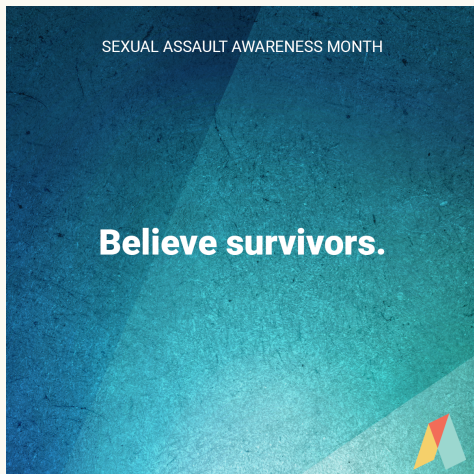


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The Ascend Justice Newsletter • April 2025



Sexual Assault Awareness Month

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness and take action to support survivors. As the month comes to a close, we encourage you to use the last few days of April to do one more thing, take one more action. Try a social media post asking your network to believe survivors (feel free to download and use our graphic), share the rape crisis hotline number (888.293.2080), or deepen your own understanding by reading books that center survivors (here's a great reading list from one of our community partners:

<https://www.caase.org/saam-books/>).

Whatever action you decide to take, know that your efforts help to end stigma, shame, and ultimately sexual assault.

Public Benefits Update & Call to Action

People who leave abusive situations often need financial, medical, housing, and other types of support to get back on their feet, especially when children are involved. In fact, one of the most common reasons people return to their abusers is because they have no ability to support themselves independently. This is why public benefits are a lifeline for survivors.

Unfortunately, the public benefits available for victims of crime in Illinois (VTTC benefits) have dried up, and our most vulnerable clients are facing unprecedented hardship. In times like these, **we are going to need to rely on our community more heavily to keep survivors from falling through the cracks.** Together, we can help our most vulnerable clients find safety and stability. Join our Sustainer Circle to pitch in - every little bit helps:

<https://www.ascendjustice.org/sustainer-circle/>



Celebration of Courage

June is right around the corner, and you know what that means: the best fundraiser in Chicago is coming up soon! We invite you to join us **June 12** for our annual Celebration of Courage. [Get your tickets today!](#)

We've outgrown our old venue, so we'll be in a new, larger space this year at the Chicago Athletic Association in the beautiful White City Ballroom! We are also excited to announce that CBS2's Marissa Perlman will be joining us again as emcee. And we look forward to introducing you to our incredible Champions of Justice, all four of whom embody our event theme: **United in Hope.**

Check out Our Merch!

Are you wearing Ascend Justice swag? Because you should be! Our TeePublic storefront has all the shirts, hats, and accessories you need to show your support for survivors!

Check it out: <https://www.teepublic.com/t-shirts/ascend-justice>

Every purchase funds our work, so grab your Ascend Justice gear and tell all your friends!





Young Professionals Board

Welcome New Young Professionals Board (YPB) Members!

In our last newsletter, we asked our community to recommend young professionals who are eager to make a difference with board work, and wow did you deliver! We now have four amazing new YPB members, and we are so excited to add their enthusiasm and expertise to our board. (Three of their bios are below, and one you'll have to wait for - we'll introduce him in our next newsletter.)



Cassandra "Cass" Marlow. I currently work at Arnoux Sharma Standeford, LLC as Senior Law Clerk. I graduate from DePaul University College of Law in May with my Juris Doctor, and I plan to take the bar exam in July in Illinois. Upon my admission to the Illinois bar (pending bar results), I accepted an offer to stay at Arnoux Sharma Standeford, LLC and become an associate attorney in the fall. I got involved with Ascend Justice by taking a few events in the past, such as the Celebration of Courage the summer between my 1L and 2L year of law school. I wanted to become more involved with Ascend Justice upon my graduation from law school, and after attending the Friendraiser in February, I decided to join the Young Professionals Board to get more involved, as I am interested in the behind scenes decisions and helping the organization from the inside.



Sylvie Rockman. I am an Associate at Davis Friedman, LLP. I focus my practice on complex financial matters and child custody matters, including cases related to the dissolution of marriage, allocation of parental responsibilities and decision-making, post-decree enforcement and modification, in addition to order of protection matters. I first got involved with Ascend Justice during law school when I volunteered over one of my winter breaks with the Order of Protection Clinic. I later returned to Ascend Justice as an intern with the Family Law Division. The client-centered, zealous advocacy of Ascend Justice's attorneys informed my understanding of the type of attorney I strive to be in my work now as a first-year associate at a divorce and family law firm. Ascend Justice plays a critical role in assisting survivors of gender-based violence and their children obtain safety and financial security. I am passionate about furthering the mission of Ascend Justice and am excited to continue this important work as a member of the Young Professionals Board!



Charlotte Castillo. I am an attorney at Lawrence Kamin, a boutique business law firm. I focus my practice on sophisticated estate planning and trust administration for high net worth clients and estate and gift taxation matters. I joined the YPB at Ascend Justice to support an organization that makes positive contributions to the community and supports a cause I care about.

Advocacy in Action

The Ascend Justice Immigration and Client Support teams were on the ground in Springfield in April to advocate for increased [Access to Justice \(A2J\)](#) funding.

We spent a beautiful spring day speaking to Illinois legislators about increasing our A2J support so that we can represent more immigrant survivors of gender-based violence.

Immigrant survivors need our help now more than ever, and we are hopeful that Illinois will come through for our most vulnerable community members. Stay tuned for updates!



We're Hiring!

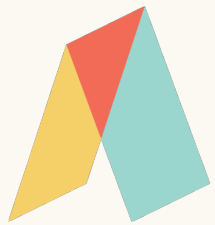
Is anyone in your network looking for work? We are currently hiring for three positions:

[Client Support Coordinator \(Order of Protection clinic\)](#)

[Intake Specialist \(Order of Protection clinic\)](#)

[Staff Attorney \(Incarcerated Survivors\)](#)

Please share widely with your networks!



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