



CENTER FOR  
**ELDER  
LAW &  
JUSTICE**

**2020  
Annual  
Report**





# Letter from the CEO

*As I sit here to write this, it has been one year since the first COVID-19 case was reported in New York State. It seems like a lifetime ago and I find myself looking through old photos and e-mails to remember what it felt like when we all saw each other regularly, without masks and the fear of infection. Being a public-facing program, many of the CELJ staff are getting vaccinated right now. But more importantly, I am happy to see many of our clients getting the protection they need. As difficult as it has been for me personally this past year, I know it has been much worse for the people we serve at CELJ.*

*When we closed our physical offices and went completely virtual last year on March 17th, I had no idea what the year would look like. We were not set up for remote work; many of our staff did not even have work laptops. Most worrisome to me; however, is how we would reach the most vulnerable in our community. CELJ staff spend so much time in the community through our Mobile Legal Unit (MLU), our Medical-Legal Partnership (MedLaw) and hundreds of outreach appearances. What would happen to these critical services?*

*Since 2016 our Mobile Legal Unit has brought attorneys directly to our clients throughout all the WNY counties we serve. Through MedLaw we have had attorneys full time imbedded in several area hospitals, providing immediate legal services to the most vulnerable patients and directly addressing the social determinants of health that exacerbate health inequities. Our outreach program targets rural populations and communities of color, many of whom do not historically call our office for assistance. How would we continue to meet the needs of all older adults in WNY without our traditional models of engagement?*

*As soon as we went virtual, our staff immediately began to address these concerns with creative solutions. Our Free Senior Legal Advice Helpline quickly expanded, adding hours and new attorneys (both pro bono and staff) to answer the flood of calls and e-mails from across the state. The volume was incredible. In May of 2020, at the height of the confusion and fear over the pandemic and the court closings, our Helpline saw a tenfold increase in volume. Our incredible administrative staff enabled us to seamlessly pivot to remote work, and our local foundations helped CELJ with the costs of PPE, tech support and even provided one-time gap funding when our state contracts were cut. Zoom and Facebook Live became our new realities and over 8,000 people accessed resources provided by our staff through those formats. Our MedLaw program continued virtually and our attorneys became experts on remote document execution. We recovered or saved almost 2 million dollars for our clients in recovered Medicaid, Medicare, and other public benefits. Although we are eager to get back into the communities we serve, we were able to make the new normal work for our staff and clients during this strange and difficult year.*

*Challenges reveal character. Our staff, board, donors and volunteers rose to the challenges brought on by the pandemic and the resulting economic collapse. The future is still uncertain, and I continue to fear for our clients and their families. However, I know that they can count on CELJ, no matter what is thrown at us. I will always be grateful that this year, even though terrible, reminded me of the dedication and commitment of everyone associated with this incredible organization.*

**Thank you!**

**Challenges  
reveal  
character.**



*Chief Executive Officer*

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**Karen Nicolson**

## ***Our Mission***

It is the mission of the Center for Elder Law & Justice to improve the quality of life for elderly, disabled and low-income persons in Western New York. We do so through the provision of free civil legal services, primarily to individuals age sixty and over as defined by the federal Older Americans Act, but also to younger disabled and low-income individuals, as funding permits. Our primary goal is to use the legal system to assure that our clients may live independently and with dignity.

# Board of Directors

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# New Staff Members



**Bryana Becker**

*Legal Assistant*



**Christina Deveso**

*Paralegal, MedLaw Program*



**Bria Lewis, Esq.**

*Staff Attorney,  
Health Care Advocacy Unit*



**Michael McCracken**

*Paralegal,  
Health Care Advocacy Unit*



**Christopher  
Phillips, Esq.**

*Borchard Fellow,  
Silver Pride Partnership*



**Francine Rondenell**

*Paralegal,  
Dunkirk Office*



## CELJ by the Numbers



**4,738**  
*Cases opened*



**4,603**  
*Cases closed*



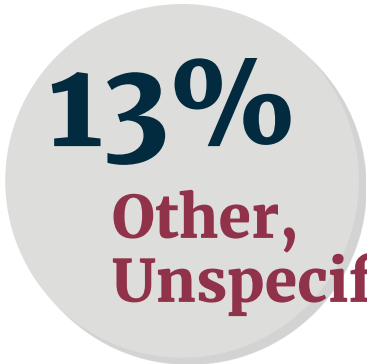
**10,416**  
*People served*



**87,613**  
*Visitors to our website*

**72%**  
*over the age of 60*

**89%**  
*are under 200%  
of the poverty level*



The amount we helped our clients recover or save through our Elder Abuse Prevention, Foreclosure Prevention, Consumer, Housing, Income Maintenance, and Health Care Units.



The amount that our services in the Kinship Care, Housing, Health Care, Foreclosure, Guardianship, and Elder Abuse Prevention Units saved taxpayers across New York State

We reached **5,171** people through client presentations.

We reached **74,000** though radio and TV.

