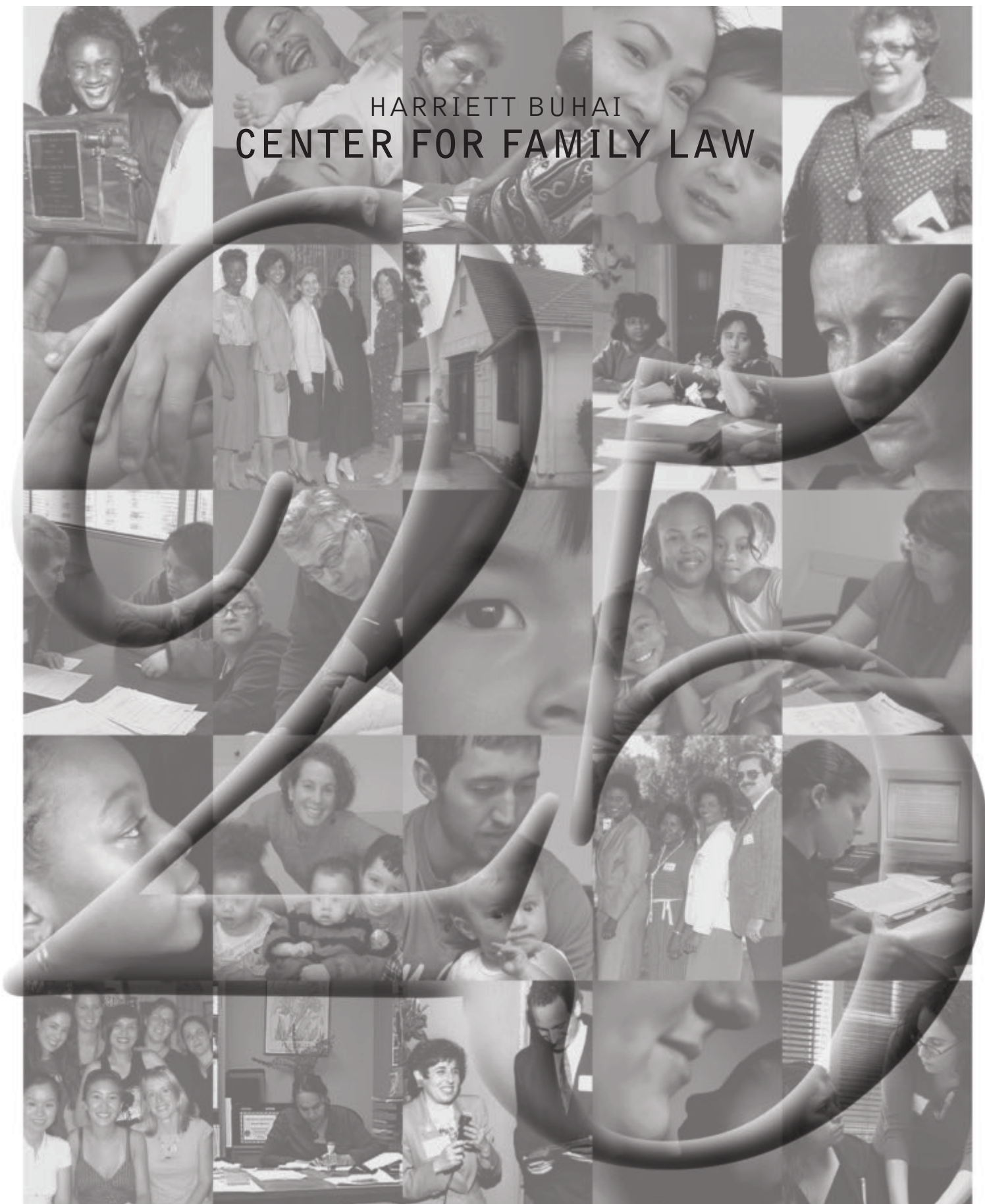
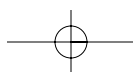


Annual Report 2006-2007

HARRIETT BUHAI
CENTER FOR FAMILY LAW



Seeking Justice • Changing Lives



Seeking Justice

A 25-Year Commitment to Compassion and Action

In 1982 a group of lawyers began meeting in a storefront in South Central. The federal government had recently slashed legal aid funding for low-income individuals, and this small band of concerned attorneys were determined to ensure equal access to the courts for disadvantaged families in Los Angeles.

