

VALLEY LAWYER

MARCH 2017 • \$4

A Publication of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association

A photograph of two men in suits standing in an office. The man on the left is bald, wearing glasses, a dark suit, a light purple shirt, and a colorful patterned tie. The man on the right has grey hair, glasses, a dark pinstriped suit, a white shirt, and a blue patterned tie. They are standing behind a wooden desk in a wood-paneled office.

**The Evolution of the
Private Attorneys
General Act of 2004**

Earn MCLE Credit

**A Truly Dynamic Duo:
SFVBA Honors
Outstanding Jurists**

An 18 Year Old's Inspirational Journey toward Independence

LAURENCE N.
KALDOR
President



phenix7@msn.com

THIS STORY IS ABOUT A YOUNG WOMAN overcoming the odds—with the help of the wonderful advocates at CASA, a grant recipient of the VCLF—who has been able to find peace as she embarks on her next housing opportunity.

Many of us (myself included) often take many of the simplest pleasures in life for granted—basic things like our families, our loved ones, and our warm homes. For most of us, having these elements in place from birth fosters the ease with which we mature towards our own independence.

However, for many, like the young lady in this article, life has been a history of childhood abuse, neglect, and often a struggle for the most commonplace necessities, including food, clothing and shelter. Her story becomes even more compelling, and her needs more dire, as she is also caring for the life and well being of her two-year-old daughter. Due to her age and the sensitive nature regarding her abusive history, Jane's real name and likeness are being withheld.

Jane has been living in the foster care system for the past five years. "I am proud to be an amazing young mother," she says, adding that she "works hard to be a good advocate for myself and my child."

But, she says, it's even more important to be a, "mature and responsible [role model]." She's learned that "being in the [foster care] system has taught me so much about myself, but most importantly it has taught me to make the best of every situation."

Between school, homework and part-time employment, in what little free time she has, Jane loves and treasures the time she spends bonding with her daughter.




"I want to be the best person and mother I can possibly be for her," she says. "My plans for the near future are to get accepted into a [transitional housing program], to finish high school, receive my diploma, and get accepted to a four-year university."

While acceptance into transitional housing programs (THP) for current and former foster youth is limited and in no way guaranteed, Jane's prospects of success are exponentially increased by her positive outlook, her maturity and the advocacy of Amanda Sattler, her CASA Volunteer Advocate.

What Jane hopes to gain from participating in a transitional housing program, aside from the obvious security and stability that comes from the THP, is, "to learn the necessities of being on my own and providing for myself and my daughter and become even more self-sufficient and responsible, and continue to learn how to be comfortable being on my own. I plan on setting a good example for my daughter, and teach her that things may get tough, but as long as we remain focused on our goals, that great things will come our way."

The THP has given her another gift—the ability to finally look towards a positive future. Professionally, Jane is focusing on becoming, "a labor and delivery nurse." On a personal note, and because of her overwhelmingly positive experience with CASA and the THP, she plans to give back to the community by becoming a foster parent herself, "to young pregnant and parenting teens to provide them with the support they need to succeed."

I am excited and eager to check on Jane's progress in the coming years and report back to you about how your donations, big and small, continue to make a difference in the lives of real people here in our Valley. 

About the VCLF of the SFVBA

The Valley Community Legal Foundation is the charitable arm of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association. The Foundation's mission is to support the legal needs of the youth, victims of domestic violence, and veterans of the San Fernando Valley. The Foundation also provides educational grants to qualified students pursuing legal careers. The Foundation relies on donations to fund its work. To donate to the VCLF or to learn more, visit www.thevclf.org and help us make a difference in our community.



LEWITT, HACKMAN, SHAPIRO, MARSHALL & HARLAN
A LAW CORPORATION



16633 Ventura Boulevard • 11th Floor
Encino, California 91436

www.lewithackman.com • 818.990.2120