



CASA CORNELIA LAW CENTER
2021 ANNUAL REPORT





JUSTICE WITH COMPASSION

Casa Cornelia's Mission and Spirit are rooted in the tradition of service of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, which founded and sponsored the Law Center in 1993 to provide free legal services to indigent victims of human and civil rights violations.

Although U.S. immigration law and policy offer safe haven for persons in perilous circumstances, eligibility for protection under the law is no guarantee of securing protection. Further, while there is a right to legal counsel in these matters, the government does not provide attorneys, so the non-citizen must find their own attorney or proceed without an attorney. Victimized non-citizens unfamiliar with the legal system, language, and culture rarely navigate the intricacies of the legal system successfully on their own. Indigent persons fleeing persecution in their homelands, abused women and men, abandoned and neglected children, and victims of human trafficking are especially vulnerable.

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Casa Cornelia Law Center is a 501(c)(3) public interest non-profit law firm providing quality pro bono legal services to victims of human and civil rights violations within the immigrant community in Southern California. The Law Center also seeks to educate others on the impact of immigration law and policy on the community and the public good.

LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – FALL 2022



Dear Friends of Casa Cornelia Law Center,

There's a statue on Ellis Island of the first non-citizen processed there by immigration officials when the facility opened on January 1892. As a 17-year-old traveling to the United States without her parents (and caring for her two younger brothers), by today's laws she would be considered an unaccompanied minor. I wonder if this young woman—arriving safely in the United States—reflected on the long journey she had endured and the long road still ahead. Emerging from that dark steamship in New York Harbor, I wonder how it felt to breathe the crisp air of that January morning.

As I reflect on the good work of 2021, my thoughts of course turn to our clients who over a century later also make long and perilous journeys. I remind myself that their arrival in the United States is never the end but rather a new beginning with many challenges still to come. We hope, though, that each step along the way will provide an opportunity to emerge from the challenges and offer a glimpse of the good ahead.

2021 was a year for all of us to collectively begin to emerge from one of the most challenging worldwide experiences in modern history. Slowly, a sense of normalcy began to return.

In the following pages, we share our work in numbers: individuals responded to, hours dedicated, languages spoken, countries represented. More importantly, though, we share stories of those who have emerged from perilous circumstances and are ready to begin their lives as our neighbors, colleagues, and friends. As you read the stories of Hashem, Oseye, Victoria, Jonathan, and Elisa, please know that your support has made it possible for them to find safety and continue moving forward.

As always, I am grateful for your partnership in this mission. May we all look ahead together to a bright future.

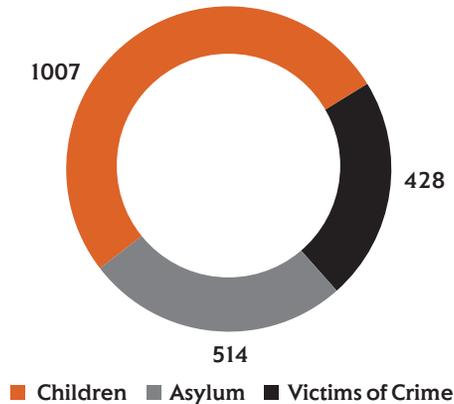
Sincerely yours,

CARMEN M. CHAVEZ, ESQ.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE WORK OF THE LAW CENTER IN 2021

In 2021, Casa Cornelia Law Center remained faithful to its mission and core focus by continuing to provide the highest quality pro bono legal representation to the most vulnerable members of the immigrant community in San Diego and Imperial Counties. **During 2021, the Law Center's 30 staff members and its corps of hundreds of volunteers responded to 1,943 persons seeking legal services** through the Asylum, Children's, and Victims of Crime Programs, a 40% overall increase from 2020. These individuals came from a total of 58 different countries and spoke 44 different languages. In the same period, **372 volunteers (attorneys, language volunteers, students, and others) contributed a total of 11,750 volunteer hours.**

INDIVIDUALS RESPONDED TO BY PROGRAM IN 2020



During the first year of the pandemic, as much of society (including most government processing of immigration matters) came to a halt, the Law Center saw a significant decrease in new requests for services. This was not the result of less need. Around the world, autocrats and corrupt officials continued to persecute and torture, gangs continued to extort and terrorize, and abusers and traffickers continued their heinous crimes, but many of those most in need of safe haven were denied the opportunity to seek it due to pandemic restrictions. Many victims already in our community—sheltering at home and cut off from social services providers—were unable to access the resources that would normally result in a referral to Casa Cornelia for assistance.

