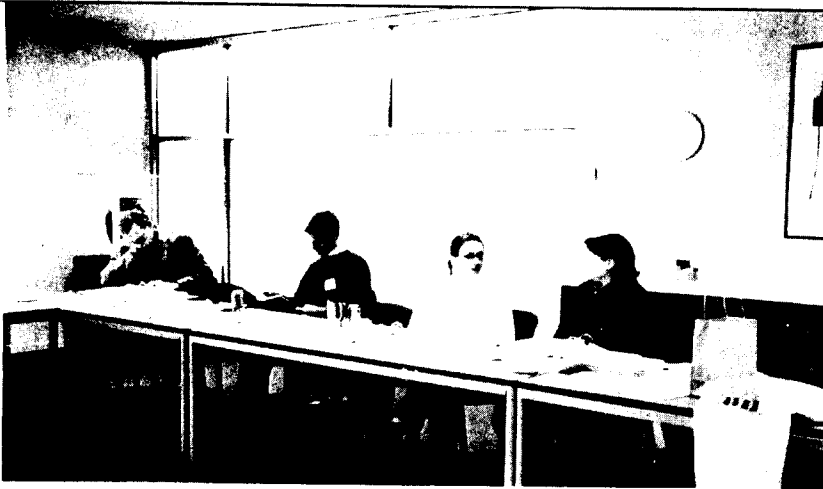


Representing Youth in Foster Care



Participants in CLC's November 7, 2003 "Representing Youth in Foster Care" training session hosted by Fredrikson & Byron P.A.

Children's Law Center of Minnesota (CLC) gained new volunteers from three training sessions held in 2003. CLC's training, "Representing Youth in Foster Care," was held at Merchant and Gould in April, 3M Company in July, and at Fredrikson and Byron, P.A. in November. CLC gained 40 new volunteers and assigned 50 clients; we still have five or more children waiting for an attorney to be assigned at any given time. CLC has already started planning training sessions for this spring, so keep an eye open for upcoming volunteer opportunities.

The training gives a broad overview of the many complex issues, which can be present in CHIPS and state ward cases. Each case may have one or more issues that the attorney has to assess, advise and advocate accordingly. While CLC cannot anticipate what each case will hold, its staff attorneys and social worker are always available to assist with questions or to help in any way.

CLC appreciates the com-

pany/firms for hosting the training and their efforts in promoting *pro bono* work for children. CLC gives special thanks to the Pro Bono Coordinators for their assistance in making the training successful.

CLC's clients receive some of the best advocacy and much more from their attorneys. It humbles me to see the dedication of the volunteers. I wish I could speak in detail about each of our volunteers and their commitment to children, but my space is limited. Here is a recent example of one attorney's dedication. T.H., a client whose history shows that any reliance he had on an adult male figure was always met with disappointment, did not trust male adults. Mark Schuman, one of CLC's volunteers from Merchant and Gould, was assigned to T.H. T.H. questioned what a lawyer could do for him. Contact with T.H. was very difficult because of his distrust. The many efforts at avoidance did not dissuade Mark, and finally, his efforts paid off. Mark

counseled T.H. about placement options, but before the hearing, had to fly to China on business. While Mark could have made arrangements for another trained volunteer to attend the hearing for him, he wanted to be there himself for T.H. He expected to return from China just hours before the hearing time to represent T.H. In spite of his jet lag, Mark advocated zealously for T.H.'s wishes. Mark's commitment and dedication to T.H. marked the first time a male adult had made him a priority without expecting something in return.

Thanks to all of our volunteers on behalf of CLC and the children you represent.

-Loretta Smith, Esq.
CLC Staff Attorney

For the Children - CLC Success Stories

Pregnant and penniless, 17-year-old Tatia fled her foster home and was living with her boyfriend's parents in an unlicensed home inappropriate for her needs. Inadequate nutrition and lack of transportation for medical care threatened her health and the health of her baby. CLC staff and volunteer attorneys interceded. Tatia was placed in a licensed foster care home and her nutrition improved. She got maternity clothes and transportation to prenatal doctor visits. After over a year of inadequate out-of-home care, she and her unborn child had a chance for a healthy outcome.