



# **Spring 2025 Newsletter**

# Spanish Guardianship and Immigration Information Session

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Spanish Guardianship and Immigration Information Session: On Feb. 24, the Legal Network held the “Spanish Guardianship Event: Know Your Rights Seminar” at the Spanish Catholic Center in Mount Pleasant, Md. The information session educated the community about their legal rights in immigration-related situations. The seminar was led by **Estefania Chavez Higgins**, Pro Bono Senior Managing Attorney at Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services, who provided a detailed presentation in Spanish to a group of a dozen attendees. In addition to the

presentation, the Catholic Charities Legal Network distributed flyers to attendees, outlining the civil legal services available. The event was an important opportunity to empower community members with knowledge and resources to navigate complex immigration and court issues more confidently.

# CCLN & LCE Guardianship Seminar



Catholic Charities Legal Network (CCLN) and Legal Counsel for the Elderly (LCE) recently hosted a Guardianship Seminar at Anchor Mental Health, featuring experienced attorney and speaker **Lisa Brown**. The event provided valuable insights into the guardianship application process and addressed key questions such as filing procedures, timeframes, and handling urgent cases. Attendees also gained clarity on submitting applications through the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) versus Family Court, the likelihood of denials through CCLN &

LCE Guardianship Seminar traditional routes, and best practices for guardians seeking to step down due to medical reasons. This seminar was an invaluable resource for professionals and caregivers looking to navigate the complexities of guardianships.

# Get to Know Pro Bono in the DC Courts



On March 19, the Legal Network participated in the Pro Bono and Volunteer Fair, which featured remarks from Chief Judge **Anna Blackburne-Rigsby** of the D.C. Court of Appeals, Chief Judge **Milton C. Lee** of the Supreme Court of D.C., and D.C. Bar President **Shaun Snyder**. The event provided lawyers and law students with the opportunity to engage with judges, D.C. Bar leaders, legal service representatives, and court staff to explore pro bono and volunteer opportunities. The Legal Network was proud to connect with attendees and share ways they can contribute to pro bono services. Pictured are **The Honorable Steven M. Wellner** of the Superior Court of D.C. and **Jim Bishop**.

# Expungement Seminars March 27 & April 3



Catholic Charities Legal Network presented an “all you need to know” seminar on Expungements. This interactive seminar answered questions from the Catholic Charities Behavioral Health Services staff working directly with consumers and interested community members.

Pictured are **Brian Stolarz**, Legal Network Volunteer Attorney, and **Jim Bishop**.

# Client Success Story By: Deacon Darryl A. Kelley

A client came to Catholic Charities Legal Network's Mona Center for a divorce and custody matter in Prince George's County. The client met his wife at a prayer meeting in his native country in Africa. His wife is a U.S. citizen, but her parents were also from the native African country. After a few years of long-distance dating, she paid for his travel to the U.S. They married right away, and she sponsored his citizenship application.

Shortly after, a child was born. They lived in an apartment with her mother and the client worked multiple jobs and gave the money to his wife to pay bills. The wife had a college education but was not employed. Her mother worked and helped care for the minor child. She would constantly scold him, and her mother treated him with some disdain because of his upbringing in the less fortunate areas of their native country. The client did not have any family members in the U.S. but did his best to take care of his family. The tensions became so unbearable that he left.

Within the same month of his leaving the apartment, his wife wrote a scathing letter to immigration withdrawing her support of his citizenship. The wife refused client visitation with the first born child. After he left, the client voluntarily paid child support to her. Additionally, she filed almost immediately for divorce and sole custody of the first child and requested supervised visitation. She was also expecting a second child. DNA results confirmed that the client was the father.

Catholic Charities Legal Network requested joint legal custody and modest visitation because of the financial status of the client who was renting a room. The client had what would probably amount to a high school education. It was apparent throughout the process and the client was convinced that the wife and her family thought that they were "better than" him. The second child was born, and the client was not allowed access to his two sons. A hearing was held, with an additional hearing four months later. The wife was adamant about sole custody and supervised visitation. The court after hearing all the testimony ruled in our favor granting joint legal custody of the two children and visitation with his two sons and advised that the court would be open to additional visitation requests once he finds his own living quarters.

