



CRLA

2015

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

**PATHS
TO
JUSTICE**

PRIORITY AREAS

CRLA provides a wide array of legal services that directly touch thousands of low-income Californians and indirectly impact the lives of many more community members.

2015 IMPACT AT A GLANCE



Make our impact even greater, make a donation online www.crla.org

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Our Mission

To fight for justice and individual rights alongside the most exploited communities of our society.

Our Vision of Justice

A rural California where all people are treated with dignity and respect and guaranteed their fundamental rights.





Dear Friends:

Our 2015 Annual Report demonstrates the different paths rural Californians take to attain justice. Each path starts from different parts of California, from the border of Mexico all the way north to places like Santa Rosa and Marysville. Some paths take years and end with a jury verdict, while others end quickly with only a call from a CRLA community worker. Some end with a change to a city's law, while others end with a widowed family staying in their home.

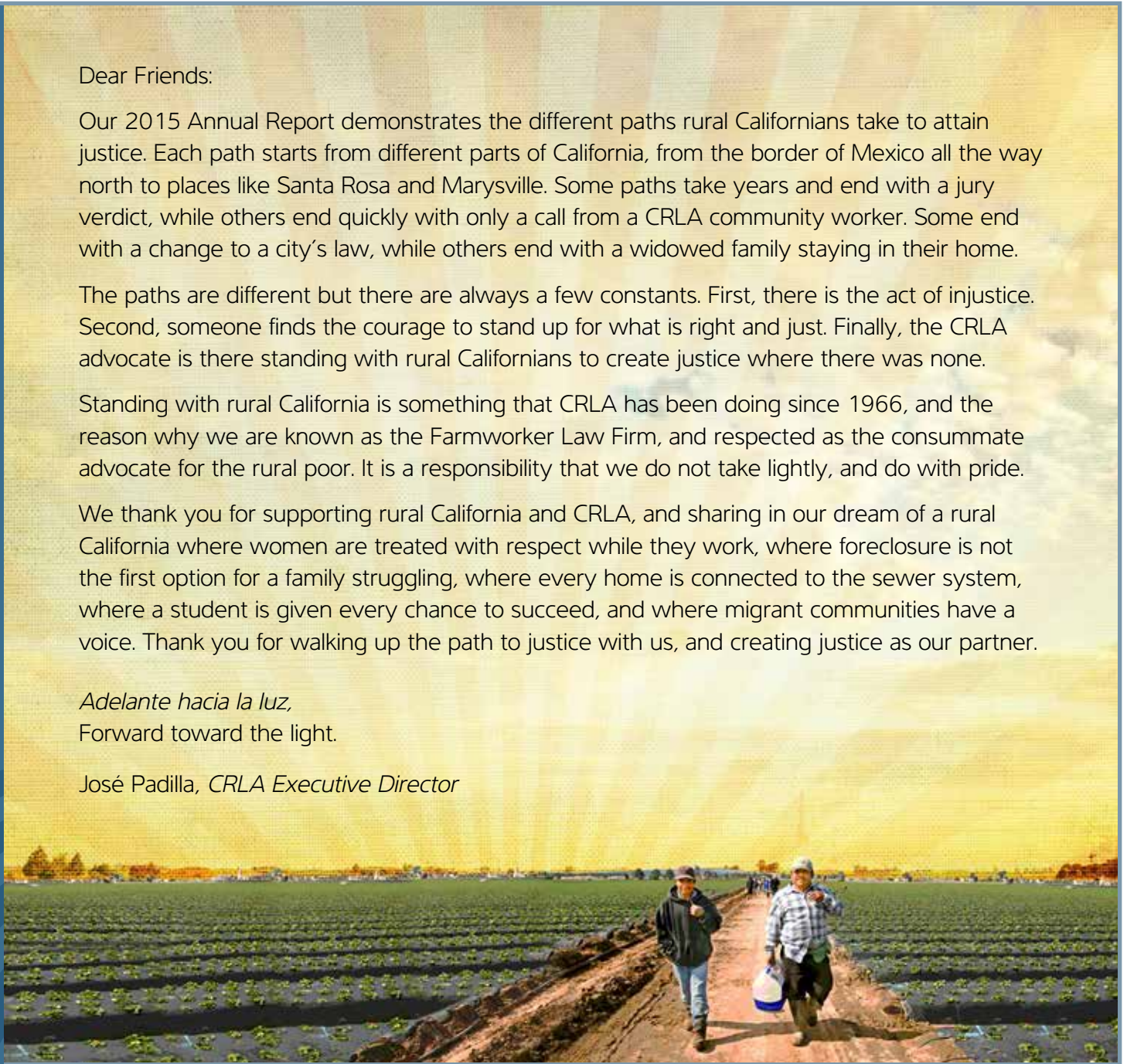
The paths are different but there are always a few constants. First, there is the act of injustice. Second, someone finds the courage to stand up for what is right and just. Finally, the CRLA advocate is there standing with rural Californians to create justice where there was none.

Standing with rural California is something that CRLA has been doing since 1966, and the reason why we are known as the Farmworker Law Firm, and respected as the consummate advocate for the rural poor. It is a responsibility that we do not take lightly, and do with pride.

We thank you for supporting rural California and CRLA, and sharing in our dream of a rural California where women are treated with respect while they work, where foreclosure is not the first option for a family struggling, where every home is connected to the sewer system, where a student is given every chance to succeed, and where migrant communities have a voice. Thank you for walking up the path to justice with us, and creating justice as our partner.

