

CLC News

Excellence in Advocacy

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Inside This Issue

- Letter
- CLC Supporters Step Up to Meet Youth Needs in Time of Covid
- Graduate Spotlights
- Employee Spotlight
- News from NorCal
- CLC Kudos
- Board Thank You

Ways to Support CLC

- Annual Gifts
- Gifts-In-Kind
- Stocks or Securities
- Matching Gifts
- Endowment
- Planned Giving
- Memorial or Honorary Gifts
- Recurring Gifts



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Dear CLC Friends and Supporters,

It is difficult to put into words the power of this moment. While the world struggles with the day to day challenges of a global pandemic, within the United States we are continuing to confront the forces of institutional racism that have plagued our nation for far too long. Both crises present a very real threat to the well-being of the children and youth we represent. Children and families need strong advocacy now more than ever.

I have been in awe of our staff's unwavering commitment to be present for our young clients while they also struggle to balance new and increasing demands at home. Throughout the pandemic and the protests CLC's doors have remained open – our staff have supported each other, their families and our clients to meet their basic needs, provided a shoulder to lean on when young people feel angry or betrayed, and fought for justice at every opportunity. Here are just a few examples of how we have spent the past 4 months:

- The CLC writ team filed a powerful opposition to a court order prohibiting visits between foster youth and their families. CLC's motion has been relied upon by attorneys throughout the country challenging similar orders.
- Our social worker investigators and case managers quickly mobilized to develop a system for virtual visitation with our clients, and have continued in-person visitation where concern for the child requires it.
- The policy team advocated to include funding in the state budget to prevent CLC's older clients from being forced out of foster care into homelessness.
- Attorneys have worked with the court to implement virtual hearings and a stipulation process to reduce the delays in access to the legal process caused by court closures.
- Thanks to generous donors we have provided our clients and their caregivers with access to critical resources including food, housing, mental health support, and technology needed for distance learning and virtual visits for children separated from their parents and siblings.

CLC has a robust training program, which includes quarterly trainings aimed at reducing racial disproportionality and disparity within the child welfare system. While these trainings and seminars provide a good foundation – we know this is not enough. Over the next several months we will develop and implement an action plan to move to the next level in our efforts to reduce disproportionality and to counter the devastating effects of institutional racism. There is a great deal to be done and CLC is committed to engaging in the hard conversations and doing the work to move forward.

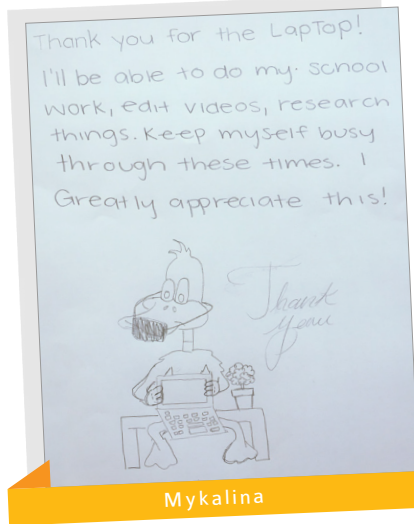
Thank you for your continued support and partnership, and for standing up for foster youth today and every day.

CLC Supporters Step Up to Meet Educational Needs in Time of Covid

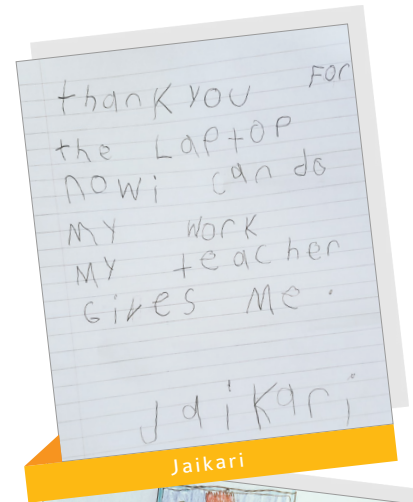
CLC is grateful to the many supporters who have helped our clients continue their educational endeavors throughout this crisis and beyond. Youth in foster care already face unique challenges in accessing an appropriate education, and the pandemic has only exacerbated the existing educational divide. The following individuals and organizations provided hundreds of laptops, tablets and chromebooks to support distance learning. CLC's ability to lean on our village was more critical than ever during this difficult time, and we extend our deepest gratitude to these donors.

Thank You!

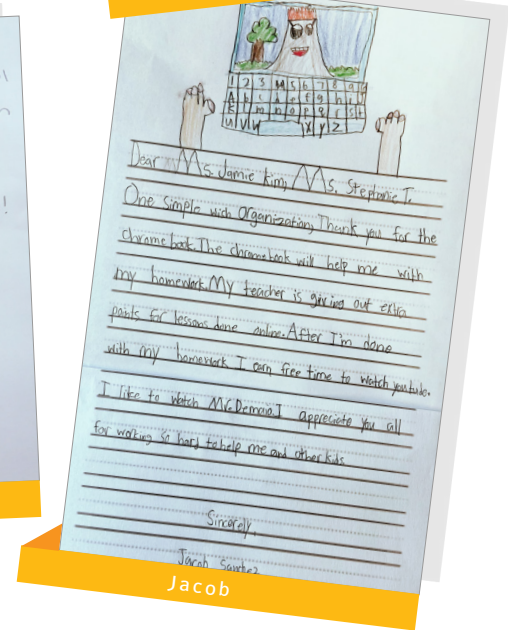
- California Community Foundation
- Sacramento Region Community Foundation
- Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
- Durfee Foundation
- Kids2Kids
- Tyler Childs & Caitlin Youngs
- Benjy & Ellen Grinberg
- One Simple Wish



Mykalina



Jaikari



Jacob

News from NorCal – Three Cheers for the Graduates!

