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RLS | *Because Justice Really Should Be For All*

Domestic Violence Erodes Family Connectivity *An RLS Client Copes with the Fallout*

When Tamara Moore, the managing attorney of RLS' Culpeper Office, talks about the case of T.D., her countenance grows bright; and in her eyes, you can see a profound sense of respect for her client. That admiration is in large measure due to the strides made by T.D. over the long arc of the case. The growth, Tamara notes, was hard won. Often progress was made in tiny increments with set-backs along the way. The attorney-client relationship evolved over time, and T.D.'s trust in Tamara required constant reassurances as a result of contradictory messages she received from an abusive spouse on one side and concerned professionals on the other.

T.D. was referred to RLS at about the same time a protective order was being put in place against her abusive spouse. Tamara suggested additional restrictions and followed up with petitions to the court for custody, support and visitation of the couple's children. Because T.D.'s husband had been abusive to the children as well, arriving at appropriate visitation was not an easy proposition. A skeptical guardian ad litem, representing the interests of the children, pushed for liberal visitation until witnessing the father's intimidation first hand at a chance encounter in the courthouse. Ultimately, as a result of an ongoing pattern of behavior by T.D.'s spouse, supervised visitation was ordered to safeguard the children.

In addition to the physical violence, psychological manipulation was a dominant feature of this case. It often played out in a relentless cycle of bullying and apologizing, and was a major factor in T.D.'s lack of trust and confidence in any kind of outside intervention. Compounding matters even more was the fact that T.D.'s husband used the force of religious teaching the basis for his demands of spousal obedience, causing T.D. to question herself and her decision to seek help at each step along the way.

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During the course of a year and many court hearings later, T.D.'s husband continued to stalk his family. He refused to cooperate with a court-ordered psychological evaluation. He gave up a lucrative career, allowed marital assets to flounder and refused to provide support for his children. Despite those challenges, T.D. persevered.

With Tamara's adept advice and representation supplanting old memories of fear, T.D. learned how to trust and gained confidence in her own judgment as an autonomous person. She now has a job and the security of knowing that the law protected her, and her children, in their time of need. The protection the law provided was made possible because T.D. had access to the competent legal representation of an attorney, thanks to RLS.

THIS JUST IN: RLS received a Community Enrichment Fund grant from Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region to provide a "Legal Wheels" mobile outreach project in Caroline County. One of our staff attorneys will be at Caroline County Court House one half-day per month to meet with applicants and clients who cannot travel to Fredericksburg. Thanks, CFRRR!

Tamara Jezic joined RLS's board of directors in 2012 with a deep understanding of the kind of advocacy provided by the organization where she now occupies a governing role.

While a student at Harvard Law School, Tamara's areas of special interest included international human rights and environmental justice. She studied with Professor Lucie White, whose community-based advocacy was an important influence on Tamara. After graduation from law school in 1998, Tamara spent two years in Ecuador working with both indigenous and campesino communities impacted by oil development in the Ecuadorian Amazon. In a case involving the Shuar People, Tamara and other attorneys from the Ecuadorian office of the Center for Economic and Social Rights supported the work of the Shuar People by drafting a petition for an emergency injunction, seeking to prohibit a large oil company from gaining access to Shuar territory by negotiating with individuals on an ad-hoc basis rather than with the governing body of the Shuar People. As a consequence of that effort, a civil court granted an injunction blocking the company from engaging in those practices, effectively preserving the integrity of Shuar governing organizations. As Tamara explains it, the injunction was not a permanent barrier to the oil companies seeking to exploit valuable rainforest land, but it served to strengthen the Shuar's organizing efforts and injected the notion of human rights into the Shuar's political struggle. Thus, it stood as an example of effective community-based advocacy.

**RLS Board Member Sees
Access to Justice as a
Basic Human Rights Issue**



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Upon her return to the U.S., Tamara worked as a legal services attorney for six years in Washington, D.C., first as an attorney with the Legal Aid Society of D.C., and later at Women Empowered Against Violence (WEAVE). Protecting the rights of tenants and victims of domestic violence comprised the core of her legal work. Tamara gained an enduring respect for the role of legal aid organizations in upholding the rights of individuals who do not have access to the private bar.