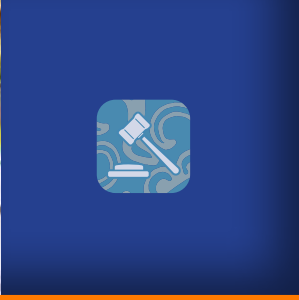
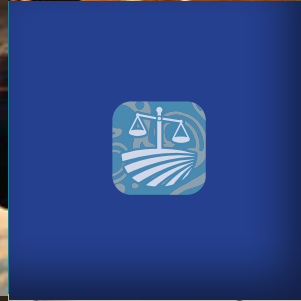
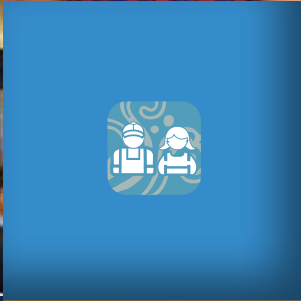
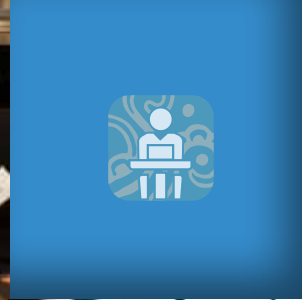
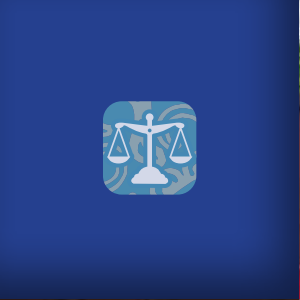
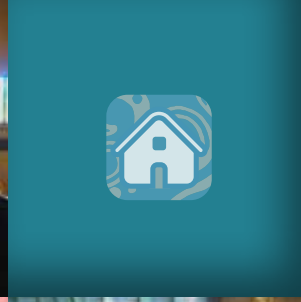
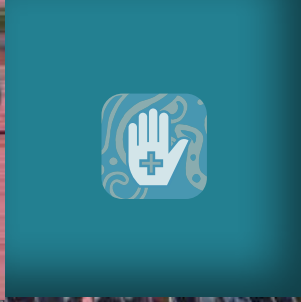
Adelante hacia la luz,
Forward toward the light.

José Padilla, CRLA Executive Director



CRLA donors and supporters help create Rural Justice every day.

Thank you so much for standing with CRLA.





COLUSA, SUTTER
& YUBA COUNTIES



“The clients and cases are so diverse.
Our client community is so unique.”

Welcome to Marysville



Civil Rights



Leadership



CRLA's most northern office, Marysville, is located in Yuba County. During the gold rush, the town of Marysville started off with dreams of becoming the "New York City of the Pacific Coast." The end of the gold rush and damage to surrounding rivers destroyed that dream. However, those rivers made Marysville and the neighboring towns in Yuba, Colusa, and Sutter Counties prime for agriculture. From rice to plums to peaches, this area is one of the key exporters of agriculture to the world.

The Marysville office works on a wide range of cases. Like all of our offices, Marysville represents low-wage workers, clients who are disabled or seniors, as well as farmworkers. They also focus on working with and inspiring future attorneys to consider working in the public interest area of law in rural, underserved communities. In 2015, Marysville staff changed how Yuba County provides General Assistance to its most needy residents, helped a family retain their much-needed social security benefits, and hosted a law student clinic to help tenants who were being evicted from their homes.

A COMMUNITY IN NEED

Yuba County created a system that ensured that almost no one received General Assistance (GA) benefits. GA is last resort assistance and provides the neediest residents of a county only \$331 dollars a month, which translates to



Left to right: Alejandro Morales, Community Worker; Laura Clauson Ferree, Regional Director; Jessica Hiller, Staff Attorney; Regina Davidson, Receptionist; Candice Coolidge, Administrative Legal Secretary

about \$2.75 an hour if the individual worked full-time. "Even this small amount can be critical to keeping a roof over someone's head," said Laura Clauson Ferree, Marysville's Directing Attorney.

The County made the GA application and requirements so difficult that it was nearly impossible for qualified individuals to be approved; in fact, the County only approved 2.3% of all applicants. The County required unnecessary documents and highly specific information. For example, the County required not just bank statements but ATM statements. It required that all documents submitted be submitted simultaneously and each be dated the same month of submission, with no exceptions. One mistake or document

submitted a day late resulted in a rejected application. In one terrible example, the County denied a single mother benefits because she could not remember her complete address from an out-of-state home where she lived more than a decade ago.

"I've been to law school and am pretty good at filling out forms, but I could not even fill out the GA application forms to the exacting standards used by the County," said Laura. "The application I prepared on our client's behalf was rejected."

CRLA partnered with the Public Interest Law Project (PILP) to ensure that Yuba County complied with state law and provide a small safety net for its most vulnerable residents.



CRLA and PILP's joint efforts resulted in Yuba County's agreement to implement a new and improved GA handbook with clear, simple rules that were consistent with state law.

On December 15, 2015, the Board of Supervisors adopted the new regulations and residents are finally getting the help that they deserve and are mandated to receive under state law.

"It was such a great victory because we were able to get GA benefits for our individual clients and also change the County's whole program, which means many more of Yuba County's neediest residents will finally receive the basic aid they need to survive. It really shows the power of CRLA," said Laura.

A FAMILY IN NEED

Jessica Hiller, Marysville's staff attorney, helped a family whose Social Security disability benefits were threatened on two separate occasions. This family has a wheelchair-bound daughter

with a life-threatening medical condition. The daughter was granted a "Wish" from the Make-A-Wish Foundation to visit a local amusement park! Family and friends rallied to rent a vehicle to take the family on their special outing.

Joy turned to sorrow, however, when the Social Security Administration (SSA) decided that the funds used to rent the vehicle should be viewed as extra income. As a result of this decision, the SSA denied the family their monthly benefit. Yet the SSA didn't stop there. The child's family was having a difficult time getting her to her medical appointments since their vehicle was too old to allow installation of a wheelchair lift and the child had grown too heavy for her parents to lift her in and out of the van themselves. The child's grandfather put a down payment on a new model (although still a used car) with a wheelchair lift. The Social Security Administration claimed the family had been overpaid in their benefits since their grandfather provided the van down payment.

"It was unbelievable," said Jessica. "The family needed the van to help transport their daughter who was in a wheelchair. When a family member helped them, SSA used that as a reason to try to take away their benefits."

"We were frustrated and angry," said the client, who asked that we withhold his name. "We are barely surviving financially, taking care of our disabled daughter, and could not pay our bills

and buy food if we had to repay the money SSA wanted back."

Jessica and Marysville staff appealed SSA's decision to an administrative law judge.

"Even with the facts and law on your side, there is always pressure when you go into hearings like these because you have an entire family counting on you. Whatever happens that day will change their lives." said Jessica.



CRLA has a long history of working for people with disabilities.

The judge found in favor of our client. “We were just so happy. We know we did not do anything wrong, and this proves it,” said the client.

A FUTURE IN NEED

CRLA has always believed in the value of training a new generation of lawyers and advocates to serve our client communities. Consistent with that philosophy, the Marysville office hosts law school students through the year. The office worked with sixteen law students from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law, to meet with individual clients and survey local mobile home parks.