The immigration system has long been marred by significant backlogs. In recent years, underfunding, misguided policies, and poor government management—combined with the greatest number of displaced persons worldwide since the Second World War—

increased backlogs to crisis levels. Even before the pandemic, cases regularly took years (sometimes decades) to process. Pandemic closures only exacerbated the situation.

As the pandemic began to abate in 2021, processing of immigration cases picked up. Many non-citizens who had been waiting years for decisions on their cases were finally able to move forward. Individuals fleeing torture and persecution who had been denied the opportunity guaranteed by U.S. and international law to seek protection in the United States these same were finally able to do. As community members returned to work and school, they began to learn about Casa Cornelia's services and seek support.

ASYLUM PROGRAM

The Law Center's **Asylum Program** continues to represent non-citizens fleeing persecution and torture in their home countries. These clients are in grave danger because of their identities, such as their race, nationality, religion, political opinion, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Asylum clients may be permitted to reside with family members or community sponsors while waiting for their cases to be heard, but many are held indefinitely in immigration detention for the duration of their cases, despite having committed no crimes. Casa Cornelia serves asylum seekers detained at immigration detention centers in Otay Mesa, California, and Calexico, California, as well as those residing throughout San Diego County.

The Asylum Program began 2021 with 200 open cases and responded to an additional 314 individuals during the course of the year. In total, this represents a 25% increase from the previous year. Clients were from all over the globe, but the countries most represented during the year were Afghanistan, Haiti, Mexico, Guatemala, and Venezuela.

Because of the nature of its work, the Asylum Program's clientele reflects the realities of civil strife and human rights violations around the world. Turmoil continued in Haiti, Mexico, and throughout the Northern Triangle of Central America. Autocrats continued in power in Venezuela, Cuba, China, and Russia. As the United States military withdrew from Afghanistan, the Taliban quickly took over and made clear their intention to rule with brutality. In 2021, the Asylum Program assisted individuals from these countries—and many others—in seeking protection.



HASHEM'S STORY: SEEKING FREEDOM FROM RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION



Hashem* was born in the 1970s in Iran to an extremely conservative Shi'a Muslim family. Although it was all he knew growing up, there were many aspects of his family's rigid religious practices and beliefs that made Hashem uncomfortable. As an Islamic state, Iran's citizens live under this Islamic law, even if they don't practice the religion.

One day, Hashem was arrested and detained for two days just for walking down a crowded street with his girlfriend. As punishment,

he was sentenced to 90 lashes. *"My wounds did not heal for two months,"* Hashem says.

After this incident, Hashem could no longer pretend to participate in the practices of a religion he did not believe in. He finished school, became a successful civil engineer and prominent local figure, got married, and had a child. But all the while, Hashem was struggling against the governmental religious requirements and expectations. Because he refused to participate in the weekly public prayers, Hashem faced increased challenges in getting permits and approvals needed for work.

"CHRISTIAN CONVERTS WERE CONSIDERED APOSTATES AND SENTENCED TO DEATH," HASHEM SAYS. "I CAN ONLY IMAGINE WHAT TYPES OF TORTURE I WOULD BE SUBJECTED TO BEFORE THEY ULTIMATELY EXECUTED ME."

Also around this time, Hashem suffered several family losses. He experienced depression and yearned for spiritual connection and guidance. He reached out to an old friend who had converted to Christianity and started attending services at a house church. Despite the risk, Hashem found

peace and meaning in following Christianity and officially converted.

Hashem hosted some of the faith gatherings, until a church organizer called with dire news. Authorities had raided one of the church locations, and they now had information on all the other locations and members of the congregation. Fearing arrest, Hashem fled immediately.

