



action & impact.

The Ascend Justice Newsletter • October 2024



What are You Doing for Domestic Violence Awareness Month?

There are two more weeks in October, which means two more weeks for Domestic Violence Awareness Month! Here are 10 things you can do to help us raise awareness and funds this month:

1. Tell one person why you care. Have a conversation with someone in your life about DV and why you support Ascend Justice.
 2. Attend an event. Check out our DVAM page to see what's coming up:
<https://www.ascendjustice.org/domestic-violence-awareness-month/>
 3. Become a member of our Sustainer Circle:
<https://www.ascendjustice.org/sustainer-circle/>
 4. Check in on your friends and family. DV can happen to anyone, and it thrives in silence, so make sure your loved ones are ok.
 5. Say something publicly on social media. Share one of our posts to make it easier!
 6. Make a donation to Ascend Justice in honor of the amazing pro bono attorneys who work with us, or someone who has helped you out in life:
<https://www.ascendjustice.org/tribute/>
 7. Ask your faith community to talk about healthy relationships.
 8. Purchase basic needs items and Visa gift cards for our clients from our [Amazon wishlist](#).
 9. Talk to your kids about healthy relationships, and make sure they know that not all domestic abuse is physical.
 10. Sign up for our [Advocacy Update newsletter](#) and help us get bills passed that will help survivors.
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Making the Country SAFE for Survivors

For more than six months, our Senior Attorney for Economic Justice, Katherine Gaughan-Palombi, has been working on the SAFE for Survivors Act Working Group, led by Futures Without Violence, to draft federal legislation that would greatly enhance a survivor's ability to achieve financial independence after abuse.

Katherine puts it this way: "In Illinois, we are fortunate to have job-protected leave for survivors under the Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act. However, passage of the Federal SAFE Act would enhance employment protections and economic security for survivors in Illinois - such as including paid leave. It would also provide crucial safe leave and job protections for survivors across the nation."

Ascend Justice has endorsed the Act. Read more about the new bill in Rep. Dingall's press release: <https://debbiedingell.house.gov/news/email/show.aspx?ID=JKBIYE4SCYAREGZYRWDOPDT24E>

INTRODUCING THE SAFE ACT

Learn more about a new federal bill that tackles financial abuse.



Trivia Night!

A huge thank you to everyone who came out for our Young Professionals Board Trivia Night on October 16! It was such a fun and energetic evening, with 15 teams competing. For many in attendance, this was their first introduction to Ascend Justice, and we're so grateful you chose to spend the night with us. Special congratulations to Team No Money Down!—Jade Lambert, Emily Dillingham, Peter Neumer, Ben Frey, Stew Weiss, and Russ Chibe—our trivia champions! The winning team generously donated their \$300 cash prize back to Ascend Justice, showing their commitment to our cause. But they didn't walk away empty-handed—they proudly sported their Whaddayaknow? Free Bar Trivia beanies, provided by our always amazing trivia host, as a fun reminder of their victory!

[Check out the photos](#) (we'll be adding more to the album as they come in, so check back if your pics aren't up yet)!

We also want to send a big shout-out to **McDermott Will & Emery** for generously hosting the event, providing amazing food and drinks, and sharing their beautiful space with breathtaking views of Chicago's northside. A special thank you to our Brainiac sponsor: **King & Spalding**, Round sponsors: DLA Piper and Hinshaw & Culbertson, Team sponsors: Davis Friedman, Jade Lambert, The Law Office of Erin M. Wilson, and Secretariat, and everyone who contributed to the night's success.

Thanks to everyone's generosity, **we raised \$8,100**,

which will allow 16 individuals to access our FREE services to get an Emergency Order of Protection. For many of the individuals we serve, the vast majority being women of color living below the poverty line, this is a lifeline that isn't always easily accessible.

We're just \$1,900 away from helping 4 more people—let's keep this momentum going! If you want to help us reach even more people, [there's still time to donate!](#) Every donation makes a real difference. Thank you for your continued support!

Welcome New Staff

We are thrilled to introduce our two newest staff members: [Nia Crosley](#) and [Charlotte Coats](#). Nia is a Fellow with our Economic Justice and Incarcerated Survivors Programs, and Charlotte is a Senior Attorney with our OP team.

Nia (pictured top) was an intern for us during law school. Now, having just passed the bar, she will assist clients with a variety of economic issues including challenging identity theft and consumer debt, advocating for employment benefits and crime victims compensation, tax guidance, and securing safe housing.

Charlotte (pictured bottom) was a Senior Attorney with the Domestic Violence Practice Group at the North Suburban Legal Aid Clinic in Highland Park before joining us. Prior to that, Charlotte spent time as a PILI intern with the Domestic Violence Group at Legal Aid Society of Metropolitan Family Services.

Welcome to Ascend Justice, Nia and Charlotte!



Welcome New YPB Members

We have three new members on our Young Professionals Board! Please help us welcome Kelly Meyer, Elena Panyard, and Kevin Quinn to our YPB!



Kelly (pictured top) re-joins the Ascend Justice YPB after completing her PILI Fellowship at Ascend Justice in 2023, splitting her time in the Orders of Protection and Economic Justice divisions. Kelly started at Kirkland & Ellis last year in the Restructuring Group. She also is currently on the pro bono teams filing clemency petitions for Ascend Justice clients Crystal Martinez and Amber Summers. Joining the YPB felt like the natural progression to continue supporting Ascend Justice's mission. While on the YPB, Kelly hopes to continue supporting, advocating, and raising awareness about the incredible work that Ascend Justice does within the community and for survivors.

Elena (pictured middle) joined the Ascend Justice YPB after listening to an Ascend Justice presentation while at work. As the child of a formerly incarcerated parent, hearing the stories from



incarcerated survivors in particular really hit home for her. Elena's hope as a new YPB member is to learn more about Ascend Justice and then share that knowledge with her community - with the hopes that they will then share the information and so on. Elena understands that change doesn't happen in big actions or overnight - it's building step by step towards a shared goal, and she can't wait to look back on all of the change we are able to create as a team in support of the staff and survivors of Ascend Justice.

Kevin (pictured bottom) currently works as the Village Planner for the Village of Bensenville. He graduated with a Masters of Urban Planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in December 2023. Some of his hobbies include traveling, rooting for the White Sox (when possible), and cycling. He joined the YPB because it came highly recommended to him as a way to give back. He recently served on a grand jury and had several eye opening moments that inspired him to want to help victims of gender-based violence. During his time on the Young Professionals Board, he hopes to get involved and begin making a positive impact.

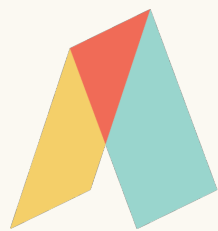
Please join us in welcoming our three newest YPB members!



Want a no-hassle way to support our work?
Join our Sustainer Circle and become part
of our reliable base of support that helps us
serve more people throughout the year. No
amount is too large or too small.



Join our Sustainer
Circle!



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legal advocacy. transforming lives.



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