Marysville’s work with law students is vital to expose the next generation of lawyers to the problems faced in rural California. The justice gap between rural communities and their urban counterparts is real and growing.

“This was a great opportunity to both help the community and introduce a new group of legal advocates to the critical need for legal services in rural California,” said Laura.

Marysville’s Gold Rush ended a long time ago. While it never became the New York of the Pacific, it is a vibrant and colorful farming community whose residents have access to justice because of the work of the Marysville staff. ■



UC Hastings students with the Marysville staff.



Hastings is in the heart of San Francisco.



Two students with a client during the clinic.



Law students play an important role in shrinking the justice gap in rural California.



“It felt like the bank was trying to steal my home from me. I remember feeling lost and alone until I found CRLA.”



Foreclosure Fighters



Many are under the impression that the foreclosure crisis is over, yet that is not the case for thousands of homeowners throughout the nation, especially those in rural communities. CRLA has not forgotten about the struggling borrowers who were victims of predatory lending. CRLA implemented the Foreclosure Assistance Project when the crisis first hit rural California. The project helps rural Californians avoid unnecessary foreclosures by providing assistance with loan modifications and understanding of mortgage loans. The project also conducts workshops and training throughout California regarding predatory lending practices. Those most in need tend to be limited English-speaking Californians and women. Support from the California State Bar has allowed the staff to continue helping rural homeowners such as Blanche Robles and Maria Chairez.

CRLA met Blanche Robles in 2013. Blanche lost her husband to cancer, but instead of grieving, she had to fight with her bank to keep her home. Blanche, like many women, was left off the mortgage loan. She has always been on the property's title as a joint tenant with her husband, but her name was not on the loan.

"It felt like the bank was trying to steal my home from me," said Blanche. "I remember feeling lost and alone until I found CRLA."



CRLA's Sylvia Torres, Johanna Torres, Jeannie Barrett, client Blanche Robles, and other housing advocate during Blanche's statement to the California Assembly about her foreclosure experience.

Blanche started working with CRLA's Foreclosure Assistance Project Administrative Assistant, Johanna Torres.

"The foreclosure process can be very devastating and difficult to understand," said Johanna. "I cannot even imagine how much harder it is when you add a loss of your spouse or a loved one."

Blanche's home had an adjustable interest rate mortgage. Blanche's payment would increase annually, but she did not understand

why. Johanna helped Blanche understand her mortgage and the different options available to save her home. "It's hard to find good people who care about your problem and then take the time to walk you through your options, but CRLA did," said Blanche. After two long years, CRLA was able to save Blanche's home. Blanche received Keep Your Home California funds to reinstate the mortgage loan. She also received a modification that reduced her mortgage payment by over 25 percent.

"I felt like I was able to breathe once my payment was reduced," said Blanche. "I could finally afford groceries and make the repairs my home needed! More importantly, I was able to finally grieve for my husband."

Maria Chairez's name was also left off her family home. She and her husband entered into a bank branch as first time homebuyers. They were talked into getting a loan with only her husband's name by a branch agent. The agent went on to assure them that since Maria would be on the title there would not be a problem. Maria's husband died in December 2009 in a terrible accident. She reached out to the lender for assistance, but no one would speak to her as she was not on the loan.

Maria struggled to make the payments and took two jobs in order to keep her loan current. She reached out to the lender for two years, then she fell one month behind, which led her to CRLA for help.

Foreclosure Intervention Coordinator Sylvia Torres assisted her in accessing the loan and worked through the lender to request an Assumption and Modification of her husband's loan. "The lender was hesitant at first, telling us that she could not do this without going through Probate," said Sylvia. In California, it is not necessary for cases like this to go through Probate procedures; property reverts to the surviving spouse.



Foreclosure continues to be a problem in rural California.

Maria began to suffer from anxiety and high blood pressure, as she feared she and her children would be left on the street with nowhere to go. She also saw people taking pictures of her house and thought the bank was going to lock her out. "I could not understand how after all the years of paying my mortgage on time, they would not even take my calls. Widows in crisis need this help even more than anyone else, but it is made more difficult for us," said Maria.

After six months of CRLA negotiating, Maria was finally allowed to apply for a modification/assumption with her lender and all the documents were submitted. In 2012, Maria received a letter that her loan was sold to a Loan Servicer. After contacting the servicer, it was discovered the lender had not sent over any of Maria's documents and she was required to reapply.

This delayed Maria's ordeal for another three years. In 2014, Maria finally received a three-month trial offer. Maria completed her payments and received her permanent modification documents in 2015, which led to the end of Maria's nightmare.

Maria received a large reduction in her monthly payment and a lower interest rate. "After receiving the modification and the help CRLA gave me, I thanked God, for putting CRLA in my path. I would not be in my home if it wasn't for them."

These are typical examples of the treatment widows and heirs receive when they are left off a loan. "Too many people think that the foreclosure crisis is over, but it is not. Foreclosure has taken many forms, as in our widows and orphan cases, that is why we will not stop fighting for those facing foreclosure in rural California," said Sylvia. ■

From Chavez to de Alba

CRLA's Board of Directors has a history of attracting some of the most influential and talented community leaders in California. The first board included people such as Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Larry Itliong, and Cruz Reynoso. That tradition continues with the appointment of Ana de Alba to the Board.

Ms. de Alba is a partner at Lang, Richert & Patch in Fresno, where she spends her days and nights fighting on behalf of workers.

"I grew up believing that you need to help others," said Ms. de Alba. "I was fortunate enough to be able to become a lawyer, and there is a certain responsibility to give back and fight for your community."

Ms. de Alba, like many of CRLA's clients, grew up in California's Central Valley and spent summers working the tomato fields with her grandmother and mother. "CRLA's client community is very personal to me because the Central Valley is my home. I have worked the fields and I understand what it means to be harassed."

She left the Central Valley to attend college at the University of California, Berkeley. Afterwards

she attended the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law, one of the top law schools in the nation.

Ms. de Alba joined Lang, Richert & Patch in 2008 as both an attorney and the pro bono coordinator. Since 2008 she created the Workers' Rights Clinic in Fresno, a collaborative effort between different local non-profits. She has also worked closely with the Consulate of Mexico in Fresno. Even with her busy schedule as a partner at a large law firm, she still makes time to take her own pro bono cases.

"Before I left for college, I made a promise to return to Fresno and to make a difference. I have been lucky enough to keep that promise."

