At a recent court hearing, 16 year old Makayla testified about the terrible abuse she had suffered at the hands of her father. Makayla was always afraid. By age 12, Makayla and her mother were in temporary housing and when her mother died just a year later, Makayla drifted from one relative to another. She chose homelessness at age 15, living on the streets, trying to get to school each day . . .
Dear Friend,

At a recent court hearing, 16 year old Makayla testified about the horrible abuse she had suffered at the hands of her father. Makayla’s father denied the family food. He beat Makayla and her mother, and Makayla says she was always afraid. By age 12, Makayla and her mother had escaped and were in temporary housing. When her mother died just a year later, Makayla drifted from one relative to another.

Makayla chose homelessness at age 15, living on the streets, trying to get to school each day and getting into a lot of trouble. It’s no surprise that fights at school got Makayla expelled. And her arrest for fighting landed her in the state’s juvenile justice system. No assessments, no supports, no attention to the causes of Makayla’s behavior.

Each child we represent teaches us more about the systems that are supposed to support our most vulnerable children and youth.

Children of color are much more likely to be arrested and locked up than white children who commit the same offense. We have been working hard to end that disparity, encouraging police and the school systems to use local resources and supports to get youth the help they need to live successfully in the community.

Our advocacy helped Makayla transition from juvenile lock-up to a stable foster home. She’s getting attentive mental health care to help her deal with the tragedies she has lived with. Educational support is helping her focus at school.

We have so much gratitude to those of you who help fund our work. Your donations allow us to keep our promises to children who need someone they can count on. Your generosity has helped so many abused and neglected children. Their stories are often frightening and too many children are desperate for our help.

You have helped us improve the state systems these kids depend upon, changing policies and practices to provide the supports that allow children to hope for a future so much better than the life they know.

You make it possible. Thank you.

Martha Stone
Executive Director

Douglas Colosky
Board Chair
Huge Legislative Wins for Connecticut’s Most Vulnerable Kids!

**Four New Laws Written by the Center**

The Center’s enormous legislative successes this year included passage of four significant laws for children and youth critically in need of support.

**Closing the Educational Gap for Thousands of Children in State Care**

The thousands of children in foster care or juvenile justice supervision are some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children in the state. Many have been abused, neglected or abandoned. They have high rates of absenteeism, academic failure, special education needs, and disciplinary issues.

The new law created a Raise the Grade pilot in three districts to identify children who perform substantially below grade level and ensure that they’ll get assistance to improve their academic performance.

**Securing Screening for Abused and Neglected Babies**

Fifty percent of children removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect showed significant developmental and social-emotional delays, but only 5 to 8 percent actually received early intervention services.

This new law requires universal screening. Every abused and neglected infant or toddler will be regularly screened for developmental and social-emotional delays, and referred to the state’s early intervention program as needed. This can dramatically reduce their need for services later in life.

**Reforming Alternative Schools to Help High Risk Students**

Students who attend alternative school programs are a high need, high-risk group, yet the state has no set standards for their education. Simple information, like how many programs exist and how many students attend, is unknown.

New legislation mandates state evaluation of all alternative education programs statewide by February 2014. This is just the beginning of our goal to ensure uniform educational quality statewide for every student.

**Allowing Homeless Youth to Access Birth Certificates**

There are hundreds of homeless teens in Connecticut who want to enroll in school, get a job, or sign up for a job training program - but they have been unable to get the documents they need to enroll or submit an application.

New legislation allows homeless youth over age 15 to secure their own future. They can now get a copy of their birth certificate with help from a school ‘homeless liaison’ or a shelter provider, without a parent’s or guardian’s consent.
Test Results Demonstrate Academic Success of Desegregation

The Center continues as lead counsel in Sheff v. O’Neill, the state’s landmark school desegregation lawsuit originally filed in 1989. As a result of the latest settlement agreement, five new magnet schools were opened, adding to the 34 already opened as a result of Sheff.

The recent release of test scores of children in magnet and suburban schools clearly demonstrates that students enrolled in choice programming opportunities perform at higher levels than students enrolled in Hartford’s public schools.

New Office at Yale-New Haven Hospital Center Expands Access to Legal Assistance for Patients

The Center’s new Medical-Legal Partnership office at Yale-New Haven Hospital gives patients and medical practitioners easy access to legal services that provide real relief to families.

The new office is the fifth Connecticut location for the Center’s Medical-Legal Partnership, improving children’s health outcomes by helping families with basic needs such as stable and safe housing, access to mental health screening, access to benefits, and understanding employment law and education rights.