**3,009** professionals attended our presentations, trainings and CLE's.



# In the News

## (Highlights)

- ***Kelly Barrett Sarama, Esq.***  
Interviewed or mentioned in Riverdale Press, The Buffalo News, and The Buffalo Law Journal.
- ***Shana DiCamillo***  
Quoted in the Daily News article, “State releases nursing home death data; advocacy group wants more detail.”
- ***Helen Ferraro-Zaffram, Esq.***  
Interviewed or mentioned in The Buffalo News and Courthouse News.
- ***Lindsay Heckler, Esq.,***  
Interviewed or mentioned in News AP National, ABC News, The Seattle Times, Modern Healthcare, USA Today, The Daily Beast, The Hill, Cambridge Chronicle, Spectrum News, The Buffalo News, The Buffalo Law Journal, and ElderLawAnswers.com.
- ***Bria Lewis, Esq.***  
Quoted in the WXXI article: “Nursing homes have relied on lawns and patios for visits. What will happen as weather grows colder?”
- ***Liam McMahon***  
Interviewed in the Buffalo Law Journal, “Where to turn if a nursing home isn’t following Covid-19 rules.”
- ***Karen Nicolson, Esq.***  
Published in Buffalo News, “Letter: Civil legal-aid providers will help those in need” and “Civil legal services are essential to Covid recovery.”
- ***Nicole Parshall, Esq.***  
Quoted in the Buffalo Business First article, “In battle against incessant robocalls, legal help does exist.”
- ***Kevin Quinn, Esq.***  
Quoted in the WBFO article: “City, Water Board urged to restore shut off water service during pandemic”, Food & Water Watch: “Amidst COVID Crisis, Cuomo Must Ensure Access to Water for All New Yorkers,” and in WHCU News, “NYS Legislature bans water shut-offs during COVID-19 pandemic.”



## Awards and Recognition



***Kelly Barrett  
Sarama, Esq.***

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Named a Super Lawyers® Rising Star from 2019 – 2020, and elected to the Bar Association of Erie County's Board of Directors.



***Helen Ferraro-  
Zaffram, Esq.***

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Named a Super Lawyers® Super Lawyer from 2019-2020.



***Christopher  
Phillips, Esq.***

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Named a Borchard Fellow to expand the agency's partnership with the Western New York Pride Center's Silver Pride Project.



***Garry Graber, Esq.***

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Named a Legal Elite by Buffalo Business First.



***Cynthia Vance, Esq.***

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Named a Power 150 Woman by Buffalo Business First.





**Edward Yadzinski**  
*and the Center for Elder Law and Justice*

*As written by Greg Yadzinski*

Edward Yadzinski (Ed) was a proud member of the Buffalo community for nearly 60 years until his passing in October of 2020. Starting in 1963, he served both the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO) as musician, program annotator and historian and the University at Buffalo (UB) Music Performance department teaching saxophone and clarinet. With the BPO, Ed performed as principal clarinetist, bass clarinetist and saxophonist until 1988 when the debilitating effects of Multiple Sclerosis (MS) compelled him to set down the instruments and pivot his creative energy to teaching, composition and writing. Swapping clarinet for computer keys, he would go on to write thousands of articles in program books for the BPO and other orchestras around the country. These narratives came from a unique 'behind the scenes' perspective of a musician and teacher. Each highlighted the beauty, nuance and history of music, adding context for audiences and enhancing the listening experience. If you attended a BPO performance or enjoyed one of their recordings within the past six decades, you have probably heard or read his work.

Unlike many stricken with the condition, MS took Ed's physical dexterity slowly over time. Even so, he was determined

to live solo on his own terms in his Snyder home until his last days. In 1990, Ed began using a scooter exclusively for mobility. He constantly maneuvered around his disability over the years with boundless improvisational creativity and the occasional assistance of his sons, neighbors, and fellow Buffalonians to build ramps, widen doors, invest in powered beds, chairs and personal lifts with customized remote controls. Even with these adaptations, MS would steadily encroach on Ed's ability to perform basic household tasks and in 2018 it became apparent that he needed assistance to maintain his lifestyle and safety. Given a fixed income, the New York State Managed Long Term Care (MLTC) program under Medicaid was an ideal option for Ed.

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**By all measures, Ed was the perfect MLTC candidate – while limited physically, he was intellectually tack sharp, living in his own home fully customized for his needs. As an alternative to skilled nursing facilities, the promise of lower cost assistance at home was a godsend. When our family began to navigate the system, we found the nobly conceived MLTC program advertised in glossy pamphlets is in fact administered by private corporations following processes optimized to minimize cost by throttling benefits to our community's senior residents. Ed encountered multiple obstacles to his admission and sustained participation in the MLTC program. He overcame these hurdles only with the repeated intervention by the Center for Elder Law and Justice (CELJ).**

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Ironically, it was a personal long-term disability insurance policy that would nearly derail Ed's initial participation in the MLTC program. Decades ago, Ed purchased coverage and made every one of the high monthly premium payments knowing that one day he would need help. When applying for MLTC assistance, he encountered a bewildering catch-22 scenario: the policy benefit was treated as income by the state to be remitted up-front before he would be accepted into the MLTC system. However, the insurance company couldn't reimburse providers until it received an invoice from a qualified nursing company after care delivery. The issue persisted for months until CELJ stepped in and began communicating directly with the stakeholders on Ed's behalf. Formal legal representation drew immediate attention to the problem in a way our family could not on our own





and compelled the various parties to develop an approach to overcome the impasse within two weeks. This critical intervention not only cleared the way for Ed's admission to the program, by assigning the insurance benefit to the home health aide company it offset nearly a quarter of the monthly cost to Medicaid.