She joined CRLA's board in 2015. "CRLA staff is on the front lines of justice. Without CRLA, justice would be inaccessible to so many in my community. I grew up watching people I cared about work hard only to have their rights violated, and then find themselves helpless to fight back."

"Ana is both a brilliant lawyer and a compassionate person," said CRLA's Executive Director Jose Padilla. "When you add that



she is a farmworker's daughter and from the Central Valley, we could not ask for a more knowledgeable farmworker representative to make the hard choices the Board makes."

CRLA is excited and thankful to have Ms. de Alba on the Board and looks forward to having her help shape CRLA in the coming years. ■



“I remember working in the heat as a kid and I’d get sick because the heat was so strong and I didn’t have enough shade.”



Staff Profile



Labor and
Employment

Guardian of the Fields



“My family worked in the fields of the Coachella Valley, I worked them too,” said Lorena Martinez, a CRLA community worker in the Coachella office. “I am still a farmworker in my heart.”

Lorena grew up living the migrant life with her family. She traveled from the Coachella Valley to Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana, following the growing season.

“Even at an early age, I saw the lack of protection and help for migrant farmworkers. In my community, it is a sad fact that you can work

hard but the paycheck might bounce or be for the wrong amount. It did not matter where we went, those problems are just the reality of life as a migrant farmworker.”

Lorena joined CRLA in 1998 as a community worker, which gave her the opportunity to protect migrant farmworkers. “I could not ignore the struggles and problems that migrant workers face in the fields. I had to do something about it. I had to protect my family and people like me.”

CRLA’s community workers have unique jobs as guardians of the fields. They provide trainings,



Farmworkers hydrating to stay cool while in the heat.



Lorena informing the community about their rights.

educational workshops, and monitor the fields for violations of worker rights. It is through this type of work that migrant farmworkers learn their rights, how to protect themselves, and become familiar with CRLA.

“I speak their language, I know how they feel,” said Lorena. “They feel comfortable talking to me and they trust me enough to come to me when they have a problem at work.”

Lorena works directly in the community. She’s been a lead trainer on CRLA’s innovative Heat Stress Training Initiative and Workplace Violence Prevention Initiatives, projects aiming to improve health conditions in the fields. She spends her time in the fields, Lorena said, because “farmworkers need to know that they are valued and that the law is there to protect them.”



Lorena with CRLA's Emanuel Benitez (far right) at the opening of the migrant farmworker facility in Mecca, CA.

California law requires that employers protect farmworkers from excessive heat. In 2015, Lorena spent a lot of time checking to ensure migrant workers were being protected by going into the fields and ensuring workers had clean and fresh water for drinking and proper shading.

"I remember working in the heat as a kid, the fields get hot, and I'd get sick because the heat was so strong and I didn't have enough shade. It is a big problem that's caused the death of a lot of good, hard-working people. These deaths can be prevented because it only takes water and shade to protect people."

Lorena has worked on cases that have significantly impacted farmworkers in the Coachella Valley. In *Navarro v. Harvey Duro and Desert Mobile Home Park*, CRLA represented residents of a decrepit mobile home park. The homes were fragile and

dangerous, with no sewer system and brown water coming out of the faucets. Lorena and CRLA staff helped the residence leave the mobile home park and get into safe and affordable housing. In *Banda v. Bagdasarian*, farmworkers were not getting rest or meal breaks, and being forced to taste unwashed and pesticide-laden grapes. Lorena was part of the team that helped the farmworkers get a large settlement.

"These were tremendous cases and wins for the community. I feel blessed and proud to have been able to help work on these two cases, and all my cases, because I really do see how it changes the lives of so many."

"Lorena represents everything that's good about CRLA," said Coachella's Directing Attorney Blaz Gutierrez. "She's done so much to prevent homelessness and advocate for fair wages and improved working conditions. I see our clients inspired by her and she inspires those of us who are privileged to work with her. And I know that there's lots more to come. She's improved so many lives and made the Coachella Valley a better place for everyone."

"I am just grateful to work in a place that lets me help so many people who just believe in hard work and justice," said Lorena. ■

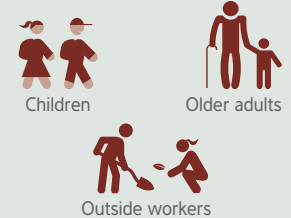
EXTREME HEAT

HEAT RELATED DEATHS ARE PREVENTABLE

WHAT

Extreme heat or heat waves occur when the temperature reaches high levels or when the combination of heat and humidity causes the air to become oppressive.

MOST AT RISK



HOW TO AVOID

STAY COOL

- Find a shelter
- Avoid direct sunlight
- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing and a hat
- Wear and reapply sunscreen
- Check on those most at-risk.

STAY HYDRATED

- Drink from two to four cups of water every hour while working
- Remind others to drink enough water
- Avoid alcohol or liquids containing large amounts of sugar.

HEAT ALERTS: Know the difference

HEAT OUTLOOK	HEAT WATCHES	HEAT WARNING
Minor Excessive heat event in 3 to 7 days	Excessive heat event in 12 to 48 hours	Major Excessive heat event in next 36 hours

Farmworkers should contact the local CRLA office if they are not receiving shade or drinking water.





Morrison & Foerster: PRO BONO PARTNER

Morrison & Foerster was founded in San Francisco in 1883 and has grown into a global law firm with 16 offices located in key technology and financial centers across the United States, Asia, and Europe. The firm's clients include some of the largest financial institutions, Fortune 100 companies, investment funds, startups, and leading technology and life sciences companies. Morrison & Foerster also has a long history of litigating for civil rights and civil liberties.

How did rural, low-income residents retain such world-class legal representation? It is because Morrison & Foerster is part of CRLA's pro bono program.

The pro bono program bridges the needs of rural California with private attorneys nationally. It allows top lawyers to provide their skills and talents to rural, low-income Californians. CRLA and our clients get much needed help and additional resources while the private attorneys get to work on new types of cases and give back to an underserved community.

Morrison & Foerster is a model of the pro bono help firms provide because it takes all types of cases from all over California. The firm sees injustice and will fight with CRLA against it.



The pro bono program bridges the needs of rural California with private attorneys nationally. It allows top lawyers to provide their skills and talents to rural, low-income Californians.

Morrison & Foerster has been supporting CRLA for years as a major donor and by providing services. "CRLA's attorneys do amazing work. It's a pleasure to partner with CRLA and help clients in parts of the state where legal resources are scarce," said Morrison & Foerster Pro Bono Counsel Dorothy Fernandez.