Poverty should not be a roadblock to good health
Major Reforms Prevent School PushOut

School pushout is the result of overly harsh disciplinary practices and inadequate educational services that take a devastating and disproportionate toll on African-American and Latino students. High stakes testing has increased incentives for schools to push out underperforming students - increasing schools’ standardized test scores and graduation rates.

The Center addressed four major areas of reform this past year:

**Legislation begins reform of alternative school programs**

New legislation written by the Center requires the Department of Education to complete an evaluation of every alternative program. Students must get a quality education and the support they need to stay in school.

**Litigation closes the educational achievement gap**

Hartford school children can now choose from 39 magnet schools and 24 suburban districts, and test data from those schools shows that integration works. Thirty-seven percent of Hartford students attended integrated schools during last school year.

**Advocacy reduces school-based arrests**

Reports show that students of color are arrested much more often than white students who commit the same offense. Remarkable success in Bridgeport and Hartford has substantially reduced school-based arrests. With the Center’s help, Bridgeport and Hartford schools have de-escalated behavior problems without resorting to arrest and school-based arrest rates decreased 34% in Bridgeport and 57% in Hartford.

**Policy reform limits suspensions and expulsions**

Students of color are suspended or expelled far more often than white students, and school discipline policies have been overly punitive and full of zero tolerance language. The Center worked with Bridgeport and Stamford to reform the schools’ Codes of Conduct and eliminate the opportunity for subjective and wildly disparate discipline decisions.
Enormous Influence Reflected in Media

Washington Post

Study: Impact of Unaddressed Mental Health Issues on Students is Severe

Mental health is one of those topics that Americans don’t like to talk about much, unless it is forced into public view by tragedies . . In the area of school reform, the mental health of students has been ignored . . despite the irrefutable fact that sick kids have a hard, if not impossible, time learning in class. But the consequences of failing to address mental health issues in students go well beyond academic problems, as a 2013 study reveals. The study, called “Blind Spot: The Impact of Missed Early Warning Signs on Children’s Mental Health,” was written by Andrea M. Spencer, dean of the School of Education at Pace University in New York and educational consultant to the Center for Children’s Advocacy.

National Public Radio

Are Schools Too Quick to Remove Kids for Their Behavior?

Shocking data from the State Department of Education shows that one thousand children age 6 or under were suspended from school in Connecticut last year . . a disproportionate number . . are black or Hispanic, from low-income districts with high rates of poverty and unemployment. Center for Children’s Advocacy attorney Kathryn Meyer says clients who are low income children of color often have underreported mental health needs and developmental delays. A teacher called the police because one of her clients, a five year old boy, was misbehaving in class. Some schools are calling parents to pick up their children early 4 or 5 days a week . . and the parents lose their jobs because they have to leave to get their children.

Education Week

Hartford Schools and Civil Rights Officials Agree on Services for ELLs

Six years after (the Center for Children’s Advocacy) first filed a complaint about inadequate services for refugee students and English-learners in Hartford’s school system, civil rights officials with the U.S. Department of Education have hammered out a resolution to address those concerns with Connecticut’s largest school district. In a 15-page resolution agreement with the Education Department’s Office for Civil Rights, Hartford’s education leaders have agreed to a prescribed set of actions and reporting requirements to ensure that refugee students and immigrant children who are English-language learners are properly identified . . (and can) access mainstream, academic content courses.

CT Public Television

The Color of Justice

There’s a disturbing fact about the juvenile justice system in Connecticut and across the country: the majority of juveniles confined are youth of color. Though nationwide surveys show that young people of all races commit the same crimes with the same frequency, children of color are more likely to be arrested, referred to court, and held longer in detention. The Color of Justice . . examines the reasons behind this apparent racial bias and the efforts being made to repair the problem decision points in Connecticut’s system. The documentary interviews local judicial personnel, law enforcement, service providers, children’s advocates (including Center for Children’s Advocacy executive director Martha Stone), parents and kids to understand the issue from all perspectives and reveal where reforms can be made.

Much more media coverage at www.kidscounsel.org/news
Connecticut Mirror

DCF Failing Foster Children Educationally

After running away from her abusive family, Crystal spent years attending school at the group homes where the state sent her to live. She knows the education foster children get when the state is your parent. The quality of the education provided in non-traditional settings for abused and neglected foster children—and the lack of monitoring of their educational progress—is coming under fire by both child advocates and a prominent state legislator.

The Department of Children and Families has been under federal court oversight for two decades for failing too many children in its custody. The court monitor’s most recent quarterly review of the agency cited gaps.