**In February 2020, CELJ again played a key role to maintain Ed's in home care. In a heartbreaking twist, after a year in the MLTC program Ed's eligibility for services was challenged and he was informed his condition did not warrant 24-hour continuous support. His home aide coverage would effectively be cut by nearly two-thirds, despite the fact his MS had worsened over the previous twelve months. Ed was suddenly caught in a systematic push to move even the most deserving participants out of the MLTC program to reduce cost as a result of government funding pressures. Once again, CELJ provided critical legal guidance and immediately filed a fair hearing request to appeal the adverse determination and maintain the critical level of care as his case was pending review.**

Sadly, Ed passed in late October 2020 before his case could be heard; however CELJ actions ensured that his vital in-home care continued uninterrupted until his last day. As a family, we had full confidence Ed would have prevailed based on his obvious need and owing CELJ's strategy, preparedness and professionalism. Even as our father rested peacefully in his final moments at home, CELJ provided guidance for funeral arrangements and estate planning, helping to alleviate stress and uncertainty during a challenging time.

Without a doubt, Ed's participation in the MLTC program

was an unqualified success, made possible by the CELJ team. The importance of their work cannot be overstated as their mission supports thousands of families in Western New York, especially imperative during the COVID pandemic and economic downturn putting many senior residents at higher risk. Every member of our elder community deserves an advocate, and as our family has seen firsthand, CELJ can profoundly improve outcomes for the most vulnerable among us.

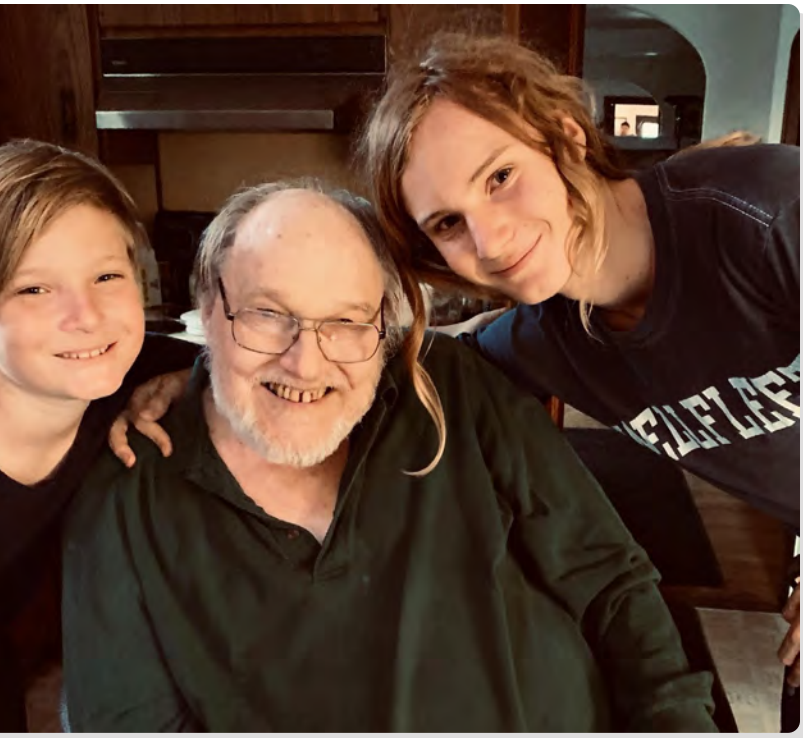


## Family Profile

Ed was a graduate of Wilkes College (1962) and the Eastman School of Music (1963). While at Eastman, Ed met Marie Koscak, then a violin student. They married in 1965 but divorced amicably in 1978. Ed and Marie both performed together with the BPO during those years. Ed and Marie had two sons Greg and Stephen Yadzinski - both are graduates of Amherst High School and the Rochester Institute of Technology (Greg BSEE 1994, Stephen BFA 1997). Greg also graduated from the George Washington University (MBA 2013). Greg is married to Amy Czelusniak and they have one child Sophia Yadzinski. Greg works in the defense industry. He and his family currently live in Fairfax, Virginia. Stephen is married to Susanna Space and they have two children Gwen and Wyatt. Stephen works with a non-profit dedicated to connecting employers with the workforce of tomorrow. He and his family live in Santa Fe, NM.

### ***Fond family memories with dad include:***

Time spent at Kleinhans as children during orchestra rehearsals (we probably shouldn't have been there but for



whatever reason our parents couldn't find a sitter), ad-hoc home renovation projects, family dinners at Lunetta's Restaurant on Cleveland Drive, summertime picnics at Joseph Davis State Park, power tools instruction, drifting off to sleep as a kid listening to clarinet practice, visits to paternal grandparents in Wilkes-Barre, PA and annual weekend camping adventures in June centered around amateur radio contests (ARRL Field Day) at Golden Hill State Park and Artpark.