**Congratulations to Gerard E. Mitchell, Partner, Stein Mitchell Beato & Missner LLP, who will be receiving the John Carroll Society Medal at the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Dinner**



**Congratulations to Jim Malloy,  
President & CEO, Catholic Charities  
DC, who is the Guest Speaker and  
Honoree at the John Carroll Society's  
39<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Dinner**



# Catholic Charities Legal Network Part-time Staff Attorney Position

**ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW:** At Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, your knowledge and service in areas such as immigrants and refugees, mental health, social work, employment and adult education, legal and financial services, health care, food assistance, shelter and housing, developmental disabilities and prison outreach can make a profound difference in the lives of many. Through more than 50 programs across the district and five surrounding counties, Catholic Charities is opening doors to help and hope. At CCADW, we continue to build an inclusive culture that celebrates a diverse workforce. We offer so much more than just a job. We offer careers. We take pride in our "promote from within" culture. We offer professional development, a comprehensive benefits package, a hybrid work model with both remote and in-office work, and a passion for building and motivating world class, high performing teams. Explore your career opportunity with Catholic Charities. Join us in Inspiring Hope and Building Futures.

**JOB SUMMARY:** The Attorney provides legal advice and representation in accord with the best practice of the profession. The position recruits licensed attorneys in DC and Maryland for pro bono civil law cases, develops a pool of attorney mentors to guide less experienced attorneys, and conduct training sessions about the program to potential volunteers at identified organizations.

## **ESSENTIAL DUTIES and RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Interview individuals seeking legal assistance and advise the client as to possible options through proper interpretation of current laws.
- Provide ongoing legal representation to the client commencing with the initial intake interview, drafting of documents, correspondence and client applications/petitions.
- Recruit active status DC and Maryland licensed attorneys who will accept pro bono civil law cases from the Legal Network in such areas as: family law, employment conflicts, landlord-tenant disputes, consumer/bankruptcy matters, public entitlements, wills/probate and advanced medical directives.
- Develop a current pool of attorney mentors who can provide information and guidance to less experienced attorneys who are willing to accept civil law cases in specific areas such as custody and child support; landlord-tenant rights; and consumer matters.
- Conduct information and training sessions on the Legal Network at government agencies, nonprofits, bar associations, private corporations, law firms, etc. to potential volunteers.
- Help enhance the visibility of Catholic Charities' Susan D. Mona Center and/or Hickey Center services to low-income Prince George's County residents to increase the number of consumers who avail of the services of the Legal Network.
- Conduct outreach activities in the community with respect to legal issues.
- Assist the Director with all internal and external reporting,
- Supervise law student interns and volunteers.
- Ensure the timely submission of all external and internal program reports.
- Serve as liaison between the program and community partners.
- Perform other job-related duties as assigned.

## **COMPENSATION PACKAGE:**

- Medical, prescriptions, dental and vision insurance
- Retirement savings plan with company match
- Company-paid and supplemental life insurance
- Flexible spending accounts
- Paid vacation, sick and personal leave
- 11 paid holidays
- Professional development and training
- Tuition reimbursement
- Employee referral bonus program

## **EDUCATION and EXPERIENCE:**

Law Degree (J.D.).Active status member of both the District of Columbia and Maryland bars.This position may require completion of Continuing Legal Education, in addition to all licensing requirements for the Jurisdiction where the attorney is licensed to practice.Two years' experience in general civil law.

## **SKILLS and COMPETENCIES:**

Verbal and written communication skills. Skill in public speaking. Ability to interact effectively and professionally at all levels and across diverse cultures.Skill in the use of computers, preferably in a PC, Windows-based operating environment.

**Please send a resume, cover letter, writing sample, and references to**  
**Afghani Barakzai, Director Recruitment**  
**[Afghani.Barakzai@cc-dc.org](mailto:Afghani.Barakzai@cc-dc.org)**

**<https://recruiting.ultipro.com/ARC1012CCADW/JobBoard/0e2fd504-4cf5-49a5-9eae-2bbfe7babd5b/OpportunityDetail?opportunityId=a6677913-6251-48e0-91ad-ff49cf1d0536>**

# Golf Tournament Sign-up



Be on the lookout! Registration will be opening soon for Catholic Charities Legal Network's Annual Golf Tournament. The tournament will be held on Monday, Sept. 22 at the Bretton Woods Country Club in Germantown, Md.

For 21 years, our annual golf tournament has supported the pro bono legal services that the legal network provides to low-income individuals in the Washington D.C. metro area. More than 100 supporters are expected to play this year.



