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THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2015
LOS ANGELES ATHLETIC CLUB

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Spotlight: MSW Intern



RAFAELA RODRIGUEZ
1st year MSW Student, UCLA

Rafaela works with LACLJ attorneys to provide a health and human services perspective on client interactions. She provides clients linkages to community resources and support for life challenges that may arise during their legal cases.

What has surprised you most about working here?

What surprised me the most is the passion that LACLJ staff have about their job. I know they come in every day ready to advocate for the most vulnerable populations, and that makes me proud to work here.

What do you wish other people knew about LACLJ?

I wish everyone knew the wide range of services LACLJ provides - from legal services to the services I provide as an MSW intern. Spreading the word about our services and connecting with community leaders is crucial to

Message from Matt Stricker, LACLJ's Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I am delighted to join the enormously talented and dedicated staff of the Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice (LACLJ). Everyone who is, or has been, affiliated with LACLJ is a rock star – from the social justice leaders that founded it in the seventies to the irreplaceable Hellen Hong, who worked over seven years to focus our mission, strengthen our infrastructure, and enhance our services.



Today, we stand for excellence and innovation in legal advocacy, and we have one of the county's most experienced nonprofit teams of family and immigration lawyers. Our clients face abusive relationships and separation from their children, and our lawyers work with them to build violence-free homes and healthy parent-child relationships. We are a team that gets things done, and I'm proud to lead our work.

Over the next several months, I look forward to meeting all of you and hearing about your passion and commitment to LACLJ. Together, I know we can help vulnerable members of our community move from crisis to stability and from adversity to opportunity.

All my best,
Matt

Gibson Dunn attorneys advocate for teen's safety



Pictured from left to right: Samuel Spears, LACLJ client, Rachel Cox, and Hila Solomon after their successful trial at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse.

Jessie*, 23, came to LACLJ seeking protection from her abusive ex-boyfriend. She had lived with him for a few months and endured severe abuse until she called the cops. Her ex-boyfriend was arrested and moved out. A few months later, she saw him hanging around her apartment complex and filed for a temporary restraining order. In retaliation, he then filed a restraining order against her.

Through LACLJ's ADVOCATE program, which connects pro bono attorneys to domestic violence survivors, four [Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher](#) attorneys (Samuel

reaching more clients in need.

What do you find most challenging about your work?

It is challenging to learn about our clients' hardship and trauma, knowing they have had little resources to cope with such experiences.

What might someone be surprised to know about you?

I find unique stillness and peace in the outdoors and try to get out of my comfort zone as much as possible. When I'm not at school or interning, I spend time rock climbing, hiking, camping or star gazing.

What is your favorite quote?

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that every has." --Margaret Mead

Spears, Rachel Cox, Hila Solomon and Kahn Scolnick) took on Jessie's case. At trial, the ex-boyfriend's family member testified negatively against Jessie. Our pro bono team had come well-prepared, having gone above and beyond in undertaking their own investigation before trial. The team uncovered information that immediately undermined the credibility of the ex-boyfriend and his witness. Thanks to the Gibson Dunn team's preparation and stellar performance at trial, the court awarded Jessie a maximum five-year restraining order.

LACLJ's Teen/LA Attorney Arianne Wang and MSW Intern Leanne Brotsky provided additional follow-up to Jessie, including counseling referrals and safety planning. Now Jessie, who continues to work and support herself, can live comfortably in her own home without the lingering fear of her batterer and move onto a safer life.

** Client's name has been changed for confidentiality.*

LACLJ welcomes new attorney, Xavier Rosas!

We are thrilled to introduce our newest attorney, **Xavier Rosas**, who brings over a decade of immigration experience, particularly working with youth, to LACLJ! He has extensive experience pursuing relief for abused, abandoned and neglected unaccompanied minors through asylum and the Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) program. As a member of the legal advisory team that drafted SB 873, he also amended state law to enhance protections for victimized unaccompanied minors. His expertise complements our Immigration Program's work to protect vulnerable youth and keep immigrant families united.

Xavier was most recently an attorney with the Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) and has worked at various immigration law firms since 2002. He has defended hundreds of immigrants at high risk of deportation throughout the Southwest and represented asylum seekers from over fifteen different countries. He is published in three cases, *Urzua-Covarrubias v. Gonzales*, 487 F. 3d 742 (9th Cir. 2007), *Najmabadi v. Holder*, 597 F. 3d 983 (9th Cir. 2010), and *In re: Juan Ramon Martinez*, 25 I&N Dec. 571 (BIA 2011). He is a graduate of UCLA and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign School of Law.



LACLJ to honor L.A. Times and Gibson Dunn at annual gala



We invite you to join us for **LACLJ's 42nd Anniversary Awards Gala** on **Thursday, June 18, 2015** at the Los Angeles Athletic Club in Downtown Los Angeles. This year, we celebrate a new era as we continue to build upon a legacy of stabilizing families and strengthening communities through high-quality legal services. We will also be honoring the following community heroes:

**Los Angeles Times
Justice Award**

**Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, LLP
Pro Bono Partner of the Year**

Click [here](#) to purchase tickets, sponsorships and tribute pages. For more information about the event, please contact Jenny Farrell at jenny@laclj.org or (323) 980-3500, ext. 14.

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