In a year of challenges and struggle for so many in our community, and especially for people living in poverty, **GHLA stood with clients and made it better.**

We advanced our mission – providing community education, legal representation and advocacy to promote social justice and address the effects and root causes of poverty, including structural racism, sexism, and inequality. The impact of that advocacy was greater safety and stability for people who need lawyers in order to meet their basic needs, survive, and eventually thrive. Read on about our key supporters, partners, strategies and results.

**THANK YOU FOR JOINING OUR MISSION OF JUSTICE**

_GHLA Staff, Board, and Foundation_

*Note: In this report clients’ names and other identifying information have been changed to protect their privacy. The pictures in this report do not reflect actual clients or staff.*
ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN IMPROPERLY EXCLUDED FROM EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Jacob, a child with autism, was at home without supports or instruction from his school system for two years, a violation of state and federal law. GHLA achieved a settlement agreement with the district to place Jacob at an out of district school, with home tutoring first, and then therapeutic hospitalization if needed in order to transition into the school building. Now, Jacob is living at home, attending school regularly, socializing frequently at school, and engaged in his school program.

2021 GHLA Pro Bono Honor Roll

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Pullman & Comley LLC
Richard S. Order
Updike, Kelly & Spellacy P.C.
Elizabeth McMahon
Sharon Pope
Dr. Stephen Humphrey
We collaborated with SimplifyCT, United Way, Wheeler Clinic, and other community partners to organize two tax clinics in May 2021 so that clients could access Child Tax Credits and Economic Impact Payments. Dozens of families went from living in poverty to greater economic stability when their incomes rose by thousands of dollars.

We assisted hundreds of clients in applying for Connecticut’s federally-funded pandemic assistance program, UniteCT, to obtain rental assistance and utility aid – as part of legal representation to avoid eviction, a major short and long-term disruptor of survival and stability.

As much of the legal and business community “went remote” during the Covid pandemic through use of technology, many people with low incomes, as well as people with disabilities and other potential barriers including language and literacy challenges, struggled to have access to the benefits, programs, and systems that they needed to meet their basic human needs. GHLA acted as a bridge for our community – facilitating our clients’ access to justice by enabling clients to participate in their remote hearings, or access other services, within our offices using our technology.

GHLA and the wider legal aid network continued to take the lead in highlighting and advocacy around mitigating the harmful consequences of the digital divide. This includes working with the CT Department of Education and local school districts on device and internet access, and with the CT Judicial Department to ensure fundamental due process rights are protected. GHLA led a coalition of legal services organizations in filing an amicus brief highlighting the disparate impact of the digital divide and its effect on court proceedings, in the Connecticut Supreme Court case In re Aisjaha N.
INCREASING SAFETY AND STABILITY FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NEEDING CIVIL COURT REMEDIES AND FEDERAL IMMIGRATION PROTECTIONS

Luisa had been physically and sexually abused by her husband, and forced into a cult in their home country. GHLA attained a Restraining Order for one year against the husband, and at trial, expert-informed decisions on conditions for safe access to the children and custody. Our advocacy resulted in child support, alimony, and distribution of retirement benefits to promote Luisa’s and her children’s present and future financial security and safety.

For Jeanne, a survivor of domestic violence, GHLA advocated under the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (UCCJEA) that Connecticut maintain jurisdiction over the children based on the domestic violence that had occurred in another state. At trial Jeanne obtained sole legal custody to be able to provide for and protect her children.

After complex discovery in a dissolution matter, we attained a significant financial award for Mary Beth, who was nearing retirement age, which will ensure a more secure future for her following many years of abuse.

GHLA successfully appealed from Probate Court to Superior Court to obtain Special Immigrant Juvenile Status findings on behalf of siblings who had been abused by parents in their home country and who needed the findings in order to stay safely in this country with the family that loves them.
Throughout 2021 GHLA represented tenants in remote proceedings and helped clients understand the complex program and policies around housing and eviction. Preventing disruptive displacement and homelessness is a core anti-poverty strategy.

Gloria and Eddie, an elderly Spanish-speaking couple, were hospitalized with COVID while Gloria was awaiting a major medical procedure. GHLA obtained more than two months for them after an eviction judgment, so they could move more safely, with less disruption.

Caroline, a young mother pregnant with a second child, was at risk of eviction due to what was termed under a then-existing state moratorium, “serious non-payment of rent.” However, her landlord had received significant rental assistance payments just before the start of the eviction process. GHLA halted the eviction and Caroline and her family were able to keep their housing and make a plan to pay the arrearage.
ADVANCING EQUITY AND ANTI-RACISM

GHLA continued our health equity-focused Medical-Legal Partnership with Hartford Health Care and expanded it to outreach through the Neighborhood Health Initiative mobile health services — in which a GHLA attorney teams with medical providers and social workers in high need Hartford neighborhoods, reaching low-income communities of color.

GHLA launched our Pardon Equity Project, partnering with pro bono legal resources from local law firms and corporations to help people seeking pardons, providing relief from the over-representation of people of color in the criminal legal system.

Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc. Staff As of 5/1/22

Kelsey Bannon, Staff Attorney
Jamey Bell, Executive Director
Nicole Bettinelli,
Community Advocate Social Worker
Michael Casasanta, Finance Director
Yetzael Clement, Legal Secretary
Jill Davies, Deputy Director
Enelsa Díaz, Managing Attorney
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Christopher Gelino, Staff Attorney
Clarissa Guerrero, Singer Fellow
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Agnes Kaziba, Attorney
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Michael Kelley, Staff Attorney

Jin Kim, Staff Attorney
Kate Martin, Staff Attorney
Brian Moore, IT Administrator
Maria Morelli-Wolfe, Staff Attorney
Lucy Potter, Staff Attorney
Ryan Powell, Staff Attorney
Shirley Pripstein, Staff Attorney
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Giovanna Shay,
Litigation and Advocacy Director
Kathy Tracy,
Executive Administrative Assistant
Rose Webb, GHLA Fellow
Alison Weir, Staff Attorney
Linda Woods, Bookkeeper
MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS – FOOD, HEALTH CARE, INCOME

GHLA preserved SNAP benefits for a refugee family of six (including a pregnant, non-English speaking mother). Our team also located a food pantry that would meet the values of their faith and culture.

GHLA worked with the CT General Assembly Human Services Committee chair to draft successful legislation to provide cost of living adjustments in the Temporary Family Assistance program, and to remove the “family cap” limit which penalized families for having additional children. TFA provides very low-income families temporary help to meet basic needs and stabilize their lives.
Jenny’s landlord contracted a lease directly with her estranged and abusive husband and Jenny did not know its terms. She was in danger of losing her housing after husband stopped paying rent after Jenny initiated divorce proceedings. GHLA got the eviction case dismissed, preserving Jenny’s housing and helping her begin to reclaim and stabilize her life.

A GHLA attorney focusing on victim’s compensation obtained compensation eligibility for Ruby, a severely injured crime victim and her parent/caregiver. These benefits will help Ruby regain as much independence as she can.

GHLA worked with the Department of Social Services to gain legislative passage of new emergency financial assistance – transitional Temporary Family Assistance and State Administered General Assistance – for individuals escaping domestic violence.

GHLA gratefully acknowledges the financial support received from the following funders:

- Connecticut Bar Foundation (IOLTA)
- Greater Hartford Legal Aid Foundation, Inc.
- Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
- National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
- North Central Area Agency on Aging
- State of Connecticut, Court Fees Grant-in-Aid
- State of Connecticut, Department of Housing
- State of Connecticut, Department of Social Services
- State of Connecticut, Judicial Branch Grant-in-Aid
- State of Connecticut, Office of Victim Services
- Town of West Hartford
- United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut
- Connecticut Bar Foundation (Singer Connecticut Public Service Fellowship)

GHLA is honored to have the generous support of individuals, law firms, corporations and other donors. These donors are listed in the following GHLA Foundation Campaign Report.
May 2022

This Report honors our community’s generous support of the GHLA Foundation’s mission – raising funds to ensure access to justice to meet basic human needs for people living in poverty. Covid-19 affected GHLA’s clients harder than most. GHLA lawyers eased some of the burden, working to increase safety from violence, preserve housing and prevent homelessness, stabilize income supports, improve health, and increase educational and employment opportunity.

The pages that follow honor our vibrant partnership with lawyers, law firms and corporations who support those goals. Over the period covered by this report, January – December 2021, we are proud to report we raised a total of $377,500.

The Foundation extends special thanks to Raytheon Technologies Corporation and its attorneys, who gave so generously. RTX’s remarkable 2021 total was $142,000 with 100% of RTX’s Connecticut-based attorneys making gifts. Also, we want to highlight and thank Robinson+Cole for their outstanding gift of $34,000, and Shipman & Goodwin for their generous contribution of $30,000. Finally, our sincere thanks to our Board members for your work throughout the Campaign season to secure the firm and corporate donations, and for your personal contributions.

As GHLA continues its essential and transformative advocacy for the large and diverse population of low-income clients served, the GHLA Foundation will continue to broaden the base of financial and in-kind support for this crucial work. Thank you for your foundational support – you help ensure GHLA’s critical legal services remain available to our neighbors in the Greater Hartford area when they need them the most.

Very truly yours,

Zachary R. Osborne
RTX Attorney & GHLAF Board President

Jamey Bell
Executive Director, GHLA
“GHLA stopped the eviction so we can stay in our apartment. We would have been homeless without GHLA.”

– GHLA Client
"My attorney helped me end a marriage where I was physically abused. She also helped me get support for my children, and to have safety and security in my life." – GHLA Client
GIFTS FROM INDIVIDUALS

$1000 or more

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The Honorable Stuart Bear  
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“Thanks to GHLA my daughter got the special educational programming she needs!” – GHLA Client
"I was denied state assistance and had problems with the Department of Labor, because of identity theft. GHLA fixed both problems."

– GHLA Client

GHLA FOUNDATION 2021 CAMPAIGN REPORT

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Mrs. Sylvia Heiman

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Raul A. Rodriguez

In Honor of

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Julian E. & Susan K. Stoppelman

Karen Sheaffer
Linda Case

“My attorney won my social security case, so I can take care of my kids. You did a great job. Thank you!”
— GHLA Client
End poverty. Advocate for justice.

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