Dear DAG Fund Supporters:

I am thrilled to share with you that after extensive discussion with Harvard Law School, we are now on the cusp of endowing a permanent fund to support our work! Thanks to your generosity, we have raised a total of $900,000 – an amazing achievement in less than four years!

Although we did not reach our original goal of raising $1,000,000, by working closely with the development and financial teams at Harvard Law School, we are forging a path forward that will ensure we can sustain the fund in perpetuity. Under this strategy, for the next few years, we will be awarding fellowships on a semiannual basis, until our fund reaches $1,000,000, at which point fellowships can be awarded annually.

We are optimistic that we will be positioned to award annual fellowships in the very near future. Our family continues to contribute to the fund, and while we will no longer be engaging in active fundraising, we will continue to welcome donations from generous supporters like you. Directions on how you can donate are below.

Excitingly, the impact of our work continues to grow. All of our former fellows remain practicing in the public interest law sector, and our newest DAG Fund fellow, Alex Milvae, will be partnering with Greater Boston Legal Services to provide much needed legal advocacy for Boston’s indigent Asian community.

On behalf of the entire David Abraham Grossman Fund for Social Justice family, we would like to thank you for helping us create this enduring public interest law fellowship program in David’s memory. It is such a privilege and so incredibly meaningful to be able to honor David’s professional legacy in this way, and we are eternally grateful for your outpouring of support in helping us achieve this outcome – as are the many public interest lawyers whose careers your generosity will launch.

With greatest gratitude,
Stacy Grossman

If you wish to continue to support the David A. Grossman Fund for Social Justice, you can!

Donations by check made payable to the “DAG Fund” should be mailed to: Julie Adelsberger, Director of Donor Services, Harvard Law School, Pound Hall, 1563 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Or, donate online by visiting our website at http://www.davidgrossmanfund.org/ and clicking the donate link or go directly to our online portal at HLS at https://community.alumni.harvard.edu/give/13520537 and

Thank you!
People experience housing instability for a variety of reasons, with one primary factor being unaddressed legal issues. That’s where Jackie Ebert, the 2018-2019 DAG Fund Fellow, steps in. As a part of the Legal Services of Greater Miami team, Jackie is addressing the legal issues of homeless women and families residing at Lotus House Village shelter as well as the legal issues of those who have recently moved out of shelter.

Lotus House Village is an innovative trauma-informed shelter serving approximately 500 homeless guests daily. Lotus House provides shelter, case management, workforce training, and houses an early child education center. It did not have an entity dedicated to addressing guests’ legal issues until Jackie started in the fall of 2018, thanks to the David A. Grossman Fund. Now Jackie is located on-site at the shelter weekly to meet with current clients, conduct intakes of future clients, and serve as a resource to shelter staff.

As Jackie has observed first hand, there are a multitude of legal issues preventing the individuals Lotus House serves from attaining housing stability, and no two guests or their legal issues are alike. Jackie has worked with Lotus House guests on a variety of issues including obtaining divorces from abusive partners, helping guests obtain birth certificates so they may obtain identification documents, appealing Social Security benefit denials, and defending former guests of Lotus from eviction after they moved out of shelter.

Jackie notes how many systems individuals experiencing extreme poverty are often forced to navigate on their own. “I sit with some of my clients and hear how they have been bounced from one agency to another without ever getting an answer or solution to their problem and I get why they are exhausted. Systems that we as a society have set up are failing my clients, time and time again. My role as their attorney is to navigate these systems with them, and at the end of the day figure out how to change the system to make it less burdensome or unnecessarily taxing.”

Another task Jackie is charged with is developing a model in which social services providers are trained on how to work collaboratively with attorneys in order to maximize the amount of legal assistance available and accessible for those experiencing homelessness. “Case managers working closely with those living in shelter can be an invaluable resource, one that is often underutilized by the legal profession” Jackie shares. “If I take the time to train them on how to identify basic legal issues, and flag to them common scenarios that can very easily turn into legal issues and provide them with the tools, training, and support to address these issues, we take a proactive approach rather than a reactive approach. As a result, together we will be able to help more people.”

This first year in the shelter Jackie has worked on building trust with Lotus House guests and shelter staff. “This is key to a successful partnership,” Jackie states. “People talk. If a guest or shelter staff does not feel I am doing my job or am not effective, they are not going to refer other guests to come and see me. Shelter case managers are also going to be less likely to listen to me or any training I may provide if they do not think I know what I am talking about. This first year has been about laying a foundation to build upon.” The DAG Fund gave Jackie the opportunity to build this foundation, and as a result Jackie was able to obtain two additional years of funding to build on her project at Lotus House from the Florida Bar Foundation, in partnership with Equal Justice Works.

Jackie is thrilled to have another two years working with Legal Services of Greater Miami and Lotus House. “We have a real opportunity here to develop a model that works that can be utilized in different shelters,” Jackie states. “I can’t thank the DAG Fund and all of its supporters enough.”

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Keeping up with Becca Donaldson (DAG Fund Fellow ’17)

Since her DAG Fund Fellowship, Becca Donaldson has stayed on as a staff attorney at Legal Action of Wisconsin to keep asserting and defending the rights of victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. The State Bar of Wisconsin named Becca and colleagues among the state’s Legal Innovators in 2018. This year, their team expects to see major next steps unfold toward their project’s goal of better enforcing the rights of crime victims. This work will include pursuing appellate litigation to more clearly establish standing for these victims and sharing what the team’s attorneys and clients have learned about how existing laws play out in practice in order to better inform pending legislation that will shape how crime victims experience justice going forwards.

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To keep up with the latest DAG Fund for Social Justice news, visit us on Facebook or at our website and THANK YOU!

www.davidgrossmanfund.org