### ***How we would like others to remember Ed:***

Ed was exceptionally talented as a musician and educator. He expressed boundless creativity in his professional and personal lives through writing, composition, and continual adaptations to work around MS - a cruel disease he battled nearly his entire adult life. He was thoughtful, courageous and kind. MS knocked him to the ground hundreds of times and he sustained bruises, cuts and multiple broken bones. Despite his injuries, he got up and moved on...Every. Single. Time. He never, ever complained about his discomfort or limitations, choosing to focus on his creative work and contributing to the Buffalo music community.

***Ed's ethos is perhaps best captured in an Emily Dickinson poem:  
"I dwell in Possibility."***

Patricia Ray Hamilton Stacey was born late August in 1939, a little over a week before the start of World War II. It was the same year that LaGuardia Airport in New York City opened, the same year The Wizard of Oz starring Judy Garland first premiered in Hollywood. The average wages for an American worker were \$1,730 a year. The average cost to rent a house was \$28 a month. A gallon of gasoline was a dime.

Patricia was the second oldest of nine children. Her mother, Gwen, was a nurse. Her father a Minister of Music at Friendship Baptist Church. They grew up with a deep appreciation for music in all forms, but her father was particularly fond of Aretha Franklin, whose Father, Reverend C.L. Franklin, led the congregation at Friendship Baptist.

In high school, Patricia was a smart and hardworking student. She won a scholarship to NYU's Social Work program, graduating with such a passion for helping others that she continued her education at the University at Buffalo in order to be licensed as a Social Worker. While in school, Patricia's need to advocate for others prompted her to establish a national association for Black students and staff.

Since graduation, she has held many jobs in the human services field—from recreation coordinator, to a supervisor at Community Action Organization, and finally as an adjunct lecturer at both Buffalo State, University at Buffalo, and ECC. Even today, at 81 years of age, Patricia volunteers as a deaconess and missionary with her church.

Her faith has been a real and driving entity in her life. She is a member of the Walls Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Buffalo, an order originally founded in 1821 in New York City that has boasted members such as Harriet Tubman. Patricia's personal motto is, "If God is for you, no one can be against you." Patricia married her second husband, the Reverend Franklin R. Stacey, in 1984 and was by his side until he passed in 1999. She has two children and is the last member of her siblings still alive today.

Sadly, it was an allegation of abuse against her children that led Patricia to seek the Center for Elder Law and



Our Clients:  
**Patricia Ray  
Hamilton Stacey**



Justice's help. Her son, as court-appointed Guardian, had stolen thousands of dollars of her money and used it as his own. He sold her possessions, verbally abused her in person and over the phone. Her extensive medical bills were adding up. She had beaten breast cancer, suffered several strokes, and sustained a heart attack. But the money was gone. Patricia ended up at a local nursing facility when staying at her son's home became too dangerous.

CELJ advocated to revoke Patricia's son's Article 81 Guardianship and succeeded in removing him from his role. They drafted a new Power of Attorney document naming a trusted individual to help her manage her affairs. CELJ also represented Patricia in a lawsuit when she was sued by the nursing facility for bills that Byron had failed to pay as Guardian, and was successful in getting the suit against Patricia dismissed.

When it got cold, since all of Patricia's belongings were gone after leaving her son's home, CELJ submitted a request for winter wear through the WNY Coalition Pooled

Trust's AfterCare grant program. With the request approved, Patricia finally had a warm coat, winter hats and gloves, and the ability to once again be a part of the community.

Today, Patricia is optimistic about the future. "I might go back to school," she says. "I have a new laptop." Asked about her relationship with CELJ, Patricia lights up. "Sarah is my little angel," she says about Supervising Attorney Sarah Duval, who has been helping her since 2018.

**Elder abuse is not just physical violence against our most vulnerable population. It can come in many forms, like financial abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, and domestic violence. The Center for Elder Law and Justice's Elder Abuse Prevention unit handles cases of adult abuse. If you suspect your loved one is being abused, call Adult Protective Services in your county. For legal help, call CELJ's intake line at (716) 853-3087.**

## Health Care Advocacy Unit Highlights during COVID

During 2020, our Health Care Advocacy Unit worked hard to meet the demands of a region in need. Thanks to the Health Foundation of Western & Central New York, we hired new staff attorney Bria Lewis, and paralegal Michael McCracken. CELJ represented clients in appeals and grievances involving Medicaid, Medicaid Managed Long Term Care, Medicare, and private health insurance companies.

The Health Care Advocacy Unit represents clients in discharge appeals from all health care facilities, including hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and assisted living facilities. Even during the public health crisis, vulnerable older adults were faced with involuntary discharges from nursing homes. One client was told he would be discharged to the local homeless shelter and was not served with any type of written notice. Our legal team successfully kept this client from being left at the homeless shelter with no other options. After several calls and e-mails to the Department of Health, and working together with an ombudsman, our attorney was able to obtain written notice from the nursing home, appeal the discharge, and work with the client to find stable housing.