Under the leadership of Mablean Ephraim, President of Black Women Lawyers Association, and Joan Patsy Ostroy, President of the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, **The Family Law Project** was born. With a single desk and phone, they began to offer clinics at night, geared toward helping women fill out restraining order forms. It was the only service the young organization could offer.

But it was an important first step. The following year, the Family Law Project received the California State Bar Pro Bono Award in recognition of



In 1985, early Board and staff members celebrate receiving the Public Service Award from the National Conference of Women's Bar Associations. From left to right: unidentified staff, Vera Brown-Curtis, Pam Sellers, Susan Stockel, Darla Rimes, Mablean Ephraim, Ann Fields, Shirley Henderson, and Henry Schiffer.

its contribution to the community, and the Los Angeles County Bar Association soon joined as a co-sponsor. In 1984 the project was renamed the **Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law** in honor of a local family law attorney who devoted her life to representing people in need.

The following two decades was a time of tremendous growth. In addition to helping thousands of low-income individuals, the Center worked to

permanently change the law and policies affecting the lives of poor persons. The Center's advocacy efforts made historic contributions at the state level to creating new laws about child support and establishing precedent-setting case law affecting access to the family law courts. In 1997, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges picked the Harriett Buhai Center's joint Domestic Violence Law Project with 1736 Family Crisis Center as one of "the most effective and innovative programs in the nation."

For over twenty five years, the Center has partnered with the private legal community, marshalling the donated energy and talent of thousands of attorneys, paralegals and law students to provide free family law assistance to vulnerable clients from all corners of Los Angeles County. With a staff of 19 and over 250 active volunteers, the Center now directly assists more than 1,500 individuals every year, and many thousands more through community education and referrals. Supportive and compassionate, the Center strives to provide *high quality* and *comprehensive* service for those who struggle every day.

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 ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
 Aarti K. Maharaj
 OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

"There are other programs, but the Buhai Center is unique in what it does."

Larry Ginsberg
 FORMER BOARD PRESIDENT

"We've helped a lot of people, and that's a wonderful feeling."

- Blanche C. Bersch
 FORMER BOARD PRESIDENT



Past Presidents of the Board (left to right): Mablean Ephriam (1982-1989), Susan Stockel (1990), Yolande Adelson (1991-1992), Blanche Bersch (1993-1994), Deborah Ewing (1995), Vera Brown-Curtis (1996), Larry A. Ginsberg (1997-1998 and 2002-2004), Beverly A. Williams (1999-2000), Carolyn DeFrancesco (2001), Nedra Jenkins (2005-2006) and Fahi Takesh (2007)

Changing Lives

The Center confronts some of life's most critical problems: violence and poverty among single-parents and their children. The Center strives to insure that each person who seeks aid receives the best legal assistance possible. The diverse and unique programs the Center has created strengthen families and empower low-income individuals to take greater control of their lives. The Center offers much more than self-help. It builds self-reliance.

Pro Per Program

Creating a partnership between clients and volunteers, the Center prepares individuals who cannot afford a lawyer to represent themselves in court. This precedent-setting program now serves as a model for provision of help to self-represented litigants throughout the state.

Pro Bono Panel

Using volunteer lawyers from the community, the Center provides hundreds of hours of free legal representation to clients who are unable to present their own cases in court because of complexity, or obstacles such as severe abuse or physical or mental disability.

Child Support Project

The Child Support Project works to improve the collection of child support for poor children in Los Angeles County. The project addresses systemic problems through a combination of advocacy, litigation and direct client assistance.

Domestic Violence Law Project

Pioneering with a social services program, the Center created one of the first programs in the U.S. providing a seamless continuum of legal and psycho-social assistance for victims of domestic violence.

Vulnerable Youth Project

The Center understands the special needs of teen parents and provides legal counsel and advice to pregnant and parenting minors, educating them about their family law rights and responsibilities.