He escaped to Switzerland, where he applied for asylum. He was detained at an immigration camp for months waiting on his application, but his petition was denied. Meanwhile, his wife informed him that authorities had raided their home, seized all his religious documentation, and summoned him to defend the charge of promoting non-Islamic religions. The Iranian court subsequently convicted and sentenced him to execution by hanging.

Although Switzerland's pandemic policies temporarily shielded Hashem from deportation, he was still undocumented with little resources to support himself. Hashem desperately searched for some way to avoid returning to Iran.

Finally, Hashem decided to seek protection in the U.S. and presented himself at the U.S.–Mexico border in San Ysidro. He applied for asylum and was detained awaiting a decision. Thankfully, Hashem contacted Casa Cornelia and, after much hard work, his asylum case was granted! Now protected, he will begin to build a better life in America without fearing the death sentence awaiting him in Iran, and he can enjoy his newfound religious freedom.

VICTIMS OF CRIME PROGRAM

The Law Center's Victims of Crime Program serves non-citizen victims of serious crimes (such as domestic violence and human trafficking) who are eligible for humanitarian immigration protection. Clients in this program are community members—colleagues, neighbors, fellow parents—who have been victimized here in the United States. Congress has created several humanitarian protections for these individuals to ensure that they feel safe seeking protection from law enforcement. The Victims of Crime Program most frequently represents clients in seeking U visas (humanitarian visa for victims of serious crimes who cooperate with law enforcement), T visas (humanitarian visa for survivors of human trafficking who support efforts to combat the trafficking), and petitions under the Violence Against Women Act (protection for non-citizens who suffer domestic violence from spouses and parents who are United States citizens or permanent residents).

At the start of 2021, the Victims of Crime Program had 327 open cases; an additional 101 individuals contacted the program during the year. Of these 405 individuals who interacted with the program in 2021, 77% were women between the ages of 26–45 years old, many of whom are responsible for children both in the United States and abroad. The majority of clients in the Victims of Crime Program are Mexican nationals whose primary language is Spanish, but the program serves individuals from all over the world in many different languages. These survivors have often lived in the shadows of society, isolated by trauma, language, poverty, and fear, but have had new doors opened to them through this work.

The U visa, the most common case in the Victims of Crime Program, is also one of the lengthiest immigration processes. Because of a statutory limit to how many visas can be given out per year, a U visa applicant who applies today can expect to wait nearly 10 years before having their application finally adjudicated. Until recently, individuals who applied for a U visa had no protection from deportation (and no permission to work) during the pendency of the application. However, in 2021, the federal government created a new opportunity for these applicants. While a person waits in line for the U visa, the government will determine if the application is bona fide. If it is found to be bona fide and the applicant passes rigorous background checks, they will be shielded from deportation and granted work authorization while they wait. The wait for legal status remains long, but at least this new policy allows applicants the ability to work and live free from the fear of imminent deportation in the interim.

The immigration authorities are still working through the backlog to make initial bona fide determinations for pending cases, but in 2021 Casa Cornelia immediately received dozens of notices that pending cases were bona fide and the applicants were granted work authorization.

OSEYE'S STORY: FROM VICTIM TO SURVIVOR



Not long ago, Oseye* worked as a chef in Europe, developing her passion for cuisine. Part Beninese and French, she was a young, independent woman starting to build a life for herself. But her path started to change after she met Sam* on an online dating site. He lived in the U.S., and they deepened their long-distance relationship over several months of communication. Eventually, Sam asked Oseye to come visit him in America. After obtaining a

travel visa, she joined him.

Oseye remembers the first month of her visit fondly; Sam took good care of her and expressed his love for her often. *"I was enthralled by him,"* she says. She was staying with his family, who welcomed her warmly. However, soon after Oseye discovered she was pregnant, Sam's mother and sister began to warn her that he would not take care of the child. They revealed that he had treated his ex-wife and two other children poorly, refusing to pay child support. Nevertheless, when Oseye told Sam about the pregnancy, he was overjoyed, expressing how excited he was to become a family.

