

[Back to Newsletter Winter 2012](#)**“Be Part of the Story” A Success!**

On Wednesday, October 12, 2011 over one thousand guests came together to participate in CGLA’s 38-year rich story at our 2011 Annual Benefit held at the



Hyatt Regency Chicago. Guests, along with almost 50 corporations and law firms that sponsored the event (listed at bottom of article), helped raise over \$530,000 to support CGLA’s services.



Lead sponsor, [Allstate Insurance Company](#) was presented the Dr. Kenneth & Margaret Taylor “Spirit of Generosity” Award for their commitment to financial and pro-bono support of CGLA. Allstate’s Executive Vice President & General Counsel, [Michele Coleman Mayes](#), accepted the award on behalf of Allstate. Several Allstate employees also