Morrison & Foerster's Arturo J. Gonzalez and Dorothy Fernandez.



Morrison & Foerster Attorneys. Top row: Diana Kruze and Dorothy Fernandez. Bottom row: Antonio Ingram, Robert Webb, Rachel Williams, and David Gold.

“We know that CRLA, like other legal aid organizations, has limited resources, and that they count on law firms like ours to make a difference in rural communities,” added Morrison & Foerster Pro Bono Counsel Rachel Williams.

In 2015, Morrison & Foerster worked on a range of matters with CRLA, including challenging an Imperial Valley school district’s discriminatory discipline practices, working to end the criminalization of homelessness in the town of Manteca, and representing a trafficking victim with an immigration matter.

“Our attorneys love working with CRLA because the cases are unique and the clients are inspirational. Our teamwork ensures clients have representation

with local knowledge, subject matter expertise, and a wealth of experience litigating complex legal issues,” said Ms. Williams.

In the Manteca case, *Lightsey et al v. City of Manteca*, CRLA and Morrison & Foerster are challenging ordinances that prohibit individuals from sleeping on the ground or storing their belongings in public. Despite enacting these ordinances, the city has not provided shelters or any other alternatives for homeless people, thus ensuring that they will be prosecuted under these new laws. CRLA and Morrison & Foerster are working together to end this criminalization of homelessness.

“We strongly believe in the tradition of lawyers protecting the rights of the people, especially those that are unfairly targeted and powerless to fight back. That is why we are fighting so hard against what Manteca is trying to do,” said James McGuire, the Morrison & Foerster partner helping on this case.

People in rural California would have been denied justice and equal access to the law if not for Morrison & Foerster and all our pro bono partners. Students are kept in school, families in their homes, and workers are getting paid because of this program.

Pro bono attorneys make a huge difference for justice and rural California. CRLA would like to thank Morrison & Foerster for all that it does for rural California and our clients. ■

**MORRISON
FOERSTER**
DONOR PARTNER



\$25,000

In 2015, the Morrison & Foerster Foundation, Morrison & Foerster Partners Arturo J. González, Jack W. Londen, Harold J. McElhinny, and Senior Trial Counsel James J. Brosnahan came together to donate \$25,000 in honor of CRLA’s 50th anniversary. CRLA is honored to have their support year after year.

A Family Giving Back

Santos grew up in a rural Jalisco, Mexico, with no electricity or clean drinking water, where he helped his family grow its food, while his father, Epifanio, worked in the fields of California.

In 1977 he came to Watsonville, California just prior to junior high school. His mother, Carmen, worked in the canneries and his father harvested lettuce in and around Salinas, California. To help their parents, Santos, his older brother, and his younger brother (there were eventually eight children in all) worked in the fields during the summers. Fast forward some 12 years and he was studying at King Hall School of Law, UC Davis, where he met Michelle Leah during law school orientation.

His involvement with CRLA began during law school where he interned for the Salinas office. He later returned to serve as the Directing Attorney for the Oxnard office of CRLA for eight years. After law school, Michelle Leah obtained her masters in Jurisprudence and Social Policy at UC Berkeley. Later she served as the Director of Research and Education for the Center on Police Practices and Community at UCSB until moving to full time parenting

and the education of their three children: Aviel, Adoniyah and Asayah..

In 2006, Santos went into private practice where he continued to serve farmworkers and low wage workers. His practice, however, would change in two critical ways: (1) he could serve both documented and undocumented workers and (2) he would no longer be prohibited from representing workers in class actions. These two changes would allow Santos the opportunity to represent thousands of workers and to collaborate with them to recover millions of dollars in wages.

The family has returned to Watsonville, California, and Santos continues to work closely with members of CRLA and on CRLA cases as co-counsel.

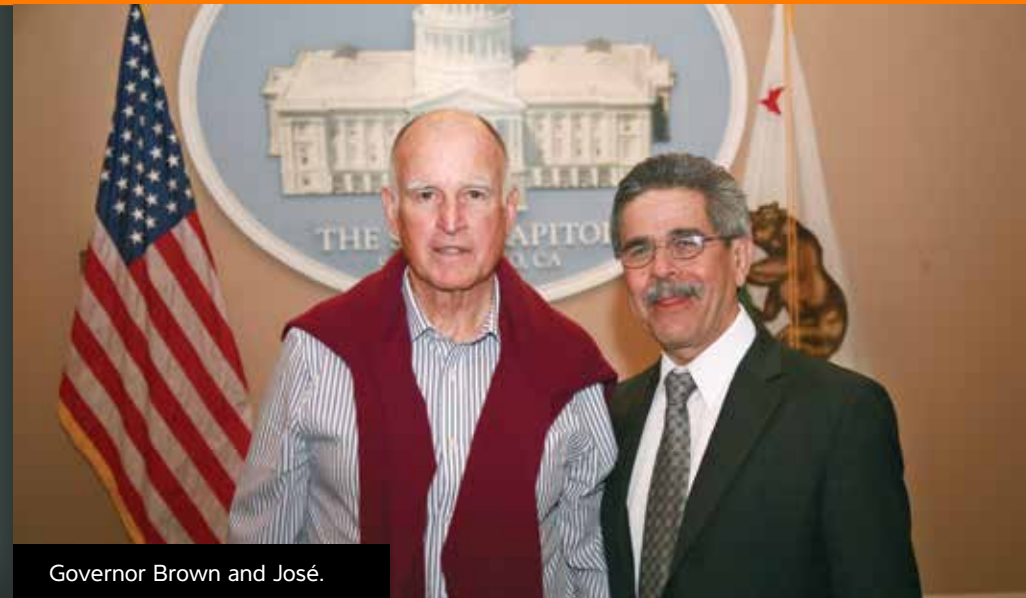
Since going to work for CLRA back in 1998, Michelle Leah and Santos have been direct financial donors to CRLA. As their means have increased, their donations have increased. Named giving, by personalizing the donors, is known in the charitable foundation world to encourage “strength to strength” donating. Normally Santos and Michelle prefer to give



anonymously. As CRLA’s single largest individual donor, however, they were asked if they would consider giving by name. Their value in justice for all, their confidence in CRLA’s ability to do so through its representation of those in need of a voice before the law, and sharing that value with their children, drives their continued support of CRLA. ■

José Padilla Receives The Latino

The California Latino Legislative Caucus, made up of current California State Senate and Assembly members, honored José Padilla on May 6, 2015 at the 14th Annual Latino Spirit Awards for his legal accomplishments and lifelong commitment to the Latino community. The Latino Spirit Awards were established to highlight positive role models in California's Latino community.