Soon after, Oseye noticed a shift in Sam's behavior: *"Because I was pregnant, I think he thought he had me locked-in to stay in the U.S. with him, so he began revealing his true self."* He would pick fights often, threatening to call immigration and have her deported. He would lock and block the doors so she couldn't leave. The abuse then became physical. Because of a condition during her pregnancy, Oseye was unable to travel internationally, and therefore couldn't return home as she had planned.

Oseye gave birth to a son and married Sam, but the abusive cycle continued. She felt trapped by her lack of legal status and desperately wanted her son to have a father. After one particularly bad argument in

which Sam violently tried to grab their baby from Oseye's arms, she called the police and filed a report. An officer recommended she move to a shelter. She wanted to return to France, but couldn't bear leaving her child. She wasn't able to take her son out of the country without permission from his father or she might be charged with kidnapping.

**"I FELT STUCK IN THIS TERRIBLE SITUATION,"
OSEYE SAYS, "I DID NOT HAVE ANY PERSONAL
FRIENDS OR FAMILY IN THE U.S. THAT I COULD
REACH OUT TO FOR HELP."**

Oseye moved to a domestic violence shelter with her son, where she sought a restraining order. She learned that Sam had previously had domestic violence charges from his ex-wife. The shelter then referred her to Casa Cornelia.

Fearing the threat of deportation and being separated from her child, Oseye decided to file a Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petition, which grants lawful permanent residence to victims of battery or extreme cruelty. Through Casa Cornelia's legal team, Oseye was granted legal status, empowering her to live independently here in the U.S.

Oseye is working to rebuild her life amongst the lasting trauma of domestic violence with a positive support system. She attends therapy, and was accepted to culinary school. Her son attends school, where his teachers say he is an incredibly smart boy. *"I would one day like to open my own French cuisine restaurant to be able to provide for myself and my son,"* says Oseye. With her green card in hand, she now has a path to citizenship as well as the financial independence needed to follow these dreams.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

Through the Children's Program, the Law Center also continues to represent non-citizen children and youth, many of whom are without the care and protection of a parent or legal guardian. Non-citizen children without lawful immigration status are especially vulnerable. As they reach adolescence and adulthood without lawful immigration status, they find themselves excluded from educational and legitimate work opportunities and are likely to fall prey to unscrupulous employers and even traffickers. Fortunately, United States law provides certain protections for these children, though accessing these protections remains challenging, and not every child will qualify.

Like non-citizen adults, non-citizen children can seek asylum if they fear persecution or torture in their home countries. Child victims of human trafficking and certain crimes may be eligible for humanitarian visas. Special immigrant juvenile status is available for children who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent. Each of these provides a pathway to lawful immigration status and thus stability, though the road is almost always long. The Children's Program represents all non-citizen children detained in federal immigration shelters in San Diego and Imperial Counties. It also represents many non-citizen children who are residing in the community, some of whom have recently arrived and others who have been living here for many years.

185 cases were open in the Children's Program at the start of 2021, and an additional 822 cases were opened during the year, for a total of 1007 children and youth. Nearly twice as many children were served in 2021 as in 2020. The majority of these children are from Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras, and El Salvador, but the program also saw a significant number of children from India, Ecuador, Bangladesh, and Nicaragua. Although most children were from Latin America, not all speak Spanish. Beyond English and Spanish, the Children's Program served children in 8 other indigenous languages spoken in Mexico and Central America and an additional 20 languages spoken in other parts of the world.

Nearly a decade ago, non-citizen children fleeing violence began arriving in the United States in historic numbers without parents or guardians. Arriving mostly from Central America, these children consistently shared stories of violence in the home, sexual assault, and brutal gang violence. Many of these children were eligible for special immigrant juvenile status, and by federal law their applications were required to be adjudicated within six months. Instead, bureaucratic delays caused these children to wait for years. Many of them reached adulthood while waiting, and while they remained eligible for protection, without work authorization in the interim, they overstayed their welcome with the family and friends who had accepted them years before. Fortunately, 2021 saw significant forward movement in the processing of the

permanent residence applications for these young people. During the year, dozens of children and youth were granted permanent residence, many of whom had been waiting four or more years for this outcome.

