

# **CJP** COMMUNITY JUSTICE PROJECT

## **CJP HIGHLIGHTS**

**October 2019**

### **CJP Northeastern PA Staff Hosts Citizenship Clinic**



**Pictured left to right: Tamara Shehadeh-Cope Esq., Benita Mejia, Natalia Gomez, Jenny Gonzalez, and Rossy Henrsez**

In July, one of CJP’s immigration attorneys and four of CJP’s paralegals assisted more than a dozen members of the immigrant community in applying for citizenship.

### **Scranton Office Helps Immigrant Families in Obtaining Public Benefits, Including Access to Lifesaving Medical Treatment**

Scranton paralegal Jenny Gonzalez and Harrisburg attorney Peter Zurflieh worked on a “sponsor deeming” public benefits case this summer for a family from Afghanistan. The husband and children are U.S. Citizens and the wife is a Legal Permanent Resident (LPR). Because of the wife’s LPR status, the Lackawanna County Assistance Office (CAO) counted the wife’s immigration sponsors’ income towards the family’s household income, despite her explaining to CAO that this sponsor was not financially contributing to the family household. After much advocacy with the CAO, CJP helped the family claim indigency. This granted the family an increase in SNAP and TANF benefits.

CJP also advocated with CAO for a client who had no ability to obtain health insurance to receive Emergency Medical Assistance. Now that the client’s EMA has been approved, she will be able to get a critical procedure to reduce her risk of cervical cancer. Without access to this procedure, the client had a high risk of ultimately dying of cancer.

## **CJP Reaches Settlement in Lawsuit Against Mobile Home Park**

CJP filed a lawsuit against a mobile home park in northeastern Pennsylvania that had implemented an unlawful policy of banning evicted residents from coming back to visit friends and family still living at the park. CJP's clients were residents of the park who, as the result of the policy, were unable to have their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren come to visit them in their homes. The settlement requires the park to revoke and cease from enforcing the unlawful policy.

## **CJP in the News**

The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* talked to Litigation Director Kevin Quisenberry for comment on Section 8 housing vouchers and the city expanding housing choice in more neighborhoods for voucher holders. In the article [Housing authority aims to give low-income residents access to more neighborhoods](#), Quisenberry is quoted: "I applaud the Housing Authority's effort to revise its payment standard to better reflect rental prices in Pittsburgh and, more importantly, to increase the number and quality of housing options for households utilizing tenant-based rental assistance."

*The Daily American* newspaper in Somerset County has been following developments in CJP's lawsuit against the owner of the Roof Garden mobile home park. Staff attorney Daniel Vitek is quoted in the July 30 article [Roof Garden owner fails to show in court to respond to lawsuit](#): "We're pleased that the lawsuit is moving forward and looking forward to a time when the residents can have their day in court and have the issues in this park corrected."

The *Scranton Times-Tribune's* ongoing coverage of CJP's tax equity lawsuit against Lackawanna County included the following article on July 12: [Lawsuit seeking to force Lackawanna County property reassessment may proceed](#).

## **CJP Hires MLK Fellow DeJonna Bates and Controller Eric Marsteller**



**Left: DeJonna Bates, Right: Eric Marsteller**

In September 2019, CJP welcomed MLK Fellow DeJonna Bates and Controller Eric Marsteller to the team. DeJonna is a recent graduate of the Widener University School of Law and is focusing her work on litigation in northeastern Pennsylvania. Eric has an accounting background and also worked for several years as the pastor of a church.

## **SUPPORT OUR WORK**

A gift to CJP goes a long way in providing effective legal assistance to protect the basic needs of and rights of Pennsylvania's poor families and low-wage workers.

Please consider making a gift to:

**Community Justice Project, 118 Locust Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101**

Also consider naming the Community Justice Project for *cy pres* awards/class action residuals.

If you have questions or would like to learn more about CJP, contact Marielle Macher at [mmacher@cjplaw.org](mailto:mmacher@cjplaw.org) or 717-236-9486, ext. 214.