
CVLS Keeps Abused Child out of Dangerous Home

*This originally appeared in the April 2010 Chicago Volunteer Legal Services Newsletter
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Young DiNiah came from a very broken home where she was neglected, abused and had contracted a sexually transmitted disease all before the age of four. DCFS reports show that she was sexually abused while in her father's care and had untreated medical conditions resulting from that abuse. In April, 2008, with her mother incarcerated and her father out of the picture, DiNiah went to live with her maternal aunt C. C gave DiNiah the best care she could provide and did her best to cope with the behavior issues that resulted from DiNiah's horrific experiences, sending the child to a therapist who specialized in sexual abuse victims. She was beginning to make progress and on July 9, 2009, C was given temporary guardianship of DiNiah.

Four days later, DiNiah's paternal grandmother D petitioned to discharge C's guardianship and to be appointed as successor guardian. That's when CVLS stepped in and volunteer Kimberly Kayiwa from Segal McCambridge Singer & Mohoney, Ltd. was appointed guardian ad litem.

Kimberly uncovered the old DCFS reports detailing the abuse and spoke with DiNiah's therapist who informed her that C

was providing the best possible care for her. C informed Kimberly that D had almost no previous contact with DiNiah and that she wished to continue as her guardian. In September of 2009 Kimberly attempted to schedule a meeting with D which the grandmother did not keep. D also missed the appointment for the court ordered home study.

After careful consideration, Kimberly ultimately recommended that the petition for successor guardian be denied, that C remain guardian and that DiNiah continue to see a therapist who specializes in sexual abuse. She also recommended under the circumstances that DiNiah's biological parents be required to petition the court for visitation in the event they wish to visit with their daughter so that the court can evaluate if this would be in her best interests. The court agreed with the recommendations and DiNiah now has a chance to recover in a loving home with her aunt C. Thank you for your excellent work Kimberly, DiNiah needed your help and you offered it freely. This is why CVLS exists.

Care to volunteer? Learn more about Chicago Volunteer Legal Services at www.cvls.org.

For more information on this decision or on Segal McCambridge's medical device and pharmaceutical defense practice, contact any of the members of our practice listed below.

Thomas P. Bernier
Baltimore
410-864-1201
tbernier@smsm.com

Nicole L. Johnson
Chicago
312-644-3539
njohnson@smsm.com

Misty R. Martin
Chicago
312-645-4586
mmartin@smsm.com

Maria C. Carlucci
New York
212-651-7405
mcarlucci@smsm.com

Kimberly A. Kayiwa
Chicago
312-645-6056
kkayiwa@smsm.com

Robert E. O'Malley
Chicago
312-645-7809
romalley@smsm.com

Mark Crane
Chicago
312-645-7805
mcrane@smsm.com

John A. LaBoon
Austin
512-651-0290
jlaboon@smsm.com

Jeffrey Singer
Chicago
312-645-7807
jsinger@smsm.com

Howard A. Fried
New York
212-651-7438
hfried@smsm.com

Gregory M. Lowry
Austin
512-370-1211
glowry@smsm.com

Walter "Pete" Swayze III
Philadelphia
215-636-4343
pswayze@smsm.com

Megan E. Grossman
Philadelphia
215-399-2003
mgrossman@smsm.com

David J. Yates
Detroit
248-994-0090
dyates@smsm.com



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