Governor Brown and José.



José, San Francisco Giants Sergio Romo, and Deborah Escobedo.



The 2015 Latino Spirit Award Honorees and elected officials.

Spirit Award



José and fellow Latino Spirit Award Honoree Rolando Castillo.



Latino Spirit Award dinner.



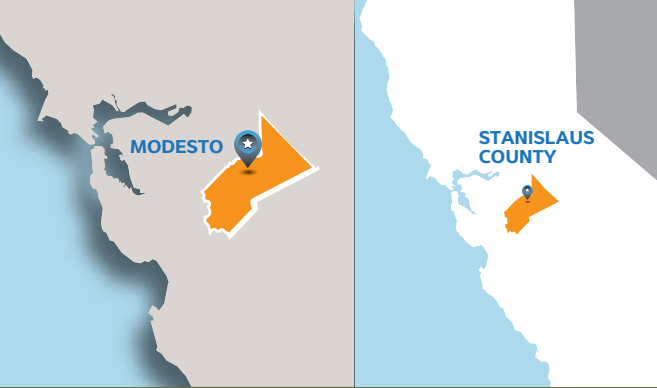
José with fellow honorees and elected officials.



José with his wife Deborah.



Senator Ben Hueso, Judge Frances Muñoz with José.



“We are proud of the work we have done and the strength of the residents and community.”

Island of Parklawn



Community
Equity Initiative



Housing



Parklawn is an island surrounded not by water but by the city of Modesto. On a map, it would be easy to mistake it as just another neighborhood in Modesto. However, the lack of basic infrastructure makes it seem a world apart.

Parklawn used to be on the outskirts of Modesto. As the city grew, it surrounded this little community. Only 0.2 square miles with less than 330 homes, Parklawn is made up of hardworking residents, many who live below the national poverty level. It is one of the many disadvantaged unincorporated

communities (DUCs) found in rural California. An unincorporated community is found on county land but not connected to any particular city, and not entitled to any city's infrastructure or services. What makes DUCs different from affluent unincorporated communities is that DUC residents mostly live below the poverty level, and these communities lack many of the basic infrastructure found in cities like safe roads, sidewalks, street lights, and sewer.

Parklawn was not connected to Modesto's sewage system but instead connected to individual septic tanks. Over the years the



A home in Parklawn. Photo by Dawn Livingston-Manzo.



CRLA's Luis Castillo and Marisol Aguilar.

septic tanks became old and overloaded. The tanks started to fail and began to send waste back up the pipes into the homes. Parklawn residents realized that they could address these issues if they were incorporated into the city. Initially, they were hopeful because Modesto started to annex other unincorporated communities and make them part of the city. Yet Parklawn's request was denied. The annexed communities were more affluent and had predominately white residents. As one residence said, there is a point when "you start realizing that it doesn't seem fair that some people get their basic needs met while you skip another community."



In 2004, Parklawn community members reached out to CRLA's Community Equity Initiative (CEI) for help in filing a discrimination lawsuit against Stanislaus County and the City of Modesto based on this unfair treatment.

CEI and Parklawn's fight against Modesto and Stanislaus County became both lengthy and costly. Stanislaus County spent millions of dollars in the lawsuit. However, CEI and the residents persevered and did not give up on justice for the community.

After seven years of fighting, CEI got the county to agree to add the resources and materials necessary for these communities to join the sewer system.

"It is a great victory," said CEI attorney Marisol Aguilar of Modesto. "We are proud of the work we have done and the strength of the residents and community. For

"This is not just about a sewer line"

decades, the residents have been diligent and consistent in asking for what they need. It was great to be able to bring the county and the residents together."

In 2015, the process of connecting Parklawn to Modesto's sewer system finally began. CRLA Community Worker Luis Castillo worked with the residents to secure resources and complete the process needed to connect the homes to the sewer lines, and demolish the septic tanks in the community.

"This is not just about a sewer line but making sure that all people have their basic needs met, and that they find a little dignity," said Luis.

Marisol is proud that the community held on for a fight that lasted over a decade, "It is always hard to keep a case going but the strength of the community always energizes and reminds me of how great it is to serve such amazing people." ■

Community Equity Initiative (CEI)



CEI is a multi-strategy effort designed to address and eliminate social, political and environmental factors that negatively impact DUCs. CEI was established to focus resources towards changing patterns of historic inequality in rural regions of California. The program works alongside community leaders to raise awareness of DUCs, increase investment in community infrastructure, advocate for equitable development, promote environmental justice, and build leadership capacity so that residents can engage meaningfully in decision-making that impacts their neighborhoods and their families. CEI created the term DUCs and is responsible for requiring city/county General Plans to include unincorporated places.

Our Friend Raul Cadena

Raul Cadena was raised in El Paso, Texas, but his spirit made him a champion for rural Californians. He was a long-time donor and an active CRLA board member and leader before he passed away in June 2016.

Raul graduated from Harvard University and the University of California, Berkeley, Boalt Hall School of Law. This type of pedigree is one that could have led him to any type of job he wanted but to Raul, law was not just a profession but a calling to bring good to the world..

Raul once shared why he decided to help workers, saying, “I felt I could make a significant impact on the lives of people and help make the quality of their lives better.”

Making people’s lives better is exactly what Raul did during his life. He represented poor clients and communities. He stood up for rural California. He fought for migrant farmworkers.

As a board member, he made CRLA a smarter organization that kept true to its labor priorities.

Raul was not just a lawyer but a husband and father. He served as the president of his children’s Parent Teacher Organization, on the

“I felt I could make a significant impact on the lives of people and help make the quality of their lives better.”

board of Consumer Attorneys of San Diego (CASD) and on the Board of Governors for Consumer Attorneys of California. He was vice president at Crown Point Junior Music Academy, a board member for the San Diego Council on Literacy, and the Harvard Club of San Diego.

Raul was a husband, father, son, brother, friend, role model, and community leader. And he will be greatly missed for the caring heart that he gave to his family and his work. ■





“Georgina stood there, heart racing, shaking, and full of fear and panic. She had no one to go to.”