Mothers Behind Bars Project

Collaborating with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the Center has developed a program of classes in the county jail to educate incarcerated women on family, dependency law and domestic violence

topics. This helps the women understand legal policies concerning the best interests of their children, enabling them to take steps to be responsible parents.

Community Education and Outreach

Center staff visits a broad array of agencies and neighborhood groups, informing people about subjects such as custody, domestic violence and child support, and increasing their awareness of related community resources.

Volunteer Development

The Center actively recruits, trains and educates volunteers to help its low-income clients. Dedicated lawyers assist in preparing pleadings, providing counsel and representing individuals in court, aided by paralegals and law students.

**83%**

Percentage clients in 2006 and 2007 that were women

74%

Percentage of female clients in 2006 and 2007 reporting histories of domestic violence

\$893

Average pre-tax monthly income in 2006 and 2007 for a single parent client and two children

“You helped me get my self-esteem back and motivate me towards a new phase in my life.”

– Monabel C.
CLIENT

“This opens your mind to examine yourself to your next destiny or life ahead. This is not the end – a new beginning”

– Sara R.
CLIENT

“I was shaking when I walked in. I felt calm when I left.”

– Ronda M.
CLIENT

Protecting Families, Empowering the Poor

For twenty five years, the Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law has provided a helping hand to over 30,000 low-income members of the community who could not afford professional legal help and had nowhere else to turn. But those numbers don't paint an accurate picture of what the Center accomplishes everyday: helping vulnerable *individuals* who face life threatening legal problems.

The frightened woman whose two young sons had been kidnapped by their father.

The desperate father whose children were wounded in a drive-by shooting while in their mother's custody.

The mother of five kicked out her home by an abusive husband, struggling to provide shelter for her family.

The college-educated woman who had become trapped in a violent relationship with a man who was controlling and exploiting several others in a cult-like extended family.

These represent just a handful of the cases resolved by the Center in 2006 and 2007. Every case tells a story, and the Center tries to assure that every client has a positive outcome.

Of the almost 3,000 individuals who received direct service at the Center in 2006 and 2007, the vast majority were persons of color; 83% were women, and almost three quarters of them reported histories of domestic violence. The average household pre-tax income for a parent and two children in the Center's caseload is less than \$900 per month. Because most clients have children, the Center's work had a direct impact on the lives of over 4,500 kids in these households.

Extreme poverty and dire circumstances face most Center clients when they visit for the first time. Hopelessness and defeat radiates from them. But an extraordinary transformation takes place for many before they finish. They are enveloped with care and concern and provided professional quality legal help. With ready access to information which informs their decision-making, coming to the Harriett Buhai Center often proves to be a life-altering, empowering experience.

Providing a Voice For the Voiceless

The Center is one of the few places in Los Angeles County where people living at the poverty line can go for free family law and domestic violence assistance. 363 individuals volunteered during 2006 and 2007, and the number of number of hours of service they provided grew by 15% during this same period. These dedicated volunteers are the backbone of the Center's unique programs, and their unselfish and caring service has a direct impact on the lives of thousands of individuals and their families.

The Center's Pro Per Program—one of the first of its kind in the country—is an innovative approach to meeting the growing need for affordable access to the court system. Trained volunteers provide legal counseling and assistance in pleading preparation so that low-income persons can effectively represent themselves. Some cases are more complex, so the Center provides full scale legal representation by a volunteer attorney sometimes aided by a mentor with extensive family law experience. Accountants, pension lawyers and other professionals also supply specialized assistance.

These kinds of personalized, hands-on volunteer family law programs are rare in Los Angeles. Volunteering provides a unique opportunity not just to give back to the community, but to be enriched by it.

"I volunteer at the Center because I enjoy the work, the staff, the clients and the knowledge that at the end of the day I have helped women take control of some part of their lives."

– Laurie Taylor, 2007 Hall of Fame Award Winner

"The experiences clients share with me are heart-wrenching and make me thank my lucky stars for the opportunities I've had in my life."

– Iran Hopkins, volunteer

Working in either the small group settings of the Pro Per program, or being directly involved with representation through the Pro Bono Panel, volunteers often witness clients experiencing a remarkable boost in self esteem. Individuals walk in desperate and with little knowledge of their rights and the legal process, but when they leave they have hope, knowledge and their dignity intact.

