

LEGAL AID *of* MARIN

Justice for all



A N N U A L R E P O R T 2 0 1 4

Mission Statement

Legal Aid of Marin's mission is to provide access to the civil justice system, through quality legal services, encompassing practical solutions, to low-income, vulnerable and otherwise underserved residents of Marin County.



LEGAL AID OF MARIN

An asset for the community since 1958

Since 1958, LAM has helped low-income Marin County residents address critical legal issues directly affecting their homes, incomes, jobs and families. Our work protects and serves Marin's most vulnerable residents by providing access to legal justice. We create economic and social impacts that help make Marin County a better place for everyone.

"Individuals exist beneath the surface. Legal Aid of Marin gives people not just a voice, but tangible help when they need it most."

J U D G E R O Y C H E R N U S

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Year in Review

LAM is poised for another great year in 2015. We have 57 years of service to Marin in the books and we are constantly finding new ways to serve our clients and those hungry for legal education. The difference that we make both by teaching people their rights and exercising those rights can be mind-boggling. We positively impact individuals and families every day we are on the job.

In 2014, we settled a class action lawsuit impacting hundreds of low-income residents, we assisted employees to recapture wages and we helped families navigate the family court system. Over 2,000 households were served.

We know that for every \$1,000 spent on free legal services for Marin residents, the community receives a minimum financial benefit of \$7,000. LAM is a positive return on any donor investment.

We established new office hours in Marin City, we have a staff person coordinating the Marin Community Court, we hired a Director of Communications & Development and we leveraged volunteer contributions valued at more than \$2.5 million.

2015 promises to bring even more impact for the whole community as we establish the new State Bar certified Marin Lawyer Referral Service ("MLRS") so that every Marin resident can have guidance to identify an attorney that can help them in any legal matter. This will be the first time LAM is providing a service accessible to the whole community.



PAUL COHEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives."

J A C K I E R O B I N S O N

Every Marin resident deserves financial, domestic and personal security.

Without legal representation,
low-income families risk:

- Discrimination in Housing/Employment
- Foreclosure or Eviction
- Homelessness
- Family Disruption
- Domestic Violence
- Wage Theft
- Unhealthy Homes

With representation by LAM,
low-income families benefit from:

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

ECONOMIC

Financial stability

\$5.0+
MILLION
Wage claims and child support

Reliable housing

\$3.0+
MILLION
Prevention of housing loss

More stable home life

\$0.2
MILLION
Prevention of domestic violence

SOCIAL

Family stability and reduced need for public assistance

More stable **work force** for employers

Increased **school attendance** due to secure home life

Less strain on **court resources** (85% of people in Marin's family court appeared initially without representation)

Longtime LAM volunteer attorney Laura Haley prepares a client for an appearance at Marin Community Court.



On the second Tuesday of each month, St. Vincent's Dining Hall is transformed into an official Marin Superior Court thanks to volunteers like Retired Senior Superior Court Clerk **Hoang Leclerc**, Judge **Beverly Wood** and Bailiff **Vince Simpson**.

MARIN COMMUNITY COURT

Three Years of Success

The award-winning Marin Community Court continues to be the last bastion of hope for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. It started in 2011 as a collaborative project between LAM, the Marin Superior Court and the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Marin County to help the homeless and those at risk of homelessness to clear up citations, **turn lives around and get people back on their feet**. The number of volunteers, participants and pro bono attorneys continues to grow—allowing the special court to blossom into a trusted and valued institution of its own.

INVESTING IN THE MARIN COMMUNITY

2,985 hours of community service completed by **114** participants

UNCLOGGING THE COURT SYSTEM

10 court sessions

322 appearances

235 tickets zeroed out

\$125,000 saved by participants

SOCIAL IMPACT

7 participants obtained veterans services

29 participants completed alternative sentence (sobriety programs, mental health care, veteran services, etc).

"Marin Community Court is reaching a population that is traditionally too intimidated to even think about going to court. Now, they're coming to court on their own initiative and with expectations to solve their legal issues."

MAURA PRENDIVILLE

LAM SENIOR STAFF ATTORNEY
AND PROJECT CO-FOUNDER

ELDER LAW

Empowering Older Adults

To understand the difference LAM can make protecting the legal rights of Marin's older adults, consider the story of Audrey McNamara Nevis.

As a pioneering flight attendant with Trans World Airlines, Audrey dedicated her life to serving and helping others. When she reached retirement, however, her trust was abused by predatory lenders. Her Lucas Valley home was refinanced 15 times. Without any family and facing homelessness at age 81, Audrey, pictured at right throughout her life, came to LAM for help.

LAM helped reach a settlement that **secured housing for the remainder of Audrey's life**, restoring dignity and respect at a time when she needed it most.

