

community.justice.center | news

The Year in Review

by Melissa A. Gertz, Esq.
Executive Director

The Community Justice Center has seen some incredible “firsts” in 2010, including the welcoming of its 100th client in March, just one year after opening its doors; receiving its first substantial grants, thanks to the generous support of the Bunbury Company and the Princeton Area Community Foundation; having its first law student summer intern; and getting awesome, new t-shirts!

The Community Justice Center has earned itself the role of a legal consultant and referral source, especially among those who assist veterans and the homeless. We have collaborated with many area organizations serving similar populations, allowing us to meet with clients closer to their homes, or within the walls of the homeless shelters, in spaces already comfortable and accessible to them. When necessary, in-home visits are made for the homebound and geographically isolated as well.

Awareness of the Community Justice Center’s services in the legal community and the media has increased as well. I was invited to write the cover story for the American Bar Association’s publication, *The Young Lawyer. From Aspiring to Inspiring* was published in January 2010. Locally, I was invited to write part of the cover story, *What Would You Teach the You of Yesteryear? Social Activist Melissa Gertz: How to be Practical*, published in the August 18, 2010 edition of *U.S.1*. These articles and others, including Mae Kaemmerlen’s May 27, 2010 column in the Trenton Times, can be found on our website.

In May, I was thrilled to find out that I was being awarded the *2010 Young Lawyer Service to the Community Award!* I headed down to the annual New Jersey State Bar Association Convention in Atlantic City to accept the Award, receiving special congratulatory accolades from the Rutgers School of Law-Newark Alumni Reception. Looking ahead to 2011, invitations to speak and participate on panels at Princeton University and Rutgers School of Law-Newark have already been accepted, with plenty more to come.

There is no doubt that the current economic climate has hit the City of Trenton and its surrounding areas especially hard. We are expecting to see a surge in client need as other sources of relief disappear. Your continued support is crucial to our ability to meet this demand. If you have not done so already, please visit our website, and join our Facebook page and mailing list by emailing community.justice.center@gmail.com.



The Best of Burlington County

by Lisa A. Turowsky

As Disability Rights Advocate, I have introduced the Community Justice Center’s services to organizations that provide assistance to people in need in Burlington County, including Early Intervention Services of Virtual Memorial Hospital, a unit that identifies and assists families and children age three through six with developmental or physical issues, CONTACT of Burlington County, a suicide prevention hotline that connects people in crisis with mental health care providers, and Family Service of Burlington County, a multifaceted mental health treatment center. I have also participated in various events held at Fort Dix for service-members, veterans, and their families.



Lisa A. Turowsky and Lisa Hayes,
of Family Success Center of Burlington County

Lisa Hayes, of the Family Success Center of Burlington County—an organization that strengthens families by offering assistance to job seekers, a food pantry, case management, transportation, and a host of support groups—has been integral to our expansion into Burlington County, by helping to link disabled individuals with us and, more importantly, by providing meeting space for those unable to travel to Trenton. To date, we have represented 10 people in Burlington County, and have provided brief service to many others, with plans to increase these numbers in 2011.

On Any Given Day...

