



action & impact.

The Ascend Justice Newsletter • August 2024



What Do We Do When Law Enforcement Won't Enforce the Laws?

Earlier this summer, Ascend Justice stood with our client, Dominique Ward, who has been the victim of relentless cyberstalking at the hands of her abusive ex for three years (and counting), as she **told her story to the media**.

After the story broke, we held a press conference at the Ascend Justice headquarters office **demanding action** from law enforcement and Meta (Facebook's parent company) because Dominique's ex has been allowed to continue to harass and stalk her without consequence, and it has to end.

Chicago Alders Nicole Lee and Andre Vasquez **answered our call** and will be holding a hearing to ask the Chicago Police Department why cyberstalking cases only have a 1% arrest rate. We expect the hearing to take place in September.

Stay tuned to our social media pages for updates on Dominique's case and help us spread awareness about a type of abuse that is rarely taken seriously.

Young Professionals Board Updates

Trivia Night 2024: We have a date and venue for our annual YPB fundraiser, Trivia Night! Save the date for Wednesday, October 16, start gathering your team, and then join us at the offices of McDermott, Will & Emery (444 W Lake St) in October! Check out the event website and register: <https://www.ascendjustice.org/trivia-night/>



New YPB application process: We've had a surge of interest recently in people wanting to join our Young Professionals Board (which is awesome!), so our YPB is implementing new application deadlines — two per year — which will help more efficiently manage the selection and onboarding processes. The new fall deadline is approaching on August 30, so if you or someone you know wants to join the YPB, contact Director of Development, Christyn Schnell, at cschnell@ascendjustice.org to get started. If you miss the August deadline, stay tuned — there will be a spring 2025 application window coming in February!



Advocacy Round-Up

Throughout the year, Ascend Justice's advocacy team works to usher legislation that helps our clients. Over the past year, we worked hard to get SB 3713 passed, and we got it done!

The bill amends the Crime Victims Compensation Act to both expand the definition of who can be an applicant and who counts as a victim, as well as expanding the list of recoverable losses to include things like broken doors, headstones and cremation expenses, and costs incurred in pursuit of an Order of Protection.

We also supported our peer organizations in their legislative efforts throughout the year and engaged in advocacy work beyond the legislative. [Learn more about SB 3713 and all of the other advocacy work we did over the past year.](#)

Did you know YOU can help us fight for survivors during the next Illinois legislative session? Sign up for our [Advocacy Updates](#), and we'll send out the call when we need your voice!

Welcome New Staff

We are thrilled to announce that **Matt McGuire** has joined Ascend Justice as a Senior Attorney on our Immigration team.

Prior to joining Ascend Justice, Matt was an attorney with the National Immigrant Justice Center, and before that, he worked as a licensed trauma clinician in Colorado.

Welcome to the agency, Matt (and your partner's little dog too)!





A New Way to Help Our Clients

This past year has been tough for our clients, especially those who need public benefits in order to support themselves while they leave abusive partners. Because of the pause/slowdown in public benefits, we are reaching out to our network to help get our clients the short-term support they need. To that end, please consider purchasing items directly for our clients from our [Amazon Wishlist](#).

We need gift cards (so clients can pay their bills, buy groceries, sign up for services, etc.) and have included several denominations of generic Visa gift cards on our list. We are also in need of basic food staples (non-perishables only), adult personal care, and baby care items.

Please contact our Client Support Manager, [Kayla Martinez](#), if you have questions or items you would like to donate.

Bringing an Afternoon of Joy to Logan

In partnership with the [Women's Justice Institute](#), Ascend Justice staff helped escort the children of incarcerated women to Logan Correctional Facility for the first ever "Family Fun Day" on August 17!

"I am so happy! I don't want this day to ever end!"
– 8 year-old boy to his mother

Volunteers led arts and crafts activities, served food, hung out with the kids, made ice cream sundaes, and took pictures to capture memories for the families. It was an awesome day for everyone, and it's such a joyful experience to see loving mothers reunited with their kids!



Celebration of Courage Raffle Winners Update

Our lucky Celebration of Courage raffle winners have been out enjoying the baseball games generously provided by our incredible sponsors!

Tom R. and his son, Ethan (a massive Cubs fan), got to experience the best possible weather at Wrigley in some incredible seats, as winners of our "Holy Cow" package. The father-son day could not have been more perfect to see the Cubs win 8-2 over the Twins!

Michael Urbanski and his family enjoyed the "Sox Scouts" package, which came with the best seats in the house at Guaranteed Rate Field, including all food and drink and a private wait staff! Though the Sox lost that day, the rain held off, and the Urbanski clan got to watch the game in style!

Patrick Burke (a keen Sox enthusiast) enjoyed the "Crosstown Classic" package with his brothers. They had amazing seats at Guaranteed Rate Field, but unfortunately



for Sox fans, August 9 wasn't their night. At least the Burke boys got some primo views for the fireworks show!

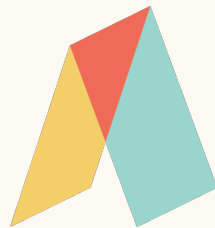
We're thrilled that our raffle winners enjoyed unforgettable baseball game experiences, all made possible by the generosity of our donors. Your support, in any form, helps us continue our mission. If you're inspired to give, learn more about how you can contribute: [Ways to Give](#).



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