"That is what is so satisfying... Forget the legal achievements. As a human being, it is very satisfying to see clients going forth with a lot more strength and focus."

– Susan Wiesner, 2006 Hall of Fame Award Winner

18,669

Hours of service provided by Volunteers in 2006 and 2007

20,208

Number of individuals receiving free direct assistance, educational or telephone referral services in 2006 and 2007

Volunteer Awards

Hall of Fame

Susan Wiesner (2006)
Laurie Taylor (2007)

Frances Wender Kandel, Volunteer of the Year

Ety Shalev (2006)
Robert Moss (2007)

Pro Bono Panel Volunteer of the Year

Jamie Gross and Karina York (2006)
Harris-Ginsberg LLP (2007)

New Volunteer of the Year

Claudia Nazario (2006)
Jaime Mendoza (2007)

Distinguished Service

Susan Kussin and Adalberto Pena (2006)
Cynthia Hunt and Marta Price (2007)

Administrative Volunteer of the Year

Beatriz Ramos (2007)

20 Year Club

Ellin Palmer

10 Year Club

Laura Steele
Lucille Wilson



"The work is done to the highest level of lawyering. The clients don't get discounted services. It's the best work that can be done."

– Dean Mellor

VOLUNTEER SINCE 1990

We are proud to recognize all of the attorneys, paralegals, law graduates, law students and community volunteers who together provided over 18,600 hours of assistance to the Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law during calendar years 2006 and 2007.