The situation surrounding nursing homes has been volatile during COVID-19. With short staffing, quality care, and infection controls already an issue, many of these facilities were set up for disaster when the pandemic began. In August of 2020, CELJ supervising attorney Lindsay Heckler testified before the Joint Legislative Committees on Health, Aging, and Investigations and Government Operations, detailing the longstanding problems in long-term care facilities that existed prior to the pandemic. She reported on the impact of the pandemic on these facilities, and proposed legislative solutions to address these problems. The testimony focused on four key areas: the need for transparency and accountability, the harmful impact on resident rights and care, survey and enforcement, and reforming the system.

Testimony was also provided in January at the New York State Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Health, and official comment was submitted in July to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services regarding COVID-19 Reporting Requirements for Skilled Nursing Facilities.

With funding from the Odd Fellow & Rebekah Benefit Fund, CELJ Paralegal Liam McMahon has developed two informational guides targeted at current and soon-to-be nursing home residents in Western New York. The guides, which were informed by surveys of consumers and professionals in our region, set out to ease the often difficult transition into a nursing home through educating consumers about common issues and the practice of

self-advocacy. Now, through a series of online educational videos, CELJ hopes to expand on the breadth and depth of information available to consumers on common nursing home resident rights issues.

This unit was particularly busy with media engagements during 2020, as our state and country struggled to manage life during a global pandemic. Supervising Attorney Lindsay Heckler was featured in USA Today, The Hill, The Daily Beast, The Seattle Times, Spectrum News, The Buffalo News, Modern Healthcare; and on 88.7 WBFO, WKBW Channel 7 News, 930 WBEN, Long Island News Radio, and Cheddar TV (just to name a few!) Supervising Attorney Kelly Barrett Sarama, and Staff Attorney Bria Lewis were also featured in articles by the Buffalo Law Journal, and interviewed on 88.7 WBFO and on WXXI.



## Senior Legal Advice Helpline

By Erin Riker, Esq.

In March 2020, CELJ's work underwent a rapid shift to remote and virtual services due to the COVID-19 pandemic and shutdown of all non-essential businesses in New York State. Our client base of mainly senior citizens was particularly at risk for the virus, but was also particularly vulnerable to the lack of in-person services due to the technological divide that exists between seniors and younger populations. This resulted in a sudden and exponential increase in demand for our Senior Legal Advice Helpline. Although the Helpline had been up and running since 2017, it had to drastically expand its operations to meet the increase in demand. Since the COVID pandemic created additional needs for legal services across the age spectrum, the Helpline's intake guidelines were expanded to include clients of all ages. This allowed the public to receive free brief legal services on issues affecting younger working adults, particularly access to unemployment benefits and paid leave for child care, as well as those affecting seniors.

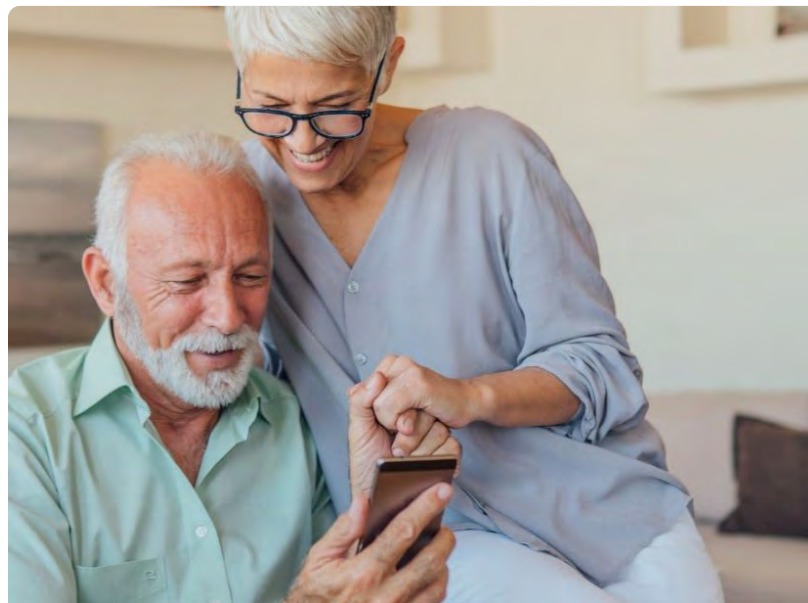
CELJ was able to quickly scale up the number of attorneys available to take phone calls during Helpline live calling operating hours. To meet the increased demand, CELJ also added a voicemail and email option that could serve callers

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with a return phone call or email by an attorney within 2-3 business days. For those with access to the Internet, CELJ operated a COVID-19 information blog that was updated daily to provide a one-stop resource for information about government stimulus packages, shutdown-related restrictions, access to testing and medical care, and access to additional government benefits.

CELJ's flexibility and dedication allowed the agency to increase its Helpline client base tenfold between 2019 and 2020. Reports on the Helpline's services were included in local news broadcasts, COVID daily press briefings from county and state government, and in communications to constituents from elected officials. Although the Helpline primarily targets clients in the Western New York area, it received calls from all over the state. The voicemail and email Helpline options remain popular among Helpline clients who are unable to call in during the Helpline's live calling hours.