# Welcome Isabel Zorraquin



My name is Isabel Zorraquin. Originally a lawyer from Argentina, I've been living in the DC area for the past decade. After having completed an LL.M. in Law and Government at American University I worked in lobbying for some years before taking the New York Bar. These past months, I was fortunate to be able to complete my Bar-required 50 hours of legal pro bono work at Catholic Charities Legal Network, where I was greeted by a group of talented, hard-working and compassionate people led by Jim Bishop, from whom I have learned a lot over the past weeks. I hope to be sworn into the Bar this month and, if possible, continue to volunteer with Catholic Charities in the future. In the meantime, I'm taking some

time off to welcome our 4th child, a girl, very soon. I'm grateful for the opportunity to have known the great work Catholic Charities does in the region and to have experienced first-hand the impact they make on low-income individuals and communities in the DMV and beyond.

# Intern Bios



**Lauren Tepper** is the Senior Intern at the Legal Network. She is a recent graduate of The George Washington University, currently working with CCLN during her gap year before law school. At GW, she was actively engaged in the Pre-Law Community, including her contributions as an Editor-In-Chief of the Undergraduate Law Review, and she earned a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs. Originally from Los Angeles, California, Lauren is passionate about giving back to her community through pro bono work. During her time at the Legal Network, Lauren has gained

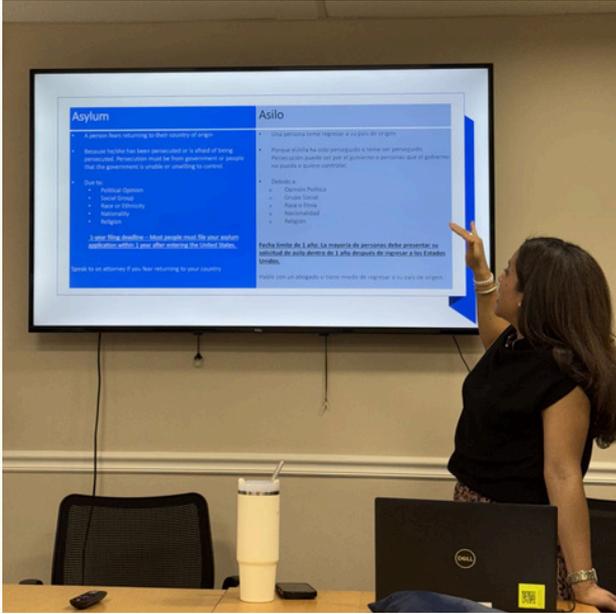
a comprehensive understanding of the cases and processes involved. She has participated in events and conducted research that supports the Legal Network in delivering essential guidance and resources to those in need. Lauren looks forward to continuing her work with Catholic Charities, doing her part to advocate for individuals, and ensuring their voices are heard.



**Joyce Chung** graduated with her bachelors and master's in public health from The Johns Hopkins University in 2023. She now serves as a Volunteer Legal Outreach Coordinator, helping to evaluate CCLN's legal services and Know-Your-Rights seminars through a creation of needs assessments, satisfaction surveys, and data analysis to assess program outputs and outcomes. She developed and standardized quarterly data collection and analysis procedures to enhance continuous quality improvement (CQI) efforts and ensure

consistency across reporting cycles. She also supported legal services by drafting closing letters and researching and writing legal memos. She loves working with the team at CCLN and is looking forward to continuing to work together towards our mission!

