



Celebration of Courage



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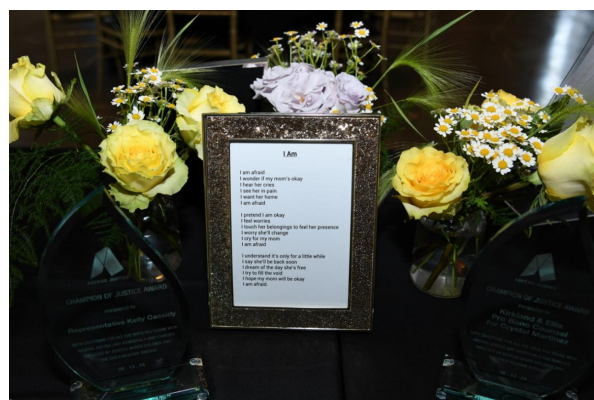
What a night!

A huge **thank you** to everyone who helped us reach our \$215,000 fundraising goal and made the 2024 Celebration of Courage an unforgettable evening! The success of this event provides core support for Ascend Justice.

CELEBRATION OF COURAGE This year's vibrant fundraising celebration brought together a passionate community dedicated to supporting survivors of domestic violence and those impacted by the child welfare system. The night, led by CBS2's Marissa Perlman, emphasized the power of advocacy. We were moved by **Crystal's powerful story**—a survivor, advocate, and mother—who showed us the profound impact of fighting for change even when circumstances place seemingly insurmountable barriers along the way.

We celebrated our **2024 Champions of Justice**, who, in Crystal's words, "moved mountains" (and we agree!), honoring their exceptional contributions to the outcome of Crystal's case and impacting change within the legislative system in a way that further amplifies voices of survivors and those advocating for them. The evening was a testament to the collaborative spirit driving meaningful impact and was a significant opportunity to support our vital work.

To our courageous survivors, dedicated volunteers, generous sponsors, thoughtful donors, supportive friends and family, and unwavering staff and board members—**thank you!** Your support and involvement are the heart and soul of Ascend Justice. Together, we will keep striving for a world where justice and safety are accessible to all.



Follow us online!



Meet Our Sponsors

Make A Donation

Hear Crystal's Story

More Info

Save the Date
2025

Advocacy



Ascend Justice works to change the system to make it fairer and safer for everyone, especially those affected by gender-based violence or the child welfare system. We focus on creating a safer, more stable, and supportive environment for individuals, families, and communities to heal and thrive. Here are the bills that you were a part of:

House Bill 681 Amending the Rights of Crime Victims and Witnesses Act - **PASSED!**
status: to Senate

This bill is the direct result of the tragic and unfortunately not uncommon death of 11-year-old Jayden Perkins and the stabbing of his pregnant mother. It aims to ensure that survivors are notified and included in the process when the Prison Review Board is reviewing and considering parole for those convicted of domestic violence charges.

Senate Bill 3713 Amending the Crime Victims Compensation Act - PASSED!

status: to Governor
This initiative amends the Crime Victims Compensation Act, making it more accessible, impactful, equitable, and just for victims of violent crimes.

Thank you!

Don't miss your next chance to advocate

Advocate Sign Up

Board of Director and Young Professionals Board Updates

Both of our boards continue to grow! We are excited to announce the new members of our Board of Directors and our Young Professionals Board.

Join us as we welcome these dedicated volunteer leaders to the Ascend Justice family.

Board of Directors



Nicole Chen
Health Care Service Corporation

Young Professionals Board



Emily Eggmann
Dentons



Mary Kennedy
Seyfarth Shaw



Rachel Migliore
Chicago Advocate Legal

Interested in joining either of our boards? Contact us to learn more!

Board of Directors

Margaret Duval, Executive Director
mduval@ascendjustice.org

Young Professionals Board

Christyn Schnell, Director of Development
cschnell@ascendjustice.org

Join Our Team

* Staff Attorney - Family Law

Working at Ascend Justice is truly a joy. As part of our growing team, you'll find yourself surrounded by caring, intelligent, and passionate individuals who foster a supportive environment. We acknowledge the challenges that accompany the work that we do and so we have active and dedicated committees - our Vicarious Trauma Committee, Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee, and our Culture Committee, all staff-led, ensuring everyone receives the support necessary to excel both professionally and personally. Join us today and become part of a team dedicated to making a difference in the lives of others while keeping self-care in focus.



Worth Noting

Community Outreach

Knowledge is power, and at Ascend Justice, we believe in sharing it far and wide! By educating law students, practicing

lawyers, advocates, and our community as a whole -both locally and nationwide - we amplify our advocacy efforts, raise awareness, and work towards righting injustices. Together, we can create a more informed and empowered society, ready to support survivors and drive meaningful change.



“This is both tragic, and unfortunately, not a unique situation...”

On March 25, our Associate Director, Ashley Olson, appeared on WTTW's Chicago Tonight to discuss the tragic murder of Jayden Perkins and what can be done about domestic violence. Ashley explains how gaps in the system can be dangerous for survivors of domestic violence and how both better education for people who work within the system and making domestic violence a community, rather than individual, issue could help prevent incidents like this one from happening again.

[Watch here.](#)



We were proud to participate in the Governors State Resource Fair in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness Month on April 4. We shared resources with students and faculty about our holistic legal services and how we can help survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

[Learn more about our work and how you can get involved.](#)



Our Managing Director of Systemic Justice, Sara G, and Staff Attorney for Family Defense, Emory R, presented at the American Bar Association's National Conference on Parent Representation in Virginia in early April. They provided attendees with an overview of Ascend Justice's holistic legal representation, plus information about our partnership with Quanada and Land of Lincoln Legal Aid , where we provide remote legal services for people in Quincy, ILL, and surrounding areas, greatly improving access to legal representation for those living in areas without many options.

[Learn more about our Quincy partnership.](#)



At a Chicago Committee on Minorities in Large Law Firms LegalTrek event for undergraduate students at DePaul on June 26, Ascend Justice Family Law attorney, Mercedes M, shared her experience of working in legal aid, how important this work is to underserved communities, and how it's an awesome job option that future law students should consider.

[See our open positions.](#)



We were thrilled to speak to Chicago's international consular community on June 25 about the services we provide free of charge! No matter where in the world they came from, Ascend Justice helps people impacted by domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking, stalking, or child welfare investigations find safety and stability. Thank you, Canada, for inviting us and being such wonderful hosts!



You've seen the news that Paris Hilton testified before the House Ways and Means Committee on June 26, but did you also see Ascend Justice's Director of the Incarcerated Survivors Program, Alexis Mansfield, was there?

[Watch her powerful testimony](#) about how important it is to include foster youth in programs connecting children to incarcerated parents.

Special Recognition from Sarah's Inn



On April 24th, Ascend Justice gratefully accepted the Together Strong Award from Sarah's Inn at their lovely Together We Inspire Educational Breakfast event.

We are so thankful for our amazing community partners, like Sarah's Inn. Together we create change, collaborate, and support one another so that, together, we can continue to impact lives.

#togetherweascend

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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