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**Are you an attorney or law student who is interested in volunteering to answer the helpline? Visit us online at [www.elderjusticenyc.org/senior-legal-advice-helpline](http://www.elderjusticenyc.org/senior-legal-advice-helpline), or call Erin Riker at 716-853-3087 x 249 for more information.**





## TV and Radio Coverage

● ***F. Alexander Fehrman, Esq.***

Interviewed on 93.7 WBLK.

● ***Katelyn Gindele, Esq.***

Interviewed on 1080 WUFO.

● ***Lindsay Heckler, Esq.***

Interviewed on WBEN AM 930, WKBW Channel 7, 88.7 WBFO, Cheddar TV & Long Island News Radio.

● ***Brad Loliger, Esq.***

Interviewed on Sound Magazine and Lockport Community Television's WNY Tonight with Tammie Lee Demler.

● ***Fidele Menavanza***

Interviewed by Buffalo Toronto Public Media for Making Buffalo Home, a 2-year long in-depth initiative to inform and raise awareness about the immigrant and refugee population in Buffalo.

● ***Karen Nicolson, Esq. and Board Member Ann Monroe***

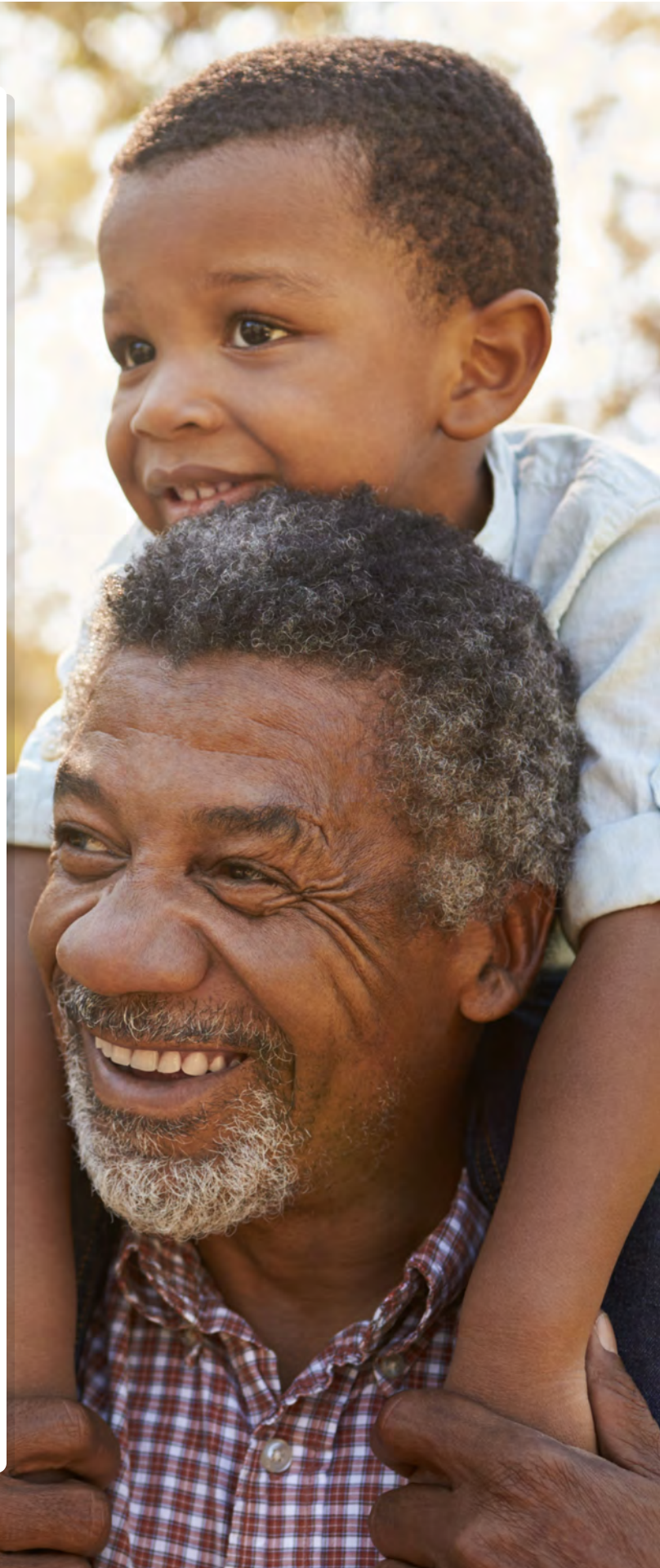
Interviewed on 88.7 WBFO.

● ***Kelly Barrett Sarama, Esq.***

Quoted on WKBW Channel 7 News.

● ***David Shapiro, Esq.***

Interviewed on Channel 7's AM Buffalo to discuss the Kinship Care Unit.