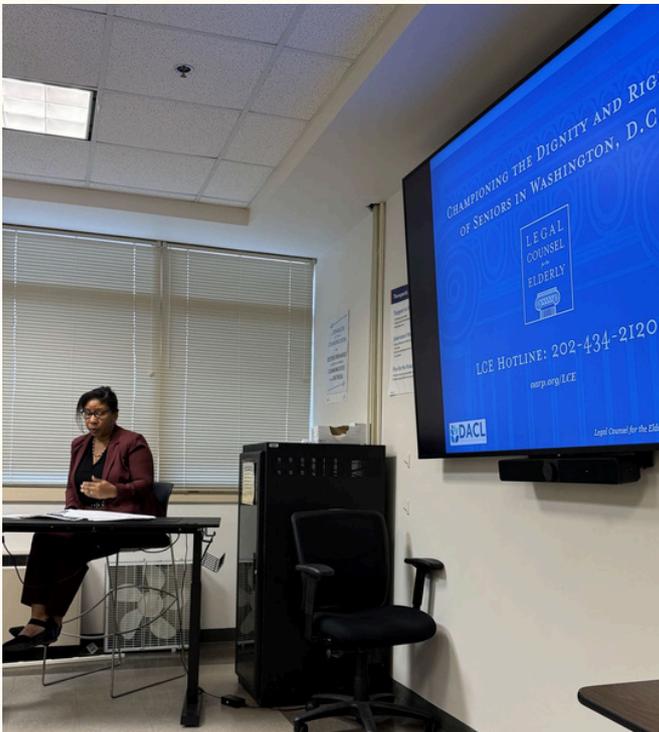
# Pictures



**Estefania Chavez Higgins presenting at the Spanish Guardianship Event**



**Jim Bishop and Lauren Tepper at the Spanish Guardianship Event**

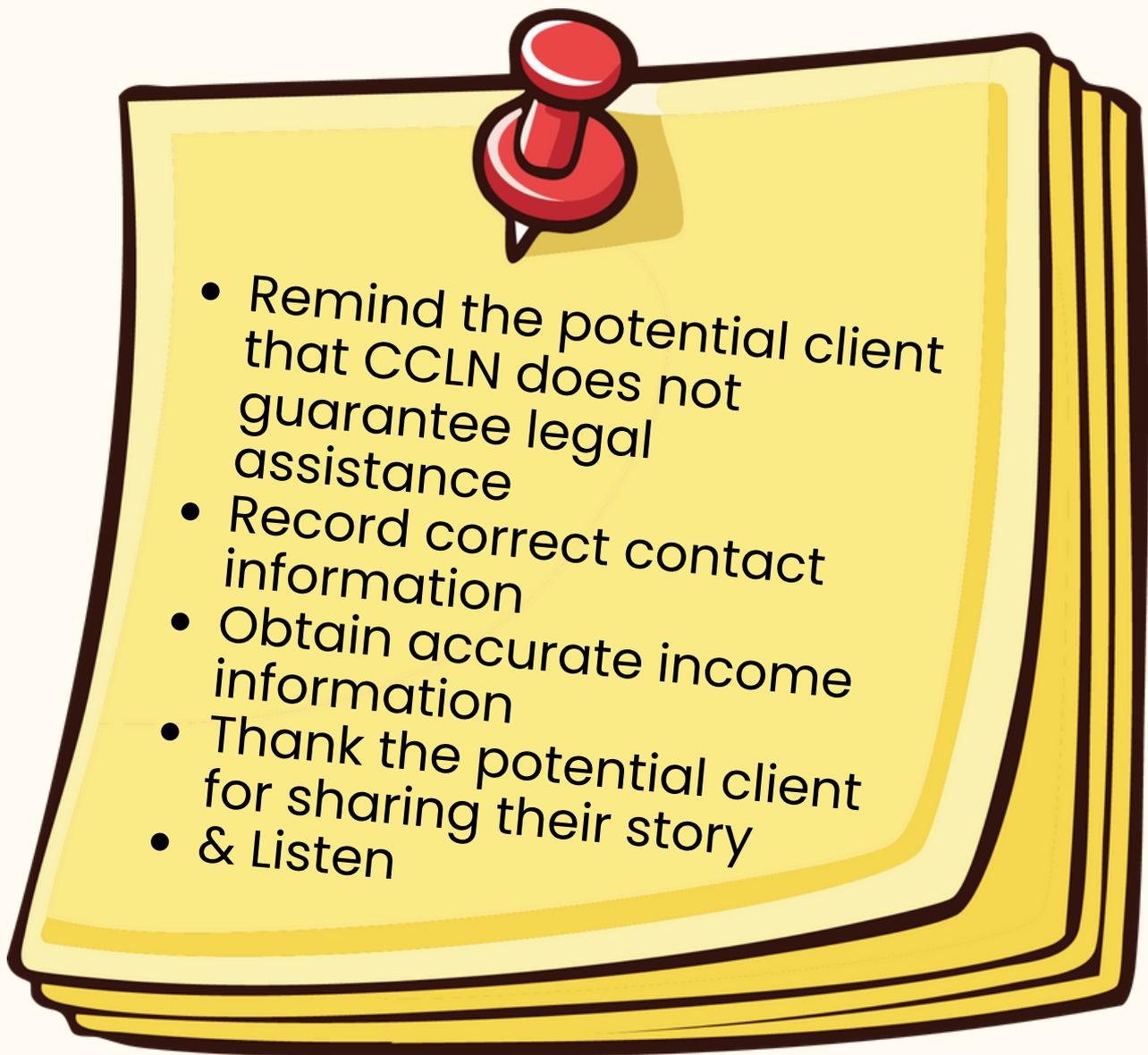


**Lisa Brown at the Guardianship Seminar**



**Seminar at Saint Matthias Malumba House**

# Reminders for Volunteers



- Remind the potential client that CCLN does not guarantee legal assistance
- Record correct contact information
- Obtain accurate income information
- Thank the potential client for sharing their story
- & Listen

# Will you volunteer?

## **CCLN Seeks Volunteer Attorneys to Offer Time and Talent:**

Do you have time to give your talent to low-income members of our community?

CCLN is actively seeking volunteers for the following roles:

- Accepting pro bono cases in Maryland and Washington, DC, by representing low-income clients especially in civil law areas of custody, will drafting and landlord-tenant matters;
- Offering attorney training for new volunteers interested in accepting pro bono cases from the Legal Network;
- Conducting community education seminars to low-income clients either in-person or virtually on topics related to will drafting and advanced healthcare directives/financial power of attorney, custody, government entitlements such as SSDI and landlord-tenant matters; or