Evane Abbassi	Valerie Cohen	Linda Gross	Dorie Lanni	Carol Palumbo	Warren Shiehl
Rashida Adams	Booker Cole	Consuelo Guardado	Menely Lari-Joni	A.C. Panella	Mina Sirkin
Crys Aguilera	Alima Coleman	Michael Guerrero	Joan Lauricella	Joan Park	Jennifer Skolnick
Byron Aldana	Dolisa Colley	Elizabeth Haegelin	Jennifer Leong	Monick Paul	Betty Smith
Katayoun Alidadi	Nina Combella	Roger Halfhide	Tally Levine	Ellen Peck	Michael Snider
William Allende	Eugene Coe	Matthew Hall	Michelle Lieberman	Adalberto Pena	Sarah Soifer
Shawn Allison	Henry Corral	Jessica Hanna	Teri Lim	Noah Perez-Silverman	Mario Solis
Martha Alvarez	Shaun Crosner	Lucy Haro	Sam Lucas	Elizabeth Perry	Gail Solo
Azi Amirteymoori	Shirley Cruz	LaShon Harris	Dora Luna	Lauren Petkin	Barbara Soto
Carolina Andrade	Liza Cunanan	Wendy Harte	Fernando Luna	Nina Poladian	Alexandra Sparling
Tammy Andrews	Magdalena Cuprys	Majid Hashemi	Julie Luna	Dolores Portillo	Laura Steele
Concepcion Arechabala	Miguel Custodio	Ryan Hatch	Mary Lund, Ph.D	Marta Price	Gretchen Stockdale
Evelyn Arias	Martin Daniel	Richard Havel	Molly Madden	Wesley Profit	Kristen Strayhorn
Susan Armendariz	Elizabeth Davey	Katie Heersema	Magda Madrigal	Carmen Qualls	Shayna Stuckey
Len Aslanian	Jennifer De La O	Nicole Herft	Heidi Madzar	Wilson Quan	Jinntung Su
Maryam Assadi	Christian DeLaRosa	Nicholas Hermsen	Carolyn Makupson	Shanon Quinley	Michelle Sutton
Jillian Atuegbu	Tanya Dellaca	Jasmin Hernandez	Nathaniel Malavenda	Luisa Quintanilla	Sara Sweeney
Roger Au	Mary Derparseghian	Jeffrey Hernandez	Meredith Manker	Miguel Ramirez	Fahi Takesh
Martha Avila-Alfaro	Angelina De Torres	Nancy Hersman	Dvorah Markman	Melissa Ramirez	Laurie Taylor
Rotimi Ayanbeku	Erica Deutsch	Jose Hidalgo	Angela Martin	Beatriz Ramos	Sharon Taylor
Joelle Bailard	Suzanne Diaz	Morgan Higginson	Yeimi Martinez	Sheela Rao	Mary Test
Kim Baldrige	Twiggy Alvarez	Linda Hillman	Julie McAlarnen	Marietta Raqueno	Brett Thorsteinson
Kelli Ballard	Brian Dieter	Colleen Hilton	Enid McCrary	Patricia Rayos	Golden Thrower
Mercedes Barajas	Kathleen Dillon	Julie Ho	James McCullaugh	Gita Reddy	David Tipton
Kimberly Bardales	Marina Dini	Ruth Holt	Angela McGill	Terry Riggins	Rebecca Torres
Thomas Barnes	Tina Doshi	Iran Hopkins	Linda McGuire	Laura Rigoli	Julian Treves Sigal
Anahid Barsegian	John Douglas	Cynthia Hunt	Kathren Mcknight	Juan Rivas	Loene Trubkin
Sherril Beissner	Karnig Dukmajian	Elizabeth Inglese	Sydney Mehringer	Michelle Rivero	Christine Twining
Esi Benyarku	Emily Edelman	Gabrielle Jackson-Lewis	Michelle Mello	Lynette Berg Robe	Yohandra Ugarte
Joy Bily	Kyla Englert	Nikki Jacobson	Dean Mellor	Shirley Roberson	Maryam Vahabzadeh
Leah Bishop	Elizabeth Erickson	Jesse James	Jaime Mendoza	Alicia Roberts	Michelle Valdez
Jeffrey Bollinger	Kathleen Erskine	Val Jespersen-Wheat	Marjorie Mersel	Karen Barlevi Roberts	Louis Valentino
Santina Bowers	Thomas Erspamer	Lexi Jester	Anna Moore	Liliana Rodriguez	Marcela Vazquez
Johnna Boylan	David Ettinger	Eric Johnson	Megan Moore	Toni Rodriguez	Gilbert Velasquez
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Millie Anne Cavanaugh	Francine Gieseke	Kristen Kim	Sanaz Nikbakhsh	Ahda Sands	Carolyn Wilkerson
Frederick Ceely	Heather Golick	Miran Kim	Louise Nixon	Anoush Sarkisyan	Redina Williams
Christine Chang	Maryanne Golsan	Renee King	Ali Nouri	Michael Sarris	Anita Willis
Kelly Chang	Leonora Gorelik	Marcia Kislinger	Fatemeh Nouri	Jennifer Saunders	Adriene Willis
Jessica Charles	Sarah Gorrell	Jesse Koppin	Vimala Nowlis	Ann Savary	Lucille Wilson
Antonio Chavez	Morgan Gower	Dena Kravitz	Socorro Ocampo	Sherrye Scarlett	Michael Wilson
Eleny Christopoulos	James Green	Marcus Kronick	Christine O'Connor	Ruth Scheppers	Melinda Wilson
Nami Chun	David Grenardo	Susan Kussin	Nicole Oganessian	Glen H. Schwartz	Diane Wolf
Sheri Cohen	Jamie Gross	Julie La Beach	Jasmine Ohanian	Judy Schwartz-Behar	Elaine Yang
			Monica Okazaki	Kinisha Scott	Donald Yip
			Karen Ortolani	Etty Shalev	Jennifer Yoo
			Nieves Osaba	John Shaller	Karina York
			Earlene Otero	Katie Shea	Sharon Yossefi
			Susan Padnick	Brian Sheehy	Alesia Young
			Nicole Pagan	Graham Sherr	Ronald Zack
			Ellin Palmer	Neil Sheth	Joy Zopko

Raising Resources to Accomplish the Mission

Theater Benefit 2006

The family law community gathered to salute Hon. Jill Robbins, Hon. John Sandoz, and Katrina Dewey. Event Chair Dan Jaffe began the tribute by saying, "tonight is an opportunity for those of us who have enjoyed some success to give something back. By being here tonight, you're helping make sure that less fortunate individuals will also have access to the promise of equal justice." The event, which included a performance of iWitness at the Mark Taper Forum, raised \$304,000.