VICTORIA'S STORY: FINDING THE STRENGTH TO MOVE ON



Victoria's* closest family growing up was her mother and her cousin, Gloria*, who was a sister to her. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)—a country in central Africa—Victoria's mother supported their small family by working as a shopkeeper. In addition to her day job, her mother was the president of a local women's rights organization and a member of an environmental conservation group. Victoria's mother placed a strong emphasis

on education during her childhood, and she was able to finish her schooling by age 16. She says, *"I was a good student and had dreams of becoming a doctor."*

Growing up, Victoria heard rumors about a rebel group pillaging homes and villages in their district to get the local government to give in to their demands. But she didn't truly believe the horrors of these stories until she was faced with it first-hand. She was just 16 when she heard rebel soldiers invade her neighborhood one night. *"I heard them enter our neighbor's house, heard screams, and then a gunshot,"* she says. They came to Victoria's house next, breaking everything in sight. Gloria, Victoria, and her mother hid but were discovered. All three of the women were interrogated and violently assaulted, suffering unimaginable trauma. Victoria's mother was left unconscious and their home in shambles.

A neighbor took the girls to the hospital, and they were treated and released. The girls remained at the hospital for over a week while Victoria's mother recovered after falling into a coma. Instead of returning home, they went to stay with Victoria's aunt. The women sold all their belongings and took a bus to the Ugandan border, where they entered a refugee camp. But the camp was rampant with disease and malnutrition, and Victoria constantly felt unsafe.

One day, Victoria's mother went into the forest for her daily foraging and never returned. Victoria and Gloria immediately went to ask for help in locating her, but after months of investigating, it was assumed that a wild animal had killed her. The girls were devastated by this loss. Victoria and her cousin went to work and live with a wealthy family as housekeepers and caregivers to their children. There, they raised enough money to pay for their travel to Mexico, and eventually the United States, where Victoria sought asylum as well as special immigrant juvenile status.

"AS A 16-YEAR-OLD GIRL, I HAD NO IDEA HOW I WOULD SURVIVE WITHOUT MY MOTHER," VICTORIA SAYS. "I RELIVE THE TRAUMA I ENDURED THAT NIGHT EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE IN THE FORM OF NIGHTMARES AND FLASHBACKS."

When Victoria presented herself at the border in Tijuana, she was detained by border officials and separated from her cousin. This, combined with her past trauma, caused Victoria's mental health to deteriorate even further. "*[Gloria] was the only close family I had left," she says, "And I had no idea where she was."*

Attempting to move on despite her grief, Victoria found a sponsor and was released from detention. She eventually obtained a work permit, and followed in her mother's footsteps working at a local conservation and recycling nonprofit. Through the organization, she was able to attend school and learn English. She also got involved in a local church, as a member and a volunteer.

Although Victoria built a life for herself here as she awaited the outcome of her immigration case, the memories of her past still haunt her. The possibility of being deported back to DRC has compounded her fears.

After nearly 7 years of diligent legal work, through Casa Cornelia's pro bono legal services, Victoria has been granted her lawful permanent residence in the United States. At 25, she still has much of her life left to live. This is only the beginning for Victoria.

THE PRO BONO PROGRAM

The Law Center is able to provide the highest quality legal representation to hundreds of clients per year because of the success of the Pro Bono Program, which continued its important work throughout 2021. Each year, licensed private attorneys from firms of all sizes, in-house counsel offices, and solo practitioners join the mission. Recruited, trained, and mentored by Casa Cornelia staff, these attorneys use their professional skills to provide pro bono legal services ranging from legal consultations to full representation before the immigration office and court. Many of these attorneys share that this is among the most meaningful experience of their legal careers.

As courts reopened after pandemic closures, volunteer attorneys were excited to get back to this critical work. These attorneys had also continued to represent and safeguard the legal rights of their existing clients throughout the pandemic. **During 2021, 208 volunteer attorneys contributed a total of 6,128 hours.** This is the equivalent of hiring an additional three staff attorneys.

As all of Casa Cornelia's clients are non-citizens and most are not English speakers, the attorneys' work would not be possible without the assistance of those with language skills. The Law Center's Volunteer Interpreter and Translator Program continues to recruit community members fluent in English and another language willing to lend their skills in the furtherance of justice. These volunteers are instructed on the role and ethics of an interpreter or translator in the legal setting and then assigned to assist attorneys as needed.