Recognizing that graduation is a major milestone for students and families, the CLC Sacramento team was committed to honor their graduating clients. While we could not recreate the experience of walking across the stage and accepting their hard-earned diploma, the team made the season special by delivering yard signs to recognize the accomplishments. To each and every graduate in our CLC community: congratulations on your well-deserved success!

CLC Kudos

A special shout out CLC Northern California Regional Director, Brenda Dabney. Brenda just graduated from the prestigious **OneJustice 2019-2020 Executive Fellowship Program** for leaders in legal services and nonprofit public service. CLC is fortunate to have such a talented and dedicated leader at the helm in NorCal!



Spotlight



Graduate Spotlight

JACI CORTEZ
Graduate

CLC is proud to celebrate former CLC client and Guardian Scholar Jaci Cortez on her graduation from Rio Hondo College!

Having spent her life in foster care, Jaci believed that she would never have the opportunities of other children her age, and that only negative outcomes lay ahead for her. This all changed, however, once Jaci met her CLC attorney, Emily, who provided Jaci with unconditional support and encouragement. While Jaci had always struggled in school, she worked hard to overcome the obstacles in her way, and proudly proved her naysayers wrong when she successfully graduated from high school and began her college career. It was a long journey to finish her degree (three degrees and one certificate in total!), but this is just the beginning. Jaci is already looking to further her education as she continues her advocacy for other youth in care through her role as a campus Guardian Scholar. To other foster youth struggling in school, Jaci’s message is to *“Stay strong. If you have a goal, don’t ever stop until you make it happen. You are enough.”*

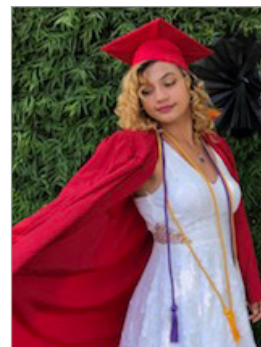
Congratulations, Jaci!

We’re so proud of CLC Client, Reason True Du Benion, who graduated a year early from her high school in June and was granted a full scholarship to college!

Reason moved around a lot throughout her childhood, attending four different middle schools, which made it difficult to stay on track in school. She was worried she might not graduate with other students her age. Envisioning a brighter future for herself was kept her motivated; she knew it would take hard work to meet her goals. As Reason shared, *“there is so much out of your control, but the one thing you can control is how much effort you put into your life.”* She put in the extra effort, taking additional classes over summer and winter breaks to make sure she graduated with her peers.

Reason has seen the positive ripple effects of her hard work. This fall, she’ll be starting the next chapter of her life at Chapman University. She’s grateful to her CLC Attorney, Deeksha Bhat, for the ongoing support. Reason can’t wait for a fresh start when she starts her college career, and looks forward to building new friendships and being on campus with other students who are just as passionate about learning as she is.

Congratulations, Reason!



Graduate Spotlight

**REASON TRUE
DU BENION**
Graduate

Employee Spotlight

JAVIER BARRAZA
Attorney, CLC SAC 2

CLC Attorney Javier Barraza has dedicated his career to improving outcomes for children in foster care. Javier first began representing youth in our Los Angeles office and then went on to advocate for children and families in the Humboldt County child welfare system. We are thrilled that Javier decided to return to CLC family in our Sacramento office, where he has brought a depth of knowledge and perspective to the practice.

Javier is truly beloved by his coworkers for his passion, dedication and ability to connect with young clients of all ages. He has spent countless hours mentoring newer CLC staff on how to best approach issues from a family and cultural perspective – having gained expertise from his work with rural, urban and tribal families. He is a strong advocate in and out of the courtroom. He has effectively challenged the thinking of bench officers and opposing counsel on such issues as substance abuse and poverty. Javier approaches each client and case with compassion. Combined with his dry wit and positive attitude, Javier is a standout attorney who always goes the extra mile. CLC is honored to have such a wonderful attorney, and person, on our team.



Board Thank You & Welcome

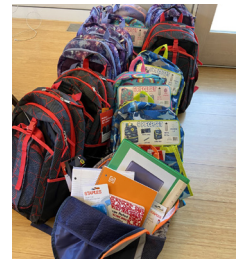
As our fiscal year comes to an end, we want thank the entire CLC Board of Directors for their continued dedication to CLC and their commitment to improving the lives of children and youth in foster care. CLC is also thrilled to welcome two new board members: **Scott Langley and Samson Mengitsu.**

Support Our Back to School Drive



As families across California prepare for distance learning - increase their Wi-Fi speed, hire tutors and create learning collaborative with neighbors, many children in foster care are without access to the technology needed to meaningfully engage in a virtual classroom. Once again, the most vulnerable in our communities will bear the brunt of an imperfect system - falling further behind their peers without the tools needed to catch up and keep up. CLC's Annual Back to School Drive is one way YOU can help children and youth in foster care stay connected. With your support, CLC's clients can start school focused on learning and ready to reach their full potential.

Learn more by visiting bit.ly/CLCDrive or by emailing gleaveesa@clccal.org




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