OLDER ADULT LAW IMPACT

30% of all LAM clients are **60 or older**

18.9% of Marin residents are 65 or older –the fastest growing population in our county.

LAM provides nearly **2,000 hours** of legal service to older adults each year helping them deal with elder abuse – physical, emotional or financial.

"I don't know what I would have done without LAM. This organization truly is a treasure in our community and I am eternally grateful for all that LAM has done for me."

AUDREY MCNAMARA NEVIS

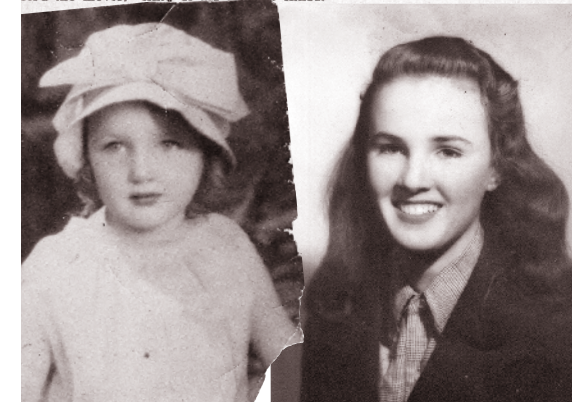
LAM SENIOR CLIENT



Audrey McNamara Nevis



LUCKY HOSTESS Audrey McNamara explains a timetable to Tyrone Power en route from Los Angeles to New York on an Ambassador flight. It was the way for Power as he recently returned from India where he costarred the movie, "King of the Khazars Rifles."



LAM employment team (from left to right) Joanna Shalleck-Klein, Ann Munene and Sandra Esquivias.

Ariana Martinez

EMPLOYMENT LAW

Protecting Low-Wage Workers

LAM's employment law team represents Marin's workers in claims of wage theft, employment discrimination and wrongful termination. We give a full scope of representation for clients who could not otherwise afford an attorney, including low-wage janitorial, domestic and restaurant workers. Since 2012, LAM has partnered with the firms of Chavez & Gertler, Goldstein, Borgen, Dardarian & Ho, and the Stanford Community Law Clinic on litigating a proposed class action suit against the corporation that operates Ross Dress For Less, as well its prime contractor USM, Inc. Led by LAM's Joanna Shalleck-Klein, nearly two years of litigation uncovered an elaborate subcontracting scheme showing how Ross and USM systematically underpaid **hundreds of janitors throughout California**. The case, *Vasquez, et al v. USM, Inc., et al.*, is still active.

EMPLOYMENT LAW IMPACT

LAM recovered more than **\$1.7 million** in settlements and judgments on behalf of workers since 2011

- 103** clients served this year, including
- 44** wage claims
- 18** employee discrimination claims
- 41** other employment issues

"Wage theft clients often come to LAM believing they have no rights. We tell them, 'you did the work and you deserve to be paid.' Educating our clients on their rights is the key."

SANDRA ESQUIVIAS
SUPERVISING LEGAL ASSISTANT

HOUSING LAW

Keeping Marin's Most Vulnerable Citizens in their Homes

Healthier homes, affordable housing, eviction prevention and access to code enforcement continue to be a big focus of LAM's advocacy work. In July, in co-counsel with the San Francisco firm of Sommers and Schwartz, LAM settled a case with the Marin Housing Authority over misallocated rent payments, fees and violations relating to eviction and grievance procedures. After two long years of litigation, more than **1,000 incorrect transactions were refunded** to over **500 Marin tenants** – including Ariana Martinez (above), who was able to stay on track to reach her goal of becoming a physician's assistant.

UNLAWFUL DETAINER SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE IMPACT

Initiated in 2011 to alleviate Marin's fast-growing eviction rate

100% of unrepresented eviction litigants guaranteed attorney advocacy from LAM

85% of cases resolved to avoid trial and possible eviction

"Without LAM, my 11-year-old daughter and I would be facing homelessness. We are grateful to have such an important legal resource as LAM in our community."

ARIANA MARTINEZ
MARIN MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL
AND MOTHER



LAM Staff Attorney Laurie Joyce

FAMILY LAW

Representing Families in Our Community

Among the multiple hundreds of cases that pass through LAM's office each year, the most contentious can be in the emotional area of family law. Divorce, custody disputes, paternity cases, restraining orders— these issues can overwhelm a client with a feeling of helplessness and despair. "A mother came to LAM recently and said she wanted to 'just give up' because she was so intimidated by the family court system," said LAM Staff Attorney Laurie Joyce. "After we assisted her to get the custody results she hoped for, she was so thankful. She had her first good night of sleep in a long time, and said **she finally felt her children were safe.**"

FAMILY LAW IMPACT

Provided family law counseling to
100 low-income families in 2014

Assisted more than **60** families
where head of household spoke little or no English

Resolved child custody for over **60** families

*"Thank you LAM, for informing
me of my rights and keeping my
daughter in my life."*

WILLIE D.