The pandemic offered new opportunities for these volunteers to get involved. As legal work shifted to remote settings, language volunteers were able to participate remotely and often to increase their participation. **121 language volunteers donated a total of 2,884 hours in 2021.**

The **Support Services Program** provides Casa Cornelia's clients essential information, assessments, and qualified referrals to social services agencies throughout the country. These services help stabilize those we serve who are in need of non-legal assistance.

The Program provided 67 referrals to 33 clients. Several of the clients assisted received more than one referral. Clients most often requested referrals for counseling, housing assistance, and social services. From 2021 and into the present time, the Program has been diligently expanding its network of social service providers to ensure clients are connected to a full range of services.

JONATHAN'S STORY: ESCAPING VIOLENCE TO HAVE SAFE AND BRIGHT FUTURE



When he was five years old, Jonathan's* father abandoned his family, eventually finding another wife and starting a new family in the United States. Back in El Salvador, his mother struggled to support her three children on her own, but she did everything she could. "My mom made sure we went to school and helped with homework," Jonathan says. But she was very sick, and her condition continued to deteriorate. Things

got worse when Jonathan was a young teen and gangs began to take over their neighborhood. Caught between the territories of two rival gangs, it became dangerous to walk to school, go to the store, or simply be outside alone. Jonathan remembers, "They would tell people that if they did not join the gang, they would kill them, their mothers, and their families."

One day, when Jonathan was walking home from school, he was confronted by gang members. They threatened and insulted him, and then physically attacked him, leaving him alone and bleeding in the street. After making it home safely, Johnathan understood the degree of danger he and his family were truly in. "I was afraid that they would hurt me again and this time leave me dead," he says.

Jonathan decided to flee to the U.S. alongside his cousin. Once they made it through the harrowing journey to the border, they were detained and transferred to a juvenile shelter. There, Jonathan obtained access to Casa Cornelia's services. Jonathan's case was not simple or easy, initially beginning as an application for asylum, but then also became a Special Immigrant Juvenile Status case. Volunteer Attorney Michelle Herrera took on his case, working with him to navigate the complex process. After years of dedication, Johnathan has finally won his case with Michelle's representation and has now received his green card!

The work of Casa Cornelia is only possible if individuals in need of our services can access them and endure through what is often a lengthy process. Unfortunately, lack of immigration status and the prospect of deportation are often not the only barriers our clients face. Rather, clients also struggle to heal from past trauma, navigate a complex society in another language with which they may not be familiar, and provide for the basic needs of themselves and their families often without work authorization. In 2021, the Law Center also continued its efforts to **remove barriers to accessing justice by referring clients to necessary social services resources**, including food and housing assistance, counseling and mental health services, non-immigration legal needs, and many others. We recognize that it is essential to meet clients where they are and to connect them with services that will allow them to remain engaged in their legal case.

Clients' needs for connections to social services vary greatly. During 2021, the support services team addressed over 40 different requested needs of clients to be connected with providers. The most common request was to be connected with support for those recently granted asylum (known as refugee benefits) and for housing, emergency shelter, and food resources.

ELISA'S STORY: REDISCOVERING HOPE



Sometimes, the most heartbreaking journeys can still end in new hope. Elisa's* story is a testament to that. Growing up in Mexico, Elisa endured abuse from all angles just because she was different. She says, *"From a very young age, I did not conform to or identify with the [male] gender assigned to me at birth."* Whenever she expressed her gender identity, she suffered verbal and physical abuse at the hands of her parents. She also experienced several instances of sexual assault

by uncles and other male figures throughout her childhood.