# New Grant Funding

During 2020 we were pleased to receive generous support from many area foundations:

- Funding to support Melissa Lau, a High Road Fellow through the ILR School of Cornell University who worked with our Health Care Advocacy Unit.
- COVID Emergency Response Funding from:
  - The New York Bar Foundation COVID Response Fund
  - The WNY COVID-19 Community Response Fund
  - The Ralph Wilson Jr. Legacy Fund
- CELJ was awarded \$125,000 from the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York to support the Health Care Advocacy Unit's work. Funds allowed CELJ to increase staffing to support issues concerning access to Medicare, Medicaid, and Managed Long Term Care; fighting against involuntary nursing home discharges; and educating nursing home residents and families on their rights due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

*The Health Foundation is an independent private foundation that advocates for continuous improvement in health and health care by investing in the people and organizations that serve young children and older adults.*

- A new grant from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation in the amount of \$218,000 will support a three year project beginning in January of 2021, providing training and support to caregivers of older adults in Western New York.
- Erie County supported CELJ's Housing Unit with a \$50,000 grant to provide counseling and referral services to those in need. A new contract was also awarded from the City of Buffalo to support COVID-19 emergency rent applications and eviction prevention services. This work will begin in early 2021.
- The OddFellow and Rebekah Benefit Fund renewed their commitment to our agency with funding to support digital outreach to nursing home residents and their families through video and podcast resources.

# *Pro Bono Volunteer of the Year*

This award is given to an individual who shows a commitment to pro bono volunteer opportunities throughout the year. The volunteer exhibits a dedication to the mission of the Center for Elder Law & Justice through his or her time and effort, making a clear impact on the number of clients that CELJ is able to serve.

## *Steven Bengart*

Steve has been a dedicated member of our Board of Directors since 2009, and currently serves as vice president of the Board. In addition to this service, he also consistently volunteers his time as a pro bono attorney. He has been a partner in the Law Office of Bengart & DeMarco, LLP for 26 years, and has also spent the last 17 years as first the Town Attorney/Prosecutor and then Deputy Town Attorney/Prosecutor for the Town of Clarence. Steve and his wife, Mary, have been married for 29 years, and have three children.



## *Terrie Benson Murray*

Terrie's commitment to the Help Center has been essential to our work. Her many hours of dedicated support to unrepresented individuals in Erie County has proved critical to the continued operation of the Center, and inspires volunteers and staff alike. She is a partner at Cohen & Lombardo, and head of the firm's Trusts, Estates, and Elderlaw Practice. Terrie is currently serving as the President of the Board of Directors of the Family Justice Center of Buffalo and Erie County, and is the founding member and officer of PEO Chapter CM, a women's organization dedicated to assisting women who wish to pursue higher education.

## *Barbara Schaus*

Barbara's dedication as a volunteer attorney has been vital to running the Help Center at Erie County Surrogate's Court, the creation of which was driven by the needs of hundreds of unrepresented litigants attempting to navigate the Surrogate's Court without the assistance of an attorney. Thanks to the many hours of pro bono work provided by Barb, these individuals are given much-needed support and guidance. She is a partner in the fourth generation family law firm of Schaus & Schaus LLP, and practices in the area of wills, trusts, and estate administration, residential and commercial real estate, and business formation. A senior attorney for the New York State Board of Law Examiner, Barb has been involved in bar exam content, administration, and grading for over 20 years.



# Luminary Award

This award is given to a philanthropic individual who shows a strong devotion to the mission of the Center for Elder Law & Justice through his or her generosity and actions. The individual should be a leader in the community, or in his/her field, and show a true dedication to the work of CELJ.

## Cynthia Vance

Cynthia has served on the Board of Directors for the Center for Elder Law & Justice since 2011, and is acting Board President, and a member of our leadership giving society. Her experience in the field of financial management is invaluable, and we can always rely on Cynthia for her advice, and advocacy on behalf of our agency. She is founding partner and manager of Jensen, Marks, Langer & Vance, LLC; and founding partner and CEO of Sterling Investment Counsel, LLC, which is now considered to be one of the premiere independent money management firms in Western New York. Cynthia also has a large client-based practice where she uses her 35 years of experience to provide her clients with financial advice.



Cynthia's involvement in the community is impressive: she is currently a member of the Board of Trustees at Canisius College, the Center for Elder Law & Justice, Nichols School, WNED/WBFO, The Buffalo Club, and a member of the Endowment Committee for Explore & More, and a member of the Junior League of Buffalo. She has received the Power 125 and Women of Influence Awards from Buffalo Business First; the Women of Distinction Award from the Girl Scouts of Western New York; the Board Volunteer Award from the Champions for Justice, and the Sustainer Council Award from the Junior League of Buffalo.

## Margaret and Ronald Talboys

Margaret and Ron are both Western New York natives, and became involved with the Center for Elder Law & Justice when CEO Karen Nicolson was working as a law student, assigned to her first case. Margaret's mother needed nursing home care at the age of 73, and was in Schoelkopf Nursing Home in Kenmore. This was when our paths first crossed, as they enlisted our help with their mother's case. Since then, the couple has made consistent and loyal contributions, often sending kind words of support. When looking at the history of our agency, their long-term commitment truly stands out. They have been investing in us for nearly 30 years, and are now members of our Circle of Justice leadership giving society. It's



no surprise that the couple should show such philanthropic dedication. The Talboys founded Habitat for Humanity Buffalo in 1985, which is now one of the top Habitat affiliates in the United States. Ron eventually retired from a long career in mechanical engineering at General Motors, and the couple dedicated all of their time to the fledgling nonprofit, building a strong foundation for years to come. Ron is also the 2010 recipient of the Leadership Buffalo Service Award. Margaret currently serves as lay chaplain at Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital and Greenfield Nursing Facility. She wrote that she considered CELJ a "partner" in their journey, having given them confidence and direction along the way.