“The failure of these kids is shown on their report cards,” Martha Stone, a lawyer who represents foster children, told the state’s Achievement Gap Task Force. “They are failing... There are thousands of these kids.”

Connecticut Law Tribune

Agreement Keeps School Rule Breakers Out of Court

Minor offenses are to be dealt with by educators, not prosecutors. The latest agreement is expected to dramatically reduce the number of young people arrested at school for non-violent offenses. A disproportionate number were minority students, said Martha Stone, executive director of the Center for Children’s Advocacy. Stone said the new agreement is an important step in reducing the number of minority students referred to court. “Your race or ethnicity shouldn’t determine how you’re handled in the juvenile justice system,” Stone said.

OP-EDs Hartford Courant

Make Alternative Schools Accountable

By Leon Smith, Center for Children’s Advocacy

A bill pending in the General Assembly aimed at making virtually unregulated alternative schools accountable should be passed. Far too many students are falling behind and dropping out due to being pushed out of mainstream high schools and relegated to sub-standard alternative school programs. Yet the state doesn’t do little to ensure that these alternative programs provide the education these students deserve.

Screening Kids for Mental Health Critical

By Jay Sicklick, Center for Children’s Advocacy

The shootings in Newtown, Chicago and other communities raised concerns about mental health relative to those committing such crimes, but the discussion has missed a critically important point. Screening for early warning signs and providing accessible mental health services and supports as early as possible has lifelong, multi-generational consequences for children and their families. Our observations increasingly suggest that the futures of children will continue to be destroyed if we do not take advantage of a vital opportunity to adequately address their mental health.

CT Latino News

Alternative High Schools Operate with Little State Oversight

The state’s Latino legislators have introduced a bill calling for a definition for an alternative school. Raised House Bill 6504, originally introduced by state Rep. Jason Rojas, D-East Hartford also calls for clarity on what these schools offer. According to Rojas, the initiative came out of talks he had with the Center for Children’s Advocacy. He said some alternative school programs are high quality, but others are not. Since the state does not track their success, it is hard to know what is happening.

Much more media coverage at www.kidscounsel.org/news
Educational Accommodations for Student with Sickle Cell Disease

Rachel started college this year. She faces special challenges because her sickle cell disease requires some accommodations. Rachel must be able to communicate quickly when there is a medical crisis — usually severe pain that requires hospitalization.

The college was aware of Rachel’s condition, but had not made efforts to support her. Her occasional absences from class were not due to her ill health. The Center, a particular focus on protecting the rights of disabled students, was eager to ensure that Rachel had the accommodations she needed.

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires the school to provide accommodations to help Rachel. With the Center’s help this past year, the school developed a meaningful, workable plan to help Rachel in a medical crisis.

Every student has the right to ADA accommodations. The Americans with Disabilities Act was enacted to ensure that schools, day care centers, camps, mental health centers (among others) cannot turn a child away on the basis of disability. Yet, children with disabilities such as sickle-cell disease, cerebral palsy, or Type 1 diabetes are often turned away from these programs.

The Center has a particular focus on protecting the rights of disabled children. Our attorneys offer training seminars and educational materials to help attorneys, families, and organizations understand the complexities of the ADA.

The Center has a particular focus on protecting the rights of disabled children. Our attorneys offer training seminars and educational materials to help attorneys, families, and organizations understand the complexities of the ADA.
Jadon has an extensive history of abuse and neglect.

The family trauma Jadon has lived with made every day an overwhelming challenge. Jadon struggled at home and struggled at school. When he did get to school, staff treated him badly and Jadon was teased and bullied by his classmates.

When the Center for Children’s Advocacy first met Jadon last April, he was 8 years old and living with an aunt whose health was unstable. She had little ability to care for Jadon. Extreme emotional and educational neglect, along with family instability, had already caused Jadon to miss 100 days of school.

The Center immediately brought in a trauma expert to develop a plan. Jadon needed support from someone he could depend on each day. We advocated with DCF to get Jadon placed in a stable and supportive foster home. We worked with the school to get Jadon placed in a smaller program with staff who are knowledgeable about children who have suffered trauma. Mental health services are helping Jadon learn to manage his behavior and the smaller class size helps with academics. We continue to meet with Jadon to assure that his progress continues.

So many children like Jadon need our help.

The Center’s deputy director, Jay Sicklick, spearheaded a state task force on behavioral health screening as part of every child’s annual primary care visit. The goal of Connecticut’s Task Force on Medicaid Behavioral Health Screening is early identification and support for at-risk children, ensuring that every at-risk child gets the services needed to provide early intervention for behavioral health concerns, as well as help to stay in school and become stable and self-sufficient members of their communities.