(Clockwise from top left) 2006 honorees Hon. Jill Robbins, Hon. John Sandoz and Katherine Dewey; Max Goodman, Cynthia Monaco and Event Chair Daniel Jaffe; Dawn Anfuso, Ron Anfuso, and Patty Kestin; Syna Dennis, Adrienne Byers, 2006 Board President Nedra Jenkins, Ugochi Anaebere, Sandra Anderson and Renee Campbell.

25th Anniversary Dinner 1982–2007

The Center celebrated 25 years of service, raising over \$390,000. The elegant dinner honored co-founders Mablean Ephriam and Joan Patsy Ostroy, as well as the Center's 2006 Volunteer Award recipients. Master of Ceremonies Larry Ginsberg reminded all that it is the dedicated effort of the volunteers that allows the Center "to make sure that everyone in the community has access to high quality legal assistance when they are faced with a crisis in their family."



(Clockwise from top left) Co-founders Mablean Ephriam and Joan Patsy Ostroy; Board member Mary Catherine Bohlen (far left) and Advisory Council Chair Judith R. Forman (second from right) with their guests; Judy Bogen, Neal Hersh and Executive Director Betty Nordwind; Senior Client Assistant Karina Estrella, Sheriff Lee Baca and Staff Attorney Amy Goldman.

Buhai Blues Brunch 2006

Over 300 guests enjoyed the Center's Seventh Annual Blues Brunch at the House of Blues on November 12, 2006. Organized by co-chairs Laura Wasser, Fahi Takesh and Susan Wiesner, the event featured the music of Michael Des Barres and raised \$106,000 of much needed funds for the Center's programs protecting victims of domestic violence and improving the well-being of children in poverty.



(Clockwise from top left) Michael Des Barres entertains from stage; Noel and Diane Applebaum with Michael Miskei; The gang from Cohen, Miskei & Mowrey enjoy the show; Staff Attorney Rachel Kronick Rothbart with daughter Hayley, 2006 Board members Fahi Takesh, Larry Ginsberg, Susan Wiesner with daughter Jane, and Rob Levine.

Buhai Blues Brunch 2007

On Veteran's Day, 2007, supporters packed the House of Blues to enjoy a morning of good food and good music, all for a great cause, donating over \$103,000 to the Center. From the stage, a grateful client thanked the Center for helping her protect her daughter from threats of kidnapping and abuse, providing just more one example of how everyday the Center empowers disadvantaged people and gives them a meaningful voice in court.



(Clockwise from top left) M.C. Sungaila, Kathy Jonas, and Scott and Darlene Mowrey; Kristen Howard, Darryl Easter and Board member Carolyn Makupson; David Blumethal and Board member Tracy Farryl Katz (far right) share a table with colleagues from Gursej Schneider & Co.; Board member Eric Johnson and family.

in memoriam



Lester Buhai

Lester Buhai, brother of Harriett Buhai, was a man who enjoyed life, and was committed to social justice. He had a successful career in advertising, and along with his interests in art, the theater, and travel, the Center, named after his sister, had a special place in his heart. Former Board member Jeff Buhai, his nephew, says of Lester, "He believed in what the Center stood for and what the Center did. He was very proud of how it had grown and developed over the years, and was heartened by how many people the Center helped." Famous for his wit and humor, Lester brought laughter and smiles through his funny cartoons, answering machine messages and Valentine's Day cards. His cousin and major Center supporter, Gene LePere, says of him, "Lester was a very gentle, strong, and clever man. He drew people to him. He loved the Center and thought it was a fitting tribute to his sister. He respected her and the work she did."



Stephen Cohen

A founding partner and well-regarded, experienced forensic accountant in the dynamic firm of Cohen, Miskei & Mowrey, LLP, Steve Cohen had a gift for friendship. It was this ability of connecting with others that led him to philanthropy. His wife Angel says "Other people's pain and loss resonated with him and he wanted to lighten their loads."

