for his firearms.



However, Rosa's journey doesn't end there.

Hear all of Rosa's story and support brave individuals just like her with your donation.

Hear Rosa's
Story

Make Your Donation

Advocacy



Support Survivors by lending your voice!

From January to May Illinois State Legislation is in session. This means that Advocacy Opportunities will become more frequent.

Make sure you **sign up to receive notifications** when Advocacy Opportunities become available so you can be a part of making real change in support of those impacted by the child welfare system and gender-based violence.

Sign Up

Here are some issues impacting survivors:

Shootings Dip in Chicago, but Grow in Domestic Violence Cases
featuring input from Executive Director, Margaret Duval

How Chicago's Electronic Monitoring Programs Fail Women and Domestic Violence Survivors
featuring input from Director of Incarcerated Survivors, Alexis Mansfield



Your Advocacy in Action!

"I'm excited for the future of this project as it gives me hope that it will help bring healing and resilience to families experiencing domestic violence."

Selena Hernandez
Parent Advocate / DV Survivor



We are very pleased to announce that staff attorneys **Elizabeth Newland** and **Mercedes Molina** both passed the Illinois Bar Exam! Results of the July exam were received in early October and we are so proud of their accomplishment.

Do you have someone or something in your life that you would like to honor or memorialize in a special way? Consider making a tribute gift by selecting "This gift is in honor or in memory of someone" when you make your donation.

Make a Tribute

Save the Date!



CELEBRATION OF COURAGE

Thursday, June 13, 2024
5:00PM - 9:00PM
The Old Post Office
add to your calendar

Have furniture to donate?



Have extra furniture items, small appliances, lamps, artwork, or mirrors?
Drop them off at the CFB this holiday season!



When: M – F 9AM-4PM (minus holidays)
Where: 4801 S. Whipple St.
Questions? Call us at 312-752-0211
**Need a receipt? Just ask during drop off!*

The Chicago Furniture Bank (CFB) is in need of furniture donations. We partner with CFB so they can provide furnishing packages that "turn empty spaces into real homes"

Schedule a pick-up with them:
www.chicagofurniturebank.org/pickups
Drop off your donation to:
4801 S Whipple St, Chicago
or learn more about their work:
www.chicagofurniturebank.org

Gold Candid Award

Gold
Transparency
2023

Candid.

Launched 5 years ago on October 30, 2019, the**Domestic Violence Co-Location Program (DVCLP)** is an innovative and collaborative program aimed at meeting the needs of families experiencing both domestic violence and the child welfare system.

Focusing on improving the effectiveness of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) interventions into the lives of families experiencing domestic violence and supported by local and statewide partners and stakeholders, the DVCLP places domestic violence advocates in DCFS offices to work with child welfare workers and to support families experiencing domestic violence.

Learn about the DVCLP & read the Data Report

Giving Tuesday Results Are In

50 Donors raised a total of
over
\$11,000!!!

In a heartwarming display of generosity and community spirit, 50 donors answered the call on #GivingTuesday which was held this year on Tuesday, November 28.

Individuals, businesses, even former Ascend Justice clients combined efforts and exceeded expectations, raising just over \$11,000, bringing holiday cheer to 11 families in need.

This remarkable achievement showcases the power of collective kindness and the impact that acts of generosity can have on the lives of others.

The success of #GivingTuesday is not just about the funds raised but also about the tangible impact on real families.

Thanks to the generosity of these 50 donors, 11 families received a \$250 gift card of their choosing - either a grocery gift card or an Amazon gift card. We hope these gift cards will create special memories that will allow these families to share moments of joy, and experience the warmth that the holiday season brings.

Thank you for making this all possible with your support!

If you weren't able to give on #GivingTuesday, you can still make an impact with your donation today.

Donate Today

October is
**Domestic Violence
Awareness Month**

October is **Domestic Violence Awareness Month** and we had so much going on!

To start the month off, our Managing Director of Family Law and Protective Orders, Danielle Parisi Ruffatto hosted a training with SHALVA about **Drafting Petitions for Orders of Protection**.

We hosted a **panel discussion at Northwestern** about domestic violence and constitutional issues. We spread awareness by wearing purple on **#PurpleThursday**, participated in the Cook County States Attorney's Office Annual Domestic Violence Awareness Walk and Resource Fair, and we were present at the Chicago premiere of the award-winning film **My Love Affair with Marriage**.

We were in attendance at the Chicago Bar Foundation's 30th Annual Pro Bono and Community Service Fair and staff were a part of many other gatherings and functions all month long.

Our Young Professionals Board wrapped the month up with their annual **Trivia Night** event raising over \$4,800 by 14 amazing teams. **Thank you for making this all possible!**



Connect with us and **be the first to hear our special announcements, receive important news updates, learn ways you can support Ascend Justice, and unite with others in our community** who uplift survivors of gender-based violence and those impacted by the child welfare system!



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.



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