Ariel has cancer.

Her doctors at Connecticut Children’s Medical Center were providing intensive treatment and Ariel’s mother was continually at her bedside. As a single parent, Ariel’s mother was panicked. Her daughter was terribly ill and there was no way she could get to her job each day and still be with Ariel, as she needed to be.

The landlord threatened eviction. A utility shutoff notice arrived in the mail. There was no income for basic needs like food or heat. Bonnie Roswig, the Center’s on-site attorney at Connecticut Children’s Medical Center was called in to help the family.

There are supports available for families with seriously ill children and we worked with the Department of Social Services to expedite an application for Temporary Family Assistance. With this help, Ariel’s mother was able to keep her apartment while she was out of work. We contacted the utility company and helped negotiate an affordable payment arrangement.

Ariel’s leukemia is in remission and she is doing so much better. Her mother returned to work and no longer needs state assistance. Their housing is secure and the utilities are on.

Legal assistance on site at Connecticut’s hospitals.

With Medical-Legal Partnership offices in five locations, the Center makes legal support easily accessible for vulnerable families. On-site referrals from medical practitioners help families resolve issues such as access to healthcare and mental health services, educational support to help children stay in school, and clean and safe housing for families living in poverty.
### Income

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<td>Fees/Contracts</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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- Grants/Contributions: 84%
- Fees/Contracts: 15%
- Other: 1%

### Expense

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<td><strong>1,492,227</strong></td>
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- Programs/Services: 93%
- Office/Administrative: 7%
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Contributions received July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013

<table>
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<th>Category</th>
<th>Contributions</th>
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</thead>
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We apologize for any errors or ommissions. To make corrections to this list, please email jbrady@kidscounsel.org. Thank you.
Awards and Appointments

CT Latino News named the Center for Children’s Advocacy a 2013 Champion of Change. “Center for Children’s Advocacy attorneys represent children and youth in Connecticut’s poorest cities, addressing factors that interfere with their ability to succeed in school. Daily, without a large budget, the attorneys for the Center are Champions of Change for children who have no one else to speak up for them.”

Edwin Colon was selected by The CT Law Tribune among the best and the brightest for the class of 2013’s New Leaders in the Law. The CT Law Tribune selected Edwin from over 300 nominees.

Sarah Eagan, former Director of the Center’s Child Abuse Project, was appointed as Connecticut’s new Child Advocate.

Jay Sicklick was appointed co-chair of Connecticut’s Task Force on Medicaid Behavioral Health Screening in Primary Care.

Bonnie Roswig was appointed to represent the children’s voice on Connecticut’s Health Insurance Exchange Advisory Committee. The Exchange works to improve the quality of healthcare for Connecticut residents and reduce health disparities. “Attorney Roswig has the qualifications and expertise to be the Advisory Committee’s voice for Connecticut’s children,” said Deputy Insurance Commissioner Anne Melissa Dowling.

Stacey Violante Cote and the Connecticut Team on Runaway and Homeless Youth were honored with the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness “Think Change” award for bringing awareness of the issues facing homeless youth and advocacy on behalf of this population across Connecticut.

Center for Children’s Advocacy received the Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association’s Community Service Award for promoting social change for the benefit of minority groups and advocating on behalf of abused and neglected children, including many of Latino descent.

Hartford Magazine and New Haven Magazine named Martha Stone one of Connecticut’s Most Influential. “Martha Stone . . . was one of the plaintiff’s lawyers in the Sheff vs. O’Neill desegregation case. Her (office) works to protect children who fall through gaps in services for special education, mental health, juvenile justice and abuse. Stone oversees legal representation for hundreds of Connecticut children out of various offices, some in schools and hospitals.”

Alexandra Dufresne was appointed to serve on Connecticut’s Child Fatality Review Panel, reviewing unexplained or unexpected circumstances of the death of any child under the age of 18 who has received services from a state department or agency addressing child welfare, social or human services or juvenile justice.

Martha Stone was appointed to the Connecticut Legislature’s Kids Report Card Leadership Committee. Comprised of the leaders of key partner agencies and organizations, the committee provides the Committee on Children with input needed to identify and promote implementation of strategies that ensure Connecticut’s young people grow up in stable environments, safe, healthy, and ready to lead successful lives.

Kathryn Meyer received a RYASAP “Above and Beyond” Award, which recognizes dedicated service and outstanding commitment to Bridgeport area communities and neighborhoods.

Stacey Violante Cote was selected one of University of Connecticut’s 40 Under 40, a recognition of outstanding graduates who have distinguished themselves as leaders in their profession.
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