- Serving as a mentor attorney to volunteers representing pro bono clients.

If interested in volunteering or to subscribe to our monthly case summary list, please email Jim Bishop at [james.bishop@cc-dc.org](mailto:james.bishop@cc-dc.org).

### **Legal Network Staff**

James D. Bishop, Director, [james.bishop@cc-dc.org](mailto:james.bishop@cc-dc.org)

Emma Johnston, Bilingual Paralegal, [emma.johnston@cc-dc.org](mailto:emma.johnston@cc-dc.org)

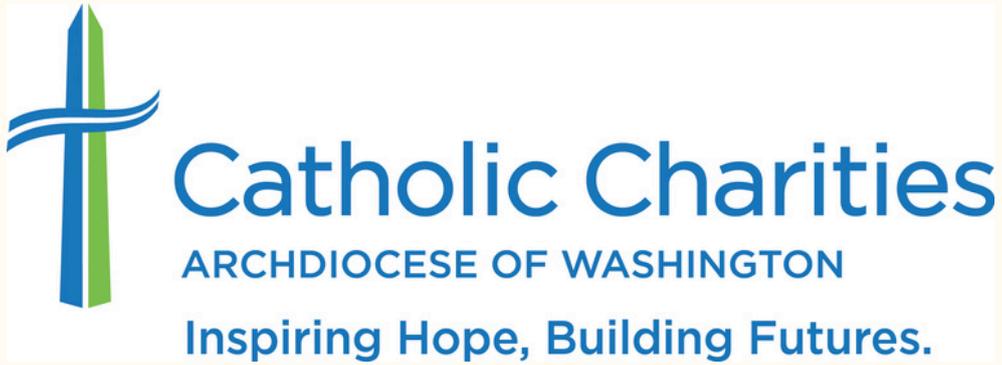
Deacon Darryl A. Kelley, Staff Attorney, [darryl.kelley@cc-dc.org](mailto:darryl.kelley@cc-dc.org)

Isabel Zorraquin, Volunteer Attorney, [isabel.zorraquin@cc-dc.org](mailto:isabel.zorraquin@cc-dc.org)

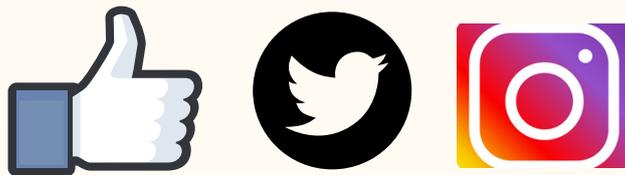
Thank you, as always, for your support for our organization. Your generous support helps us to assist those in need of legal representation in the Washington, DC, area.



**Donate**



Catholic Charities Legal Network | The James Cardinal Hickey Center, 924 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001



**This edition of the Newsletter was composed by Lauren Tepper, Senior Intern**