Terror in the Fields



Sexual assault is a potential threat faced by everyone, but farmworker women often encounter conditions that exacerbate the risk. Out in the fields, long and bushy crops create a natural cover, thus leaving female farmworkers vulnerable to attacks and easy targets for predators.

CRLA began fighting sexual harassment and sexual assaults in the fields back in 1999. CRLA partnered with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and the Golden Gate University Law School's Women's Employment Rights Clinic to file the first sexual harassment case on behalf of a farmworker, Blanca Alfaro, in the case *EEOC vs. Tanimura & Antle*. The case, which started as a \$600 wage and hour claim, ended with a \$1.8 million settlement.

Since the Blanca Alfaro case, sexual harassment and sexual assault is still a major problem and sadly common in the fields. CRLA continues to stand with survivors of violence in hopes of making it uncommon.

The case that you are about to read is just one example from 2015, but it is representative of the experiences farmworkers face in the fields.

Georgina began working for Reiter Berry Farms in 2004 to pick crops. Field work is hard and only offered seasonally, but she enjoyed her work. That enjoyment ended in 2011 when Jesus Garcia joined her crew.

Garcia instantly began to harass Georgina. He leered at her constantly, looking at her from head to toe. He blew kisses at her when she walked by. He violated her personal space as she worked. He left notes telling her to call him. She never asked for this attention but it did not matter to Garcia. It did not matter that she was happily married and that her husband and children worked with her at Reiter Berry Farms.

Georgina complained to her foreman and supervisor, Aaron Lozaro, about Garcia's sexual harassment: how it bothered her and made it hard for her to work. She wanted it to stop. Lozaro spoke to Garcia about it, but Garcia ignored the foreman's request and continued to harass her. Lozaro did not report Garcia, instead he protected him, allowing Garcia to continue harassing Georgina for the remainder of the season.

A year later, Georgina returned to Reiter Berry Farms for another season only to learn that Garcia had become her foreman. Lozaro, the old foreman, was promoted to be the assistant ranch manager, and he then promoted Garcia to be his replacement as the new foreman of Georgina's crew. Lozaro knew that Garcia had been sexually harassing Georgina and was a threat to her safety, but he decided to give that person control, authority and power over his victim.

Management from Reiter Berry knowingly and recklessly put Georgina in direct harm.



Female farmworkers are often left vulnerable to attacks by sexual predators.

One hot July afternoon, Garcia, who had all the authority and power over Georgina at work, got close to her, groped her and boasted, "I can do with you whatever I want." Georgina stood there, heart racing, shaking, and full of fear and panic. She had no one to go to—Garcia was the only supervisor in the fields that Sunday, and she did not want to upset him because he could have her fired. She stood in the fields alone and afraid.

Just four days after this incident, Garcia assigned Georgina to work in a thick and overgrown part of the berry fields. It was an isolated area that put Georgina in an unprotected and dangerous place.

Georgina was alone picking berries when Garcia appeared with his pants unzipped. He ordered her to touch him. She tried to walk away but he grabbed her, and as she moved away, he pulled and ripped her pants and sexually attacked her.

Georgina called Reiter Berry management and asked the assistant ranch manager to meet her privately because she was too scared to talk over the phone.

The assistant ranch manager, the old foreman who put Garcia in charge of Georgina, who had known her for over two years, listened to Georgina cry and shake while holding her torn pants up with her hand. The assistant ranch manager called the main manager, and she had to relive the experience again as she told him what happened, too. The manager told her that they would talk to Garcia, but if his side differed from hers, they would all sit down together and talk about what happened. The very idea of sitting across from her attacker terrified Georgina.

She asked them to call the cops, but they responded with silence.

The manager told Georgina they needed to start their investigation, and told her to go back to the fields and finish working. Georgina told them that she could not because her pants were ripped and could not stay up by themselves. The manager gave her a safety pin.



Female farmworkers make up a large part of the farmworker workforce.

Upset, embarrassed, and traumatized, Georgina wrapped her sweatshirt around her waist and walked back to the place where she was assaulted and returned to picking berries.

Garcia, with Georgina's blood still on his pants, admitted to the assistant ranch manager that he sexually assaulted Georgina, and Reiter Berry immediately suspended him—for three days.

Hours after the sexual assault, the cops were finally called and Garcia was arrested. Garcia was later convicted for his crime, something that rarely happens to those that attack female farmworkers.

Georgina's nightmare did not end with the arrest of Garcia. Her co-workers did not stand up for her and instead ostracized Georgina for getting Garcia in trouble. They spread vicious rumors about her and stopped talking to her. She told Reiter Berry about what her co-workers were doing to her, but they responded with silence.

Sexually assaulted and alone, Georgina fell into a deep depression and could no longer sleep. She had nightmares of the assault and would replay it in her head.

Just like the first time she made a complaint to Lozano about Garcia's sexual harassment, Georgina stood up against Garcia and Reiter Berry Farms. This time, she didn't face it alone. She talked to CRLA's Lisel Holdenreid and Michael Meuter. Lisel and Michael did not respond with silence, but with a lawsuit against Reiter Berry Farms with the help of Kathryn Dickson and Emily Nugent of the law firm Dickson Geesman, LLP.

A neutral arbitrator listened to the facts and awarded Georgina over \$800,000 and required Reiter Berry to change their sexual harassment policies. This award is one of the largest awards for a case representing only one client in CRLA's history.

The decision was based on the fact that Reiter Berry failed to protect Georgina after her first complaint about sexual harassment and instead promoted her harasser. And, no investigation was known to have taken place to see if there were other survivors of Garcia's torment. Further, his promotion signaled to Georgina that she had no one to go to, and

that Reiter Berry Farms would not do anything to protect her.

The arbitrator also considered that even after the attack, those in power at Reiter Berry did not demonstrate anything that showed they understood the severity of what happened or that Georgina was even a victim. Reiter Berry Farms failed to protect her from Garcia and failed to protect her from the co-workers that ostracized her after the attack.

In addition to the money, the arbitrator required that Reiter Berry's staff receive new sexual harassment training with the hope that what happened to Georgina would never happen to another person on that farm. CRLA is hopeful that this award will signal the end of this type of attack at the company.

Georgina stood up multiple times to end her harassment. Reiter Berry Farms tried hard to silence her and worked hard to keep her powerless. In the end, Georgina could not be silenced. With CRLA by her side, Georgina never stopped fighting, and found her dignity and respect. ■

STATISTICS ON SEXUAL ASSAULT

Farmworkers in the United States work long and hard hours in the fields, facing extraordinary challenges and dangerous conditions. They lack basic worker rights and earn some of the lowest wages in the country.

EVERY 2 MIN
SOMEONE IN THE U.S. IS
SEXUALLY ASSAULTED

10 MINIMUM AGE
FOR FARMWORK

ONLY 2 out of 3 OF SEXUAL
ASSAULTS ARE ACTUALLY REPORTED

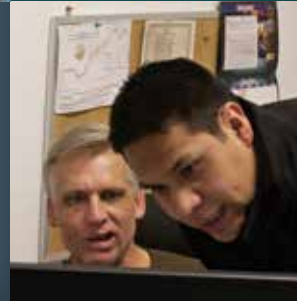
FARMWORKER
WOMEN
80%

Have experience
some form of
SEXUAL
HARASSMENT

75% OF VICTIMS ARE ASSAULTED BY
SOMEONE THEY KNOW

Sexual Assault is not just forcible rape, sexual assault is any type of sexual behavior or contact where consent is not freely given or obtained and is accomplished through force, intimidation, violence, coercion, manipulation, threat, deception or abuse of authority.

CRLA dreams of a California where there is justice, fairness and legal access for all. This dream is only possible because of the hard working staff at CRLA.



Financials

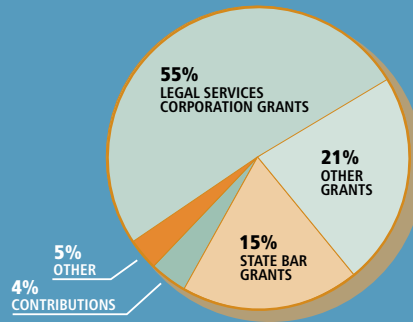


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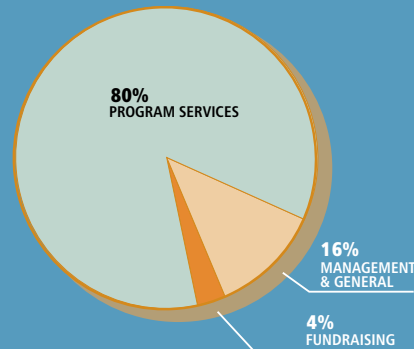
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2015 REVENUE



2015 EXPENSES



STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

	Year Ended December 31, 2015			Year Ended December 31, 2014		
	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	TOTAL	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	TOTAL
REVENUE AND SUPPORT						
Grant revenue	\$-	\$12,174,133	\$12,174,133	\$-	\$12,894,138	\$12,894,138
Donated services	527,466	-	527,466	655,665	-	655,665
Attorneys fees and costs recovery	92,556	460,933	553,489	6,321	562,395	568,716
Contributions	347,288	800	348,088	412,771	-	412,771
Special event revenue	176,220	-	176,220	148,981	-	148,981
Other revenue	116,388	44,658	161,046	94,123	272,686	366,809
Net assets released from program restrictions	12,447,686	(12,447,686)	-	13,627,888	(13,627,888)	-
Total revenue and support	13,707,604	232,838	13,940,442	14,945,749	101,331	15,047,080
EXPENSES						
Program services	10,818,493	-	10,818,493	12,704,599	-	12,704,599
Management and general	2,113,157	-	2,113,157	1,998,778	-	1,998,778
Fundraising	604,527	-	604,527	630,208	-	630,208
Total expenses	13,536,177	-	13,536,177	15,333,585	-	15,333,585
Change in net assets	171,427	232,838	404,265	(387,836)	101,331	(286,505)
NET ASSETS						
Beginning of year	\$1,213,592	246,231	1,459,823	\$1,601,428	\$144,900	\$1,746,328
End of year	\$1,385,019	\$479,069	\$1,864,088	\$1,213,592	\$246,231	\$1,459,823

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION December 31, 2015 and 2014

ASSETS	2015	2014
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$552,318	\$123,590
Grants receivable	230,034	409,592
Pledges receivable	36,753	24,048
Other receivable	48,404	50,294
Prepaid expenses, deposits, and employee advances	199,128	226,427
Other assets	640	900
Total current assets	\$1,067,277	\$834,851
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Client trust funds	326,174	302,134
Pledges receivable	48,000	-
Property and equipment	3,185,022	3,253,529
Total non-current assets	3,559,196	3,555,663
Total assets	\$4,626,473	\$4,390,514
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	2015	2014
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	\$161,329	\$216,516
Accrued liabilities	590,144	630,340
Current portion of notes payable	87,825	91,979
Total current liabilities	839,298	\$938,835
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Client trust funds payable	326,174	302,134
Notes payable	1,596,913	1,689,722
Total non-current liabilities	1,923,087	1,991,856
Total liabilities	\$ 2,762,385	\$2,930,691
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	653,151	500,395
Unrestricted board designated	731,868	713,197
Temporarily restricted	479,069	246,231
Total net assets	1,864,088	1,459,823
Total liabilities and net assets	\$4,626,473	\$4,390,514

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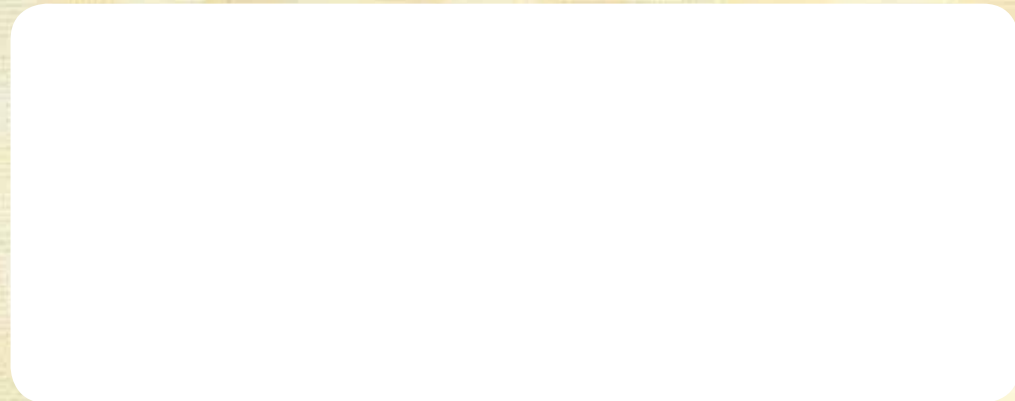
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