NOVATO FATHER AND LAM CLIENT
MAINTAINED SHARED CUSTODY
OF HIS CHILD

IRMA V. put her life on the line to extinguish a fire ignited in a neighbor's unit at her apartment complex. After incurring medical expenses to treat her injuries, she asked the landlord for help.

When the landlord stonewalled, LAM Staff Attorneys Maura Prendiville and Araceli Ontiveros-Venegas helped Irma file a small claims action against the landlord. The response was immediate.

The landlord paid all of the client's medical expenses and the issue was settled out of court.



Irma V.

Above and Beyond

Some cases can be too complex to fit into one particular program.

To ensure that these cases do not fall between the cracks, LAM staffers often go above and beyond their areas of specialty.



Lovely Nakooka with her newborn son

LOVELY NAKOOKA suffered a childhood of neglect and abuse in foster care, ending up homeless at age 17. After 8 years on the Section 8 voucher waiting list, a pregnant Lovely came to LAM for help.

LAM successfully appealed for her eligibility, securing housing benefits for Lovely just in time for the arrival of her newborn son. To celebrate, Senior Staff Attorney Maura Prendiville coordinated a baby shower in LAM's offices, providing Lovely with baby toys and much-needed supplies.

San Rafael-based attorney **Matthew Briggs** conferring with a Marin Community Court client

VOLUNTEERS AND PRO BONO ATTORNEYS

Making a difference for the public good

LAM has a growing network of pro bono attorneys and community volunteers that has been a part of the organization since it was founded in 1958.

LAM's pro bono program is managed by Nancy Murphy, who for the past 28 years has partnered with hundreds of attorneys and dozens of law firms from Santa Rosa to Silicon Valley, helping an average of 500 clients each year. "We are able to help a lot of people, even if only a little bit," said Murphy.

LEGAL SERVICES

264 attorneys volunteered more than **4,000 hours** in 2013

COMMUNITY SERVICES

98 non-attorneys volunteered more than **5,000 hours** in 2013

IN-KIND VALUE

2013 = **\$2,528,388**
2012 = **\$2,270,358**

"The law is complex and daunting enough even for lawyers, and altogether unwieldy for poor, marginalized families and individuals. Volunteering at LAM transforms the law for these people from a burden into something useful, powerful and above all, beneficial."

CHARLES R. OSTERTAG

PRINCIPAL OF ALAMERE LAW
& LAM PRO BONO ATTORNEY

LEGAL AID OF MARIN 2013 PRO BONO ATTORNEYS AND VOLUNTEERS

Lauress Ackman	Henry Froneberger	Emily Levitan	Michael Samuels
Maureen Alger	Jessica Garrett Swanson	Carl Lippenberger	William Saul
Ian Anderson	Jonathan Gertler	Eliot Lippman	Barrett Schaefer
Jennifer Ani	Marlene Getchell	Michael Lopez	Nestor Schnasse
Doug Armstrong	Andrew Giacomini	Scott Lueders	William Schoen
Ben Asch	Matt Gluck	Jay Luther	Jeff Schoppert
Gordon Atkinson	Patrice Goldman	Liwen Mah	Aurelia Schulz
Louis Barella	Johanna Gomez	Goli Mahdavi	Roberta Schwarz
Matthew Z. Barrett	Sharon Green	Diana Maier	Kristen Scott
Adam Bentley	Sandra Groven	Russell Marne	Rena Sera
Luisa Bigornia	Alison Gude	Lori Mason	Javier Serrano
Teghan Binnings	Joel Gumbiner	Chris McDermott	Brent Seymour
Cory Birnberg	Stephen Gustavson	Rebecca McGuire	Neha Shah
Debra Bogaards	Laura Haley	Patrick McMahon	Colleen Shaw
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Kadhine Fitz-Patrick	Jacqueline Lee	Malcolm Ruthven	Michael Yongue
Michael Flynn	Don Lesser	Mary Sackett	Natasha Zaslove
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Every effort was made to include all 2013 Pro Bono attorneys and volunteers.

Thank You

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Isabel Allende, Willie C. Gordon and Ethel Seiderman (pictured here at LAM's Tip Your Hat For Justice event) are among many loyal LAM supporters whose generosity makes a direct impact in our community.

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Peter E. Haas, Jr. has been a supporter and champion of several LAM projects including the Marin Healthy Homes Project and the Marin Community Court.

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RETIRING



LAM Administrator Jan Baldwin

JAN BALDWIN is retiring after 14 years as Administrator. Jan kept LAM moving forward with integrity, a commitment to excellence and an eye on the bottom line. She has been the go-to person for both professional and personal inquiries.

LAM wishes Jan well as she retires to her art and other pursuits. Jan is beloved throughout the LAM family.