"Finally, I could not endure the violence and abuse from my family anymore," Elisa says. Struggling with her mental health, she dropped out of school and ran away from home at the age of 13. Living on the streets as a young girl, Elisa was challenged with finding ways to survive. Faced with starvation and threats to her life, she was forced into sex work at a young age. For many years, she endured targeted violence and abuse based on unchecked transphobia and homophobia engrained in Mexican society. She says, *"No one would protect me from harm, least of all the Mexican police, who targeted me for violence and operated with impunity."*

"It was a difficult and dangerous existence," she says, *"Sometimes I dressed and presented myself as a man, for my own self-preservation."* But Elisa struggled with the idea of compromising her identity even as the discrimination threatened her life. Despite her daily experiences living on the margins of society, she found a way to endure and become stronger for it.

After a lifetime of living in constant fear with no one to turn to, Elisa had enough. *"I made up my mind that I did not want to live this type of life anymore and decided to come to the United States,"* she says, *"I hoped that the violence would stop and that I could just live."* But the journey to a safe haven

would not be easy. Upon her first attempt to cross the border, she was injured and separated from the group she was traveling with. She wandered in the desert for days without food or water before being spotted in San Diego and taken to the hospital. But once she recovered, she was processed by immigration authorities and expelled to a migrant shelter in Tijuana without a chance to make her asylum claim.

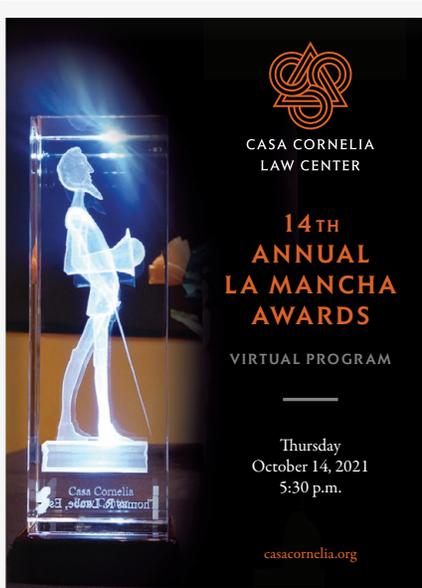
Still injured and desperate to escape the looming threats that awaited her in Mexico, someone at the shelter helped her safely return to the U.S., where she filed an official asylum claim. Elisa contacted Casa Cornelia for help. One of our staff attorneys, Liza Perkins-Cohen, took on her case and argued her asylum claim based on her gender identity.

After long delays, Elisa was granted asylum! She can now legally remain in the U.S., protected from the threat of deportation and the violence awaiting her in her home country. With this priceless gift, she can start building the life she's always wanted, safe from abuse and discrimination. *"In the time I have spent in the United States, I have received more respect and love from others than I have my entire life in Mexico,"* she says.

Elisa can finally begin dreaming of a future for herself and rediscover hope in her life. She has begun taking English classes and is working toward earning her GED. She was able to officially change her name and gender identity under state law, becoming further empowered to advocate for her health and educational needs. Through it all, she has maintained a sunny disposition and a positive attitude despite the many obstacles she has had to face. We are certain that the strength and persistence she has built up over the course of her life will allow her to overcome any other challenges that await in this next chapter.

*Client names and/or photographs have been changed for confidentiality.

14TH ANNUAL LA MANCHA AWARDS



Every year, Casa Cornelia presents the La Mancha Awards to exceptional volunteers who help further access to justice for the vulnerable populations served by the Law Center. Given the gathering risks and restrictions, the 2021 celebration was held virtually. The video program debuted on Thursday, October 14, and featured interviews with award recipients, client testimonies, event sponsors, and current and former staff.

The following awards were presented:

LA MANCHA AWARDS

DISTINGUISHED PRO BONO ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR

Anne Beaumont, Esq
Perkins Coie LLP

PRO BONO LAW FIRM OF THE YEAR

Morrison & Foerster LLP

LUCY HOWELL LA MANCHA HUMANITARIAN AWARD

José Carlos Yee Quintero
Casa del Migrante en Tijuana

PRO BONO PUBLICO AWARDEES *

Fatima Brizuela, Esq, *Hartley LLP*
Vicki Broach, Esq
Samantha Greenberg, Esq, *Kirby McInerney LLP*
Jessica Gross, Esq, *Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP*
Kaila Harter, Esq, *Morrison & Foerster LLP*
Anusha Kakani, Esq, *Cooley LLP*
Alejandro Moreno, Esq, *Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP*
Benjamin Morris, Esq, *Foley & Lardner LLP*
Keiko Rose, Esq, *Morrison & Foerster LLP*
Sara Stearns, Esq, *Morrison & Foerster LLP*
Gali Steinberg-Tatman, Esq, *Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, PC*
Jason Stirling, Esq, *Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP*

