



INDIANAPOLIS LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Advocating with Passion and Purpose

SEPTEMBER 2020

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Guardianship Keeps Siblings Together



Twenty-one-year-old, Mya, came to Indy Legal Aid seeking help with guardianship of her younger siblings, "Devan" and "Sheree."

Mya's mother had adopted a number of children over the years, including Mya and her two siblings, ages nine and 12. Sadly, Mya and her siblings' mother died in May 2020. At this time, Mya decided that she wanted Devan and Sheree to live with her.

Mya lives in Hamilton County and works nights at a packaging facility. Because of the ages of Devan and Sheree, Mya has them spend the night with a cousin. Then after her shift, she picks them up in the morning and gets them ready for school. Mya is a devoted sister who has created a loving home environment with no additional financial support. She is extremely proud that both Devan and Sheree are doing very well in school.

Indy Legal Aid volunteer attorney, Madonna McGrath, was Mya's attorney. Even with Covid-19 continuing to affect court proceedings, Madonna was able to wrap-up this case very quickly. Mya's guardianship "was one of those cases where you really felt that you made a positive change in people's lives. It made me feel good," Madonna said. "If I didn't feel that way, I wouldn't be here."

Pictured above: Madonna McGrath with Mya, Devan, and Sheree.

From Summer Intern to Part-Time Data Consultant

Indy Legal Aid has been very fortunate regarding interns that have helped us over the years with numerous projects. One intern in particular, Jacob Purcell, has been so indispensable that we hired him as a part-time statistician while he completes his under-

graduate degree.

Jacob graduated from New Palestine High School and is a senior at IUPUI with a major in Sociology and minors in Spanish and Neuroscience. He is the Music Director for On a Side Note, a mixed a cappella group at IUPUI.



Law school is in Jacob's future as he plans to apply to the McKinney School of Law and is considering a public policy master's in conjunction with a law degree. Currently, Jacob is applying to CASA/GAL to become a guardian ad litem.

Indy Legal Aid has benefited greatly from Jacob's Sociology major in which he mines data resources, along with his work as a Research Assistant at the Center for Research on Inclusion & Social Policy (CRISP) at IUPUI. While at CRISP, Jacob was involved in policy analysis of the Indianapolis area. CRISP researches the effects of social policy in the areas of housing, homelessness, education, and neighborhood and community development, to name a few, in order to evaluate local organizations' solutions to social policy issues.

Jacob has transformed our demographic data to better reflect the needs of our clients which is invaluable information. In addition, he is proficient in data analysis that allows our staff to report our findings to grant-making institutions in Indianapolis.

"It didn't take the staff long to realize we needed Jacob to remain with us after his summer internship ended," said John Floreancig, Indy Legal Aid CEO and General Counsel. "Jacob is an incredible asset to both our programs and fundraising efforts."

Indy Legal Aid Receives Supplemental COVID Grant from the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute



Indy Legal Aid recently received a grant from the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI) to supplement the grant already received for the 2020-2021 Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Program. The supplemental grant is in response to COVID and focuses on new expenses related to a change in how services are being provided to victims.

Since March 2020, Indy Legal Aid attorneys have been working with clients remotely to provide initial assessment and advice. Our phone system and database have proven woefully inadequate to manage the huge volume of calls we have received each day during the pandemic, along with our database that is over 12 years old and is no longer able to meet our need to track important client demographics.

Grant funds received from ICJI will allow us to purchase a new client database that will track the demographic variables we need, run statistical tests, and provide our attorneys with the ability to track their cases and input their notes; a new phone system that will allow us to

better handle the high volume of calls we receive, along with allowing the attorneys to answer these calls from home; a streaming video system to enhance the quality of legal sessions that will give Indy Legal Aid the capability to host live sessions regarding topics of interest; and the production of legal education videos that we can post on our website and social media, along with sending to clients.

We are extremely grateful to ICJI for allowing us to improve the way in which we serve our clients.

Volunteer Opportunities



Indy Legal Aid has a number of volunteer opportunities for attorneys, students, and the general public. For attorneys, we have pro bono cases, internships for students, and our spring and fall events, along with light office work.

For more information, click [here](#).

No time to volunteer? Donate now!



We have several ways for you to make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable Hoosiers in Central Indiana. Approximately \$.90 of every dollar donated to Indianapolis Legal Aid Society is directly used to provide programs and services. For more information, click [here](#).

615 N Alabama St, Suite 122

Indianapolis, IN 46204

(317) 635 - 9538

www.INDYLAS.org

info@indylas.org

Monday - Friday

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

"The Indianapolis Legal Aid Society is dedicated to ensuring that qualified low-income persons living in the Central Indiana community have access to quality legal assistance for civil disputes."



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