by Siobhan A. Nolan, Rutgers-Newark, '12
Summer 2010 Intern



Siobhan A. Nolan

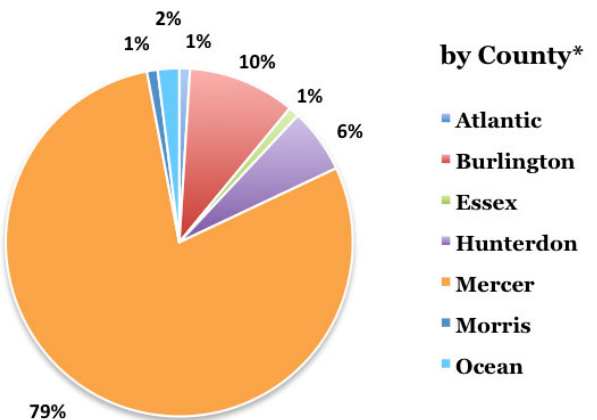
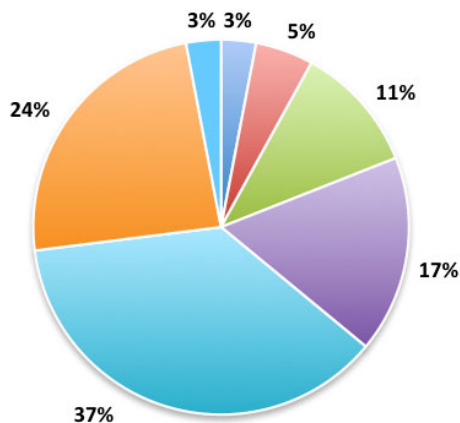
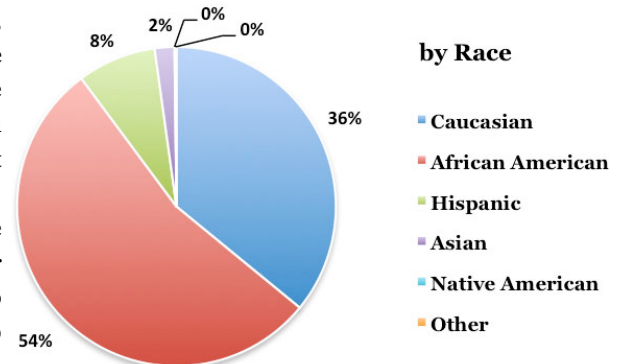
... at the Community Justice Center, you could talk to someone who served in Vietnam and has Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), someone with a debilitating disease like Multiple Sclerosis, someone who was so badly abused by a spouse that there are entire folders of medical records detailing the horror, or someone with a severe mental illness like schizophrenia. Never lacking in variety, the unifying characteristic is that the Community Justice Center clients all come from low-income backgrounds, and need help with disability-related issues. Many have even become homeless as a result of their medical conditions. To some, receiving monthly disability payments may seem like nothing, but to these clients, it is literally life-changing. Disability benefits can mean the difference between clients living on the street or in their own homes.

I am grateful to the Community Justice Center for letting me share in their mission to serve the underserved. Throughout my time there, I developed a sense of the importance of legal services dedicated to veterans and the disabled, two categories of people often overlooked in the traditional legal realm. Being able to meet and talk with clients on a daily basis provided me with a unique perspective that many other legal interns unfortunately do not get to experience. I was able to get to know so many clients and familiarize myself with their stories and hardships, each one unique. The role that the Community Justice Center plays is critical and the need for this kind of legal representation is becoming more and more evident in today's society. It has been rewarding to be involved in such a progressive line of work. Interning at the Community Justice Center has definitely helped solidify my dedication to working in the field of public interest law.

Any Way You Slice It, We're Reaching the Community

The Community Justice Center assists the low-income disabled (that is, 175% of the poverty level or below), with an emphasis on veterans and the homeless. In addition to full representation and brief service, the Community Justice Center provides trainings and information sessions upon request to area agencies, government units, and consumer-run support groups.

Demand for services has been high. Represented below is the demographic spectrum of the Community Justice Center's 130 clients for which it provides full representation (from inception in March 2009 to September 2010). Brief services have been provided to approximately 30 people, and information and referrals have been provided to more than 300 people.



*Please note that roughly half of CJC's clients are homeless—they have been included in the county in which they receive emergency services.

Walk with the Dreamers, the Believers, the COURAGEOUS, the Cheerful, the Planners, the DOERS, the Successful People with their heads in the clouds and their feet on the ground. Walk with those who have ideals, with ZEST to help and lift, to CREATE and CONTRIBUTE. Let their spirit ignite a fire within you to leave this world better than when you found it. ~ Wilferd A. Peterson

Please remember the Community Justice Center as you plan your year-end giving. In today's tough economic climate, your support is essential to help bridge the gap between the surge in our clients' needs and the decreased endowments and funding opportunities. **From now until December 2011, donate \$50, and you'll receive our inspiring CJC T-Shirt featured to the right (words above).** Or if you would rather have just the shirt, you can purchase it for \$15. All contributions made on or before December 31, 2010 are tax-deductible for this calendar year. Visit www.nj-communityjusticecenter.org for information on how to donate, including online via Paypal. Thank you for your support!