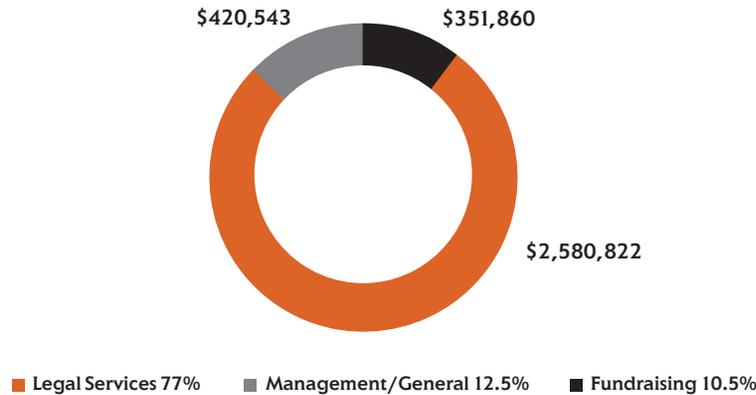
**This list represents attorneys' firms at the time of volunteering in 2021.*

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDEES

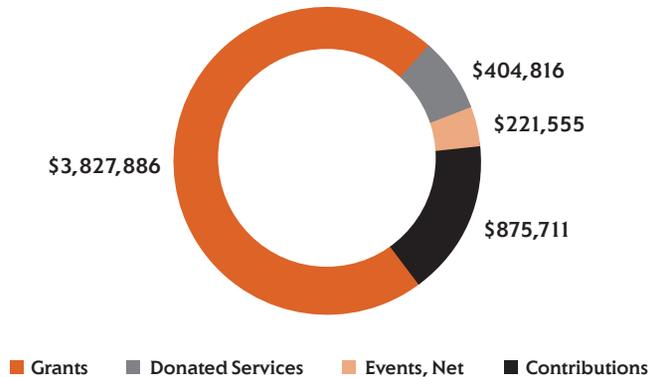
Ruby and Sabel Aguiar
Nadia Carrillo
Jane Chou
Glorene Franco
Jaime Garcia
Carlos Gonzalez
Ekaterina Gracheva
Ibrahim Hajj
Jesus Mendoza Downey
Hannah Ohman
Rocio Ortiz
Sr. Mary Popit, SHCJ
Loyal Rouhana
Lisa Shunkwiler
Barbara Zaragoza

2021 FINANCIALS

\$3,353,285: Expenditures 2021



\$3,329,968: Fundraising Income/Donated Services 2021



In 2021, Net Assets increased by \$2,716,958. Of this amount, \$1,230,394 was unrestricted, and restricted funds for legal programs increased by \$1,486,564.

CASA CORNELIA 2021 DONORS

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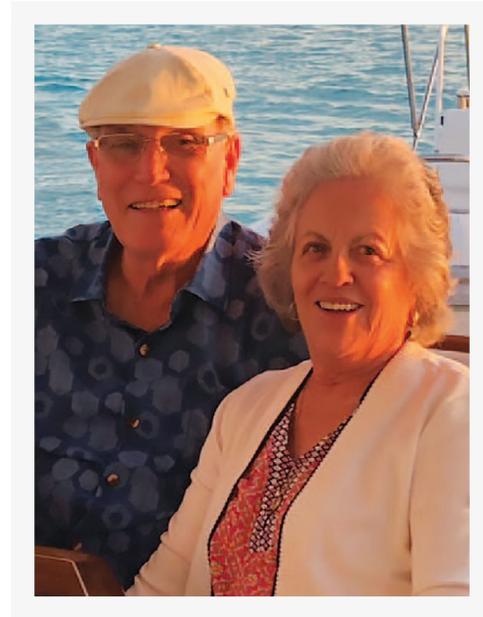
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