Neal Simon and his wife Nancy

NEAL SIMON created and supervised LAM's social work program to support our work in Dependency Law.

For more than 20 years, Neal trained and mentored dozens of social work students from San Francisco State and U.C. Berkeley. LAM benefitted from Neal's expertise in the handling of multiple other cases involving clients in crisis. Neal will continue his work at Marin General Hospital and spend more time with his family.

"There is no instruction book at the courthouse. What we do at LAM is obtain justice for those running the gauntlet we call the court system. LAM protects the dignity and legal rights of the most vulnerable, which improves and protects our entire community."

JONATHAN GERTLER
LAM BOARD PRESIDENT

Jonathan has been a LAM board member for more than 10 years, and was elected as the new LAM Board President beginning in 2014.



LAM Board President Jonathan Gertler

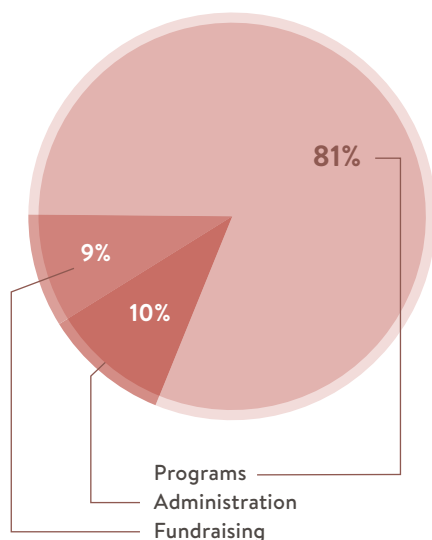
INCOME	2012	2013
In-Kind Support/Volunteer Legal Services	\$2,266,340	\$2,528,225
Cash & Cash Equivalents	820,617	758,742
Investments/Reserves	248,788	222,960
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	1,280,847	1,140,079
EXPENSES		
Salaries, Payroll Taxes & Benefits	784,710	816,935
Other Operating Expenses	368,878	418,534

CLIENTS SERVED 2013

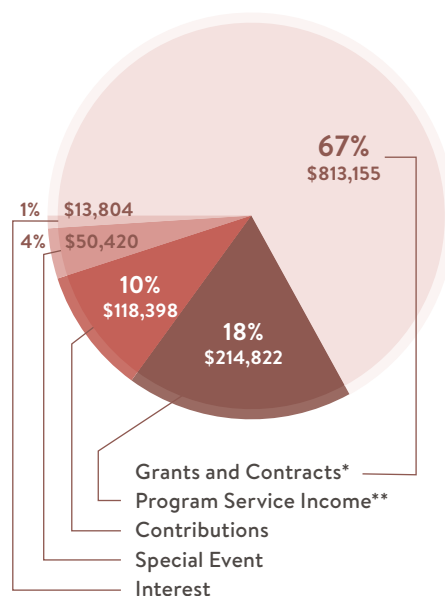
New Cases Opened **1,641** New & Ongoing Cases **2,086**

Annual audit available upon request

EXPENSES 2013



INCOME 2013



TAX STATUS

Legal Aid of Marin is a 501(c)(3) organization. All contributions to Legal Aid of Marin are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law. Tax Identification Number: **94-141 9330**

* LAM has not received any restricted federal funding since 2001. Government grants from the State of California represents less than 15 percent of all revenue.

**Program Service Income includes attorney's fees, claims administration fees and grants/contracts that require regular report and invoice for reimbursement.



Dede Teeler and LAM Executive Director Paul Cohen

Dede Teeler 1961-2014

LAM's beloved colleague Dede Teeler, who was the heart and soul of the Marin Community Court, passed away suddenly this Fall.

Dede joined the MCC team as a paralegal volunteer in June 2011, putting in thousands of hours of volunteer work. Her enthusiasm and involvement grew exponentially and she became the staff coordinator of the program. In the past 3 years, she helped hundreds of clients resolve their legal issues and access social services by walking them through the MCC process.

Dede's passion and enthusiasm for LAM and the MCC was unceasing, and she acted with patience and compassion even on our most difficult days. Without Dede's extraordinary dedication, MCC would not have developed into the flourishing haven it has become for our clients. LAM staff and clients will dearly miss Dede's calming presence. Rest in peace, Dede.

LEGAL AID OF MARIN

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LEGALAIDMARIN.ORG



Above: Marin Community Court Clerk Hoang Leclerc, LAM Senior Staff Attorney Maura Prendiville with LAM Pro Bono Attorney Charles Ostertag, and LAM Staff Attorney Araceli Ontiveros-Venegas. Front cover: Marin Community Court Bailiff Vince Simpson, LAM Pro Bono Attorneys Jessica Karner and Matthew Briggs (with client), and Judge Beverly Wood.