Our Support

Key to our success has been the generous financial support, talent, and time from our donors. Thanks to each and every one of you for believing in the Community Justice Center and the vital role it plays in the health and well-being of Central New Jersey's low-income disabled and veterans. Special thanks to Frank Connell and the **Tir Na Nog**, 1324 Hamilton Avenue in Hamilton, who hosted our Barbeque & Beer Benefit on July 8, 2010, and to all of the musicians who graced the stage and entertained us all. We hope to see everyone again next year!

Acorns (\$1-\$249)

Afam Akamelu
Linda & Jim Ake
Shammi Bhatia
Sean Chappe
Susan Dumas
Carol & Bob Foster
Richard Foster
Patty & Eric Gertz
George Hanley
Sharon Hughes
Linda Ialacci
Andrea Kanefsky
Lee & Laurie Kalb Kaswiner
Timothy Korzun
Anne Labate
Jeanne Matusky
Michael McKenna
Ed & Ellen Murtha
Lisa Nickels
Sondra Obstein
Debra Owens & Herman Kummeler
Monica Parsons
Al Pontani
Dennis & Penelope Rodgers
Patricia Sayles
Sandy & Steve Stein
Atakorn Tangtrakul
Paul Tractenberg
James Trowbridge
William & Christina V. Harvey

Seedlings (\$250-\$499)

James Pope and Nancy Marks
Harold Stuart

Saplings (\$500-\$999)

Nicholas McClary

Oaks (\$1,000+)

Michael Kozlowski

Corporate (Fundraiser Support)

Applebee's
Best Buy
BJ's Wholesale Club
C'est Cheese
Dublin Square Pub
The Home Depot
Luggage Factory of Flemington
Macaroni Grill
Olive Garden
Pennington Quality Market
P.F. Chang's
Pizza Hut
Rosedale Mills
Shoprite of Flemington
Staples
Starbucks
TGIFriday's
Trader Joe's
Wegman's

In-Kind

Shandiya Bynum
Daniel Coleman
John Coursey
Shaun Ellis
Kristin Frasier
Eric Gertz
L.S. Gertz
Melissa A. Gertz
Tom Glover
Erik Greb
Innotech Support Solutions
Joe Kildea
Mohel Elliott Bauer & Gass CPAs PA
Matt Pillischer
Justin Pope
Tir Na Nog
Thakoon Tangtrakul
James Trowbridge
Lisa A. Turowsky

Foundational Support

The Bunbury Company
Community Foundation
of New Jersey, The Mercer Fund
Princeton Area Community
Foundation

I enjoy being a part of the Community Justice Center's Board of Trustees because the CJC provides such a necessary and important service to the members of my community. As a plaintiff's personal injury lawyer, I see first-hand how important it is to seek compensation for injuries tragically inflicted upon innocent victims. The CJC provides a voice for these members of society, who are denied disability benefits, by bringing petitions for these necessary benefits. I commend their efforts and I am happy to serve on the Board.

~ Christina Vassiliou Harvey, Esq., Lomurro, Davison, Eastman and Muñoz

Barbeque & Beer Benefit July 8, 2010

More pictures on our Facebook page!

Clockwise from Top Left:

1. Our Wonderful Supporters
2. Kristin Frasier & L. S. Gertz
3. High Hearts, featuring Justin Pope, Shaun Ellis, John Coursey, & Matt Pillscher, Esq. Check them out at www.highhearts.com!
4. Erik Greb
5. Danny Coleman, emcee Tom Glover, & Joe Kildea
6. IT Consultant Thakoon Tangtrakul & Melissa A. Gertz



310 W. State Street, 3rd Floor
Trenton, NJ 08618