Tamara has been practicing law since 2007. She recently joined Yacub Law Offices, LLC, and works as an immigration and personal injury attorney at the firm's Woodbridge, Virginia location. Prior to joining Yacub Law Offices, she was a personal injury attorney with the Allen Law Firm in Fredericksburg, VA. A fluent Spanish-speaker, Tamara especially enjoys working with immigrant clients.

Tamara welcomed the opportunity to join the board of RLS in order to contribute to the organization's role in providing equal access to justice. As she sees it, "Access to justice is a basic human rights issue." We agree. Given her experiences both at home and abroad, we are most fortunate to have Tamara as a member of our board of directors. We look forward to our work together to ensure equal access to justice.

RLS' Fredericksburg Office recently moved to a new location at 500 Lafayette Boulevard. We are planning an Open House in September, the date to be published soon.

2013 Summer Intern Program

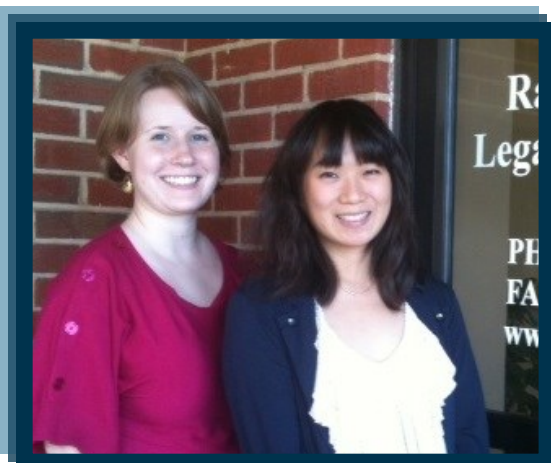
*Law clerks looking not only to do well,
but to do GOOD.*

Natalie Shaw and Jessica Chi have at least one thing in common: they are spending their summer hiatus from law school at RLS. Natalie attends University of Richmond School of Law while Jessica is enrolled at Washington and Lee. In a recent conversation with RLS' Grace McCormick, Natalie and Jessica talked about their internship experience.

What led to your initial interest in RLS?

Natalie: I interviewed with three other employers, but in doing my pre-interview research, I tried the poverty simulator on RLS' website only to find out how tough it is to survive on the level of income that RLS' clients do. It got my attention.

Jessica: You know, there is a lot of pressure at law school to make the grade and get a job with a big firm, but that is not why the law exists. If I spent my summer at a large corporate firm, I would have been doing research for the entire summer. At RLS, I knew that the work would be more hands-on.



Natalie Shaw & Jessica Chi

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In what way has your internship been formative?

Jessica: We have been fortunate to work directly with clients giving us an exceptional view into how the average person perceives the justice system. The client interactions have been both instructive and valuable, an experience we would not have gotten elsewhere. Of course we are supervised, but I really appreciate the level of trust the attorneys have in us. The whole office has a vibe of mutual support for the mission; it's a very collegial atmosphere.

Natalie: There is no question that the work here has added to the learning that goes on in the classroom. Prior to my internship at RLS, I was not sure whether I would pursue a career that was litigation centric because it doesn't really light up my brain. So, I have to say, it's been amazing to work so closely with clients, and I realize that is where my passion lies. The practical experience I am getting here at RLS connects to my academic learning and makes it all very real.

Has this experience influenced your career goals? What do you see yourself doing with your law degree?

Natalie: Not long ago, I went to court with an RLS attorney on a protective order case. I really connected with the client who was young, scared and responsible for a 3 year old child. I learned about the Victim Witness program that day which is something I am very interested in. Later, I found out that the FBI has a robust Victim Witness program; I can see myself in that role.

Jessica: I would like to pursue either immigration law or work in the public defender's office. If immigration is my ultimate path, I would like to specialize in refugee and asylum matters.

The law clerks at RLS, under direct supervision of attorneys, participated in a broad range of activities this summer including drafting correspondence, motions, orders, pleadings and discovery; spearheading research projects; preparing for trial; conducting client meetings (intake & court prep); updating RLS' housing guide; and for third year law students who hold a practice certificate, representing clients in court.

RLS integrated a diverse and motivated group of interns (law students and undergraduates) into its ranks this summer. We thank them all for their enthusiasm, pluck and hard work, and wish them well as they transition back to academia and beyond.



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