Steve's compassion combined with his sense of community made him a valuable ally of the Center. His partner Michael Miskei says "Steve understood he had a responsibility in life, to be a good steward and citizen in addition to a loving family man and a financial success. He was someone who recognized that he had a duty in life that extended beyond the people he knew." Leading the way at his firm in support of the Center because of his belief in its effectiveness and its mission, the Steve Cohen legacy is ably carried on by his partners.



Don Gurse

Donald Gurse was a Renaissance Man. With an abundance of talent, humor, and intelligence, he accomplished a lot and gave much in his life. A bundle of energy, Don had wide ranging interests and involvements from sailing and fishing to law. Fortunately for many, the charitable concerns of the Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law were high on Don's list.

With ingenuity, Don transformed his chosen profession of accounting into a career of challenge and innovation, pioneering the field of litigation-based forensic accounting. In 1979 Gurse merged his practice with that of CPA Stan Schneider, forming Gurse Schneider & Co., giving rise to a full service enterprise that today has more than 120 accountants and staff. Don was a teacher and mentor by instinct, and, as described by his partner Stan Schneider, a "leader by example," for several generations of accountants and many family law attorneys. He leaves behind a legacy of love, friendship and admiration as well as significant contribution to the field of family law.

our donors

The following individuals, firms, and businesses made generous donations to the Center during 2006 and 2007. Each donor is listed only once, reflecting the cumulative giving during this period.

\$40,000 +

Ms. Gene LePere
Sorrell and Linda Trope

\$20,000 +

Law Offices of Judith R. Forman, P.C.
Harris - Ginsberg LLP
Jaffe and Clemens
Hon. Jill S. Robbins (Ret.) and
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David Wilstein

\$10,000 +

Cohen, Miskei & Mowrey LLP

Gurse, Schneider & Co. LLP
Kolodny & Anteau
Law Offices of Makupson
& Howard, APC

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\$5,000 +

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& Schroff
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Randolph & Associates
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Law Offices of Lynn Soodik, A
Professional Corporation
Cori B. Steinberg, Esq.
Susan Steinhauer and
Dan Greenberg
Taylor and Lieberman, ACC
Bunny Wasser and Howard Bernstein
White, Zuckerman, Warsavsky, Luna,
Wolf & Hunt
Stevie Wonder

\$2,500 +

Allred, Maroko & Goldberg
Honey Kessler Amado
Kappy Bristol
Broadway Federal Bank, f.s.b.
Law Offices of Vera Brown-Curtis
Jeff Buhai and Suzanne Rosenblatt
Valerie and Bradford Cohen
Law Offices of
Emily Shappell Edelman
Mablean Ephriam
Epson America, Inc.
Mercedes Fresno
Girardi / Keese
Patricia Glaser and Sam Mudie
Glassman, Browning, Saltzman
& Jacobs, Inc.
Linda S. Gross
Michael A. Guerrero, A Professional
Law Corporation
Elliot Handler
Terry M. Hargrave, CPA/ABV,CFE,
Hargrave & Hargrave, CPAs

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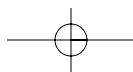
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	2007	2006
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Support		
Government contracts	604,657	477,951
Foundations	65,103	81,468
Special events	477,006	372,272
Foundations legal	135,656	146,480
Individuals	78,780	21,779
Client donations	2,693	2,287
Total Support	1,363,895	1,102,237
Revenue		
Third-party contracts	206,460	243,366
Manual sales	10,450	9,426
Investment income	23,292	16,330
Total Revenue	240,202	269,122
Donated Services	1,542,298	887,956
Total Support and Revenue	3,146,395	2,259,315
Expenses		
Program Services: Family Law Legal Aid	2,601,740	1,858,397
Supporting Services:		
General Administrative and Fundraising	407,851	374,536
Total Expenses	3,009,591	2,232,933
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	136,804	26,382
Net Assets, Beginning of year	772,532	746,150
Increase (Decrease) in net assets	136,804	26,382
Net Assets, end of the year	909,336	772,532



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We protect victims of domestic violence and improve the well-being of children living in poverty. With the help of volunteers, the Center provides free family law assistance and legal education to the poor. We strive to empower people in need and assure them meaningful access to the courts.

our vision

We aspire to create a community where poverty is not a barrier to those who seek to resolve critical family law matters.

