OUR MISSION

To provide equal access to the justice system by serving as a bridge between indigent and other disadvantaged people in San Diego County and the volunteer lawyers and others who are willing to donate their time and resources.

EMPOWERING SAN DIEGANS FOR 35 YEARS

Since 1983, San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program (SDVLP) has empowered thousands of low-income women, children, and men throughout San Diego County. A private, non-profit organization, SDVLP is the county’s oldest pro bono legal services program.

For more than 35 years, SDVLP has continued to grow, adapting to meet the legal needs of the most vulnerable San Diegans throughout periods of tremendous change. This past year was no exception. We added new programs, including the Microbusiness and Nonprofit Support Project, and we continued providing vital community services through our numerous other longstanding programs.

We thank you for your support in 2018, and look forward to your partnership for many more years to come.

With gratitude -

Jeffrey M. Byer, Esq.
Board Chair

Amy J. Fitzpatrick, Esq.
Chief Executive Officer

Cover Photo: Yang Tang, an IP attorney with Perkins Coie LLP, provided pro bono representation to assist a SDVLP client in securing legal guardianship of her grandchild.
Empowering Caregivers

Countless children in our community do not have parents who are able to care for them. Each week, the grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts, uncles, and trusted friends who step up to care for these children come to our Guardianship clinic seeking legal help. These caring individuals face significant barriers to securing legal guardianship, even when the children's parents agree with the arrangement. Each week SDVLP volunteers can be found in our downtown office interviewing clients, researching complex legal issues, drafting petitions, and connecting families to community resources. While each guardianship case is unique, our volunteers and dedicated staff ensure that our clients are provided with the best possible representation, which in turn will ensure safe and stable homes for children who need this the most.

Our Programs

- Domestic Violence Prevention
- Family Law
- Guardianship
- Special Education
- HIV/AIDS Law
- Microbusiness and Nonprofit
- Vision for Justice Collaborative
- Landlord/Tenant

Pro Bono attorney Julia Williams with an SDVLP client after their successful guardianship hearing.
HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR WORK

EMPowering SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

Many low-income San Diegans make ends meet by operating small, personal businesses, such as catering, selling crafts, hairdressing, and child care. With very few resources, many of these microentrepreneurs struggle to navigate the legal hoops required to operate a money-making enterprise. SDVLP identified this need, and created our new Microbusiness and Nonprofit Support Project. Since the program’s inception, we have helped local entrepreneurs with issues such as:

- Business Entity Formation
- Review and Drafting of Business Contracts
- Lease Agreements
- Trademarks, Copyrights, and Patents
- Employment Issues
- Insurance Issues
- Permitting

Since launching the project in 2018, SDVLP has helped more than two dozen low-income microentrepreneurs start or stabilize their businesses, and comply with legal regulations.

SDVLP Supervising Attorney Jennifer Nelson (second from left) spoke at an event about services for low-income entrepreneurs.

Photographer, Lucia, was assisted through our Microbusiness Project. She was counseled regarding copyright issues and obtained a client service agreement for her portrait business.
Our annual Justice For All Celebration, held on September 18th, commemorated our 35th anniversary. We were extremely honored to have Kathleen Kennedy Townsend as our special guest. The lively conversation format between Ms. Kennedy Townsend and SDVLP Board Vice Chair Elizabeth Brann was a treat for event attendees. In addition to anecdotes about her father, Robert F. Kennedy, the former Lieutenant Governor of Maryland delivered a message centering on the importance of service in advancing social justice. The presentation was the highlight of an evening dedicated to honoring the service of this year's award recipients, and the San Diego legal community as a whole.

**2018 Justice for All Celebration Award Recipients**

**Community Service Award**  
*Susan C. Groves, Esq.*

**Family Law Facilitator, Manager (Retired)**  
Superior Court of California, County of San Diego

**Pro Bono Publico Award**  
*Jared A. Smith, Esq.*  
Fish & Richardson

**Outstanding Law Firm Award**  
*Perkins Coie LLP*

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Over 90% of our annual budget goes directly to serving our clients.

**Total Revenue**
$2,645,000

**Total Expenses**
$2,266,000

- **93% Program Services**
- **4% General Expenses**
- **2% Fundraising**
- **1% Special Events**
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Retired

M. Andrew Woodmansee, Esq.
Jones Day
I feel extremely fortunate to receive such a qualified and knowledgeable volunteer lawyer. She took the fear of the court system away. Thank you so much!"

- SDVLP Domestic Violence Client