ASCEND JUSTICE

A word from our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Although it has been many years since I last started a school year as a student, this time of year still fills me with a sense of energy and potential.

At Ascend Justice, the end of the summer is also filled with transition. We say good-bye to amazing interns, and this year to a board member who has served thirteen years!

However, we are also excited for the possibilities that lie ahead: fantastic new leaders on staff and on our Board of Directors (could that be you?), strategic planning, and more opportunities to get to know you better.

It's not quite the same as a new lunch box and a case of sharp crayons, but it's close!

Sincerely,

Margaret

Margaret R. Duval
Executive Director
Ascend Justice

Board and Young Professionals Board

A strong Board of Directors is vital to the success of Ascend Justice - we are grateful for the commitment of our eleven outstanding Board of Director members with a combined commitment to Ascend Justice of over 57 years!

Our vibrant Young Professionals Board is currently comprised of 19 amazing members with a combined commitment of over 51 years! The work that these boards do help Ascend Justice in so many areas including fundraising, making connections in the community, advocacy, and financial health.

If you have a passion for our mission and would like to explore opportunities for volunteer leadership at Ascend Justice, we'd love to hear from you.

Learn More

After 13 years on the Board, Christina Briesacher stepped down due to

term limits. Christina joined the Ascend Justice team early on in her career and has served as a member of our Board of Directors since October 2009, including several terms as President of the Board.

Thank you so much, Christina, for your commitment to supporting the work at Ascend Justice!
We look forward to continuing our relationship.

Welcome to our New Director of Development

We are excited to introduce our new Director of Development, Christyn Schnell.

Christyn comes to us with over 16 years of nonprofit experience both as a fundraiser and a data manager. Her background in data analytics, her knowledge of fundraising trends, and her desire to connect with people like yourself made her a perfect fit in this position.

Christyn is passionate about connecting to donors and supporters to the work that we do and creating an environment of appreciation and gratitude.

Please help us in welcoming her to Ascend Justice.

Staff Updates

Hard work at Ascend Justice does not go unnoticed.

Bryan Liberona was promoted to Senior Staff Attorney. Bryan is an outstanding advocate for our clients and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this role. Our clients benefit greatly from Bryan's calming presence, expertise, and positive attitude when they are facing trauma and crisis. He is a valuable asset to Ascend Justice and we are so fortunate to work with him!

Carolina "Caro" Gallo was promoted to Client Support Manager. Caro has been an invaluable support for our clients over the past three years. She has provided stability, support, a listening ear, and has served as a gateway to accessing life-saving benefits to our clients. Caro has been instrumental in keeping our clients in their homes, fed, clothed, and literally saved lives by helping clients gain medical benefits.

Become a part of our growing team! Check out our current job postings here.

Strategic Plan

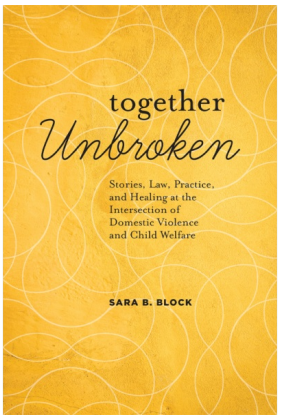
We all need goals. Ascend Justice is about to embark on Strategic Planning. For the next several months, we will be working to create a plan that will allow Ascend Justice to continue our work with purpose, commitment, and with our clients' needs at

Ascend Justice's mission is to empower individuals and families impacted by gender-based violence or the child welfare system to achieve

the forefront of our minds. Be on the lookout for more information about our Strategic Plan in the months to come.

safety and stability through holistic legal advocacy and system reform.

What We Are Reading



"Together Unbroken" is the result of a long journey of advocacy, determination, and connecting with survivors of domestic violence who have been impacted by the child welfare system.

Sara Block, our Director of Advocacy, has literally "written the book" on the intersection of domestic violence and the child welfare system.

"Together Unbroken" shares stories of survivors and promotes a new framework for meeting the needs of children and their families, including systemic transformation that enable victims and their families the ability to heal.

Congratulations, Sara!

Getting To Know You

We want to know more about you. Participate in our brief 2-minute survey so you can receive more meaningful communications from us. Let us know how we're doing because your opinion matters and we would love to hear from you!

Take Our Survey

Volunteer Update

Our Interns allow our reach to go even further! With the number of cases that come to us each day, we are able to provide assistance to a greater number because of our Interns.

Thank you, Interns!!

Fourteen amazing interns joined us this summer: Zeinab Bakhiet, Gabriela Chavez Barrientos, Hadley Delany, Kennedy Ray Fite, Anna Greer, Margaret Harrold Miles, Mamayan Jabateh, Damia Marshall, Melissa Megala, Alyssa Moinet, Samantha Myers-Dineen, Gabrielle Seiwert, Taylor Shuman, and Fernando Silva.
Thank you to each of you for your hard work!

We welcome our new group of eleven hard-working interns! Stokli Ashcraft, Zeinab Bakhiet, Jaina Desai, Angelica Finnelly, Haley Greep, Kristin Mariani, Brieanna Martin, Morgan Minow, Alyssa Moinet, Grecia Villegas, and Hannah Weise.
Welcome to the Ascend Justice family!

Learn More About Volunteering at Ascend Justice

Worth Noting

Executive Director, Margaret Duval, received a Roman Nomitch Scholarship to attend

Harvard Business School's Strategic Planning for Non-Profit Managers (SPNM) Program. During her week-long visit to Harvard Business School, Margaret was able to, as she puts it, "think, dream, and strategize about the future of Ascend Justice. Learning from the incredible faculty and my brilliant classmates from around the world was an amazing opportunity to focus on our mission and what's next for our work."

Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management
July 10 - 16, 2022
Harvard Business School

A strong network of partners is critical to provide a well-rounded holistic approach to our clients. Pro Bono Network and Ascend Justice's own Alexis Mansfield, Senior Attorney in our Incarcerated Survivors division, highlights the importance of keeping families together who have been torn apart due to domestic violent and the prison system.

Read the article here.

It's important to meet our clients where they are at and since domestic violence can occur at any time, the expansion of availability of Orders of Protection is a move that will allow help to be more accessible when it's needed, no matter the time of day.

Read about the changes here.

On July 27th an Order of Protection victory occurred in the First District Appellate Court when Legal Aid Chicago teamed up with a powerful network of organizations which included Ascend Justice staff. This was "a victory for survivors across Illinois."

Read more about the case and the outcome here.

In Illinois, the Firearms Owner Identification (FOID) Card Art requires Illinois State Police to revoke or suspend and seize a person's FOID card once a protective order is issued against them. FOID card holders are provided with written notice that they must turn in their cards AND transfer their firearms within 48 hours. What happens if they don't comply? In Cook County, likely nothing, as the Sheriff's Office lacks the resources to follow up on these crucial revocations. Ascend Justice supports legislation that would fund enforcement, close loopholes, and provide greater safety to survivors of gender-based violence.

Read more about this important issue here.

Photo credit: Stacy Wescott /Chicago Tribune

Our annual Celebration of Courage event was held at the Old Post Office on a beautiful evening on Thursday, June 9. With over 200 people in attendance and over $165,000 raised to support Ascend Justice's mission, there was much to celebrate

and share. This important fundraising event could not have taken place without our thoughtful donors and dedicated sponsors.

Thank you!

Meet Our Sponsors

See Photos

Learn More

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legal advocacy. transforming lives.