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*Thank you to the following donors who contributed to the Center for Elder Law & Justice during 2020!*

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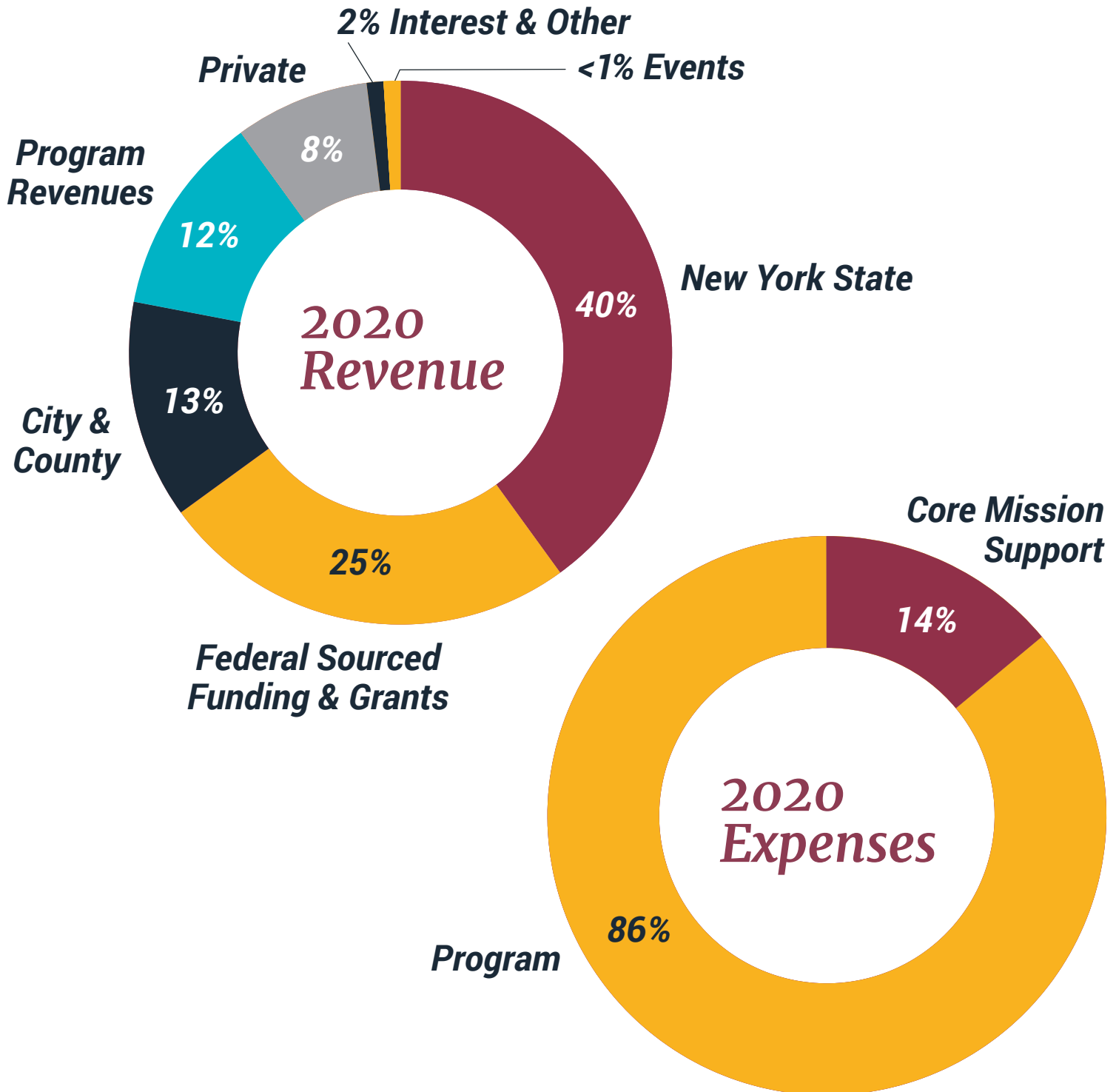
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# Financials

Revenue & Expense  
Year Ending December 2020



# Financials

Revenue & Expense  
Year Ending December 2020

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Program Revenues	\$624,405	12%
Federal Sourced Funding	\$1,352,413	25%
New York State	\$2,108,120	40%
City & County	\$709,857	13%
Private	\$408,751	8%
Events	\$12,350	<1%
Interest & Other Revenue	\$105,708	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,321,604.00</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Program	\$4,264,370	86%
Core Mission Support	\$714,673	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,979,043.00</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Numbers for the year ending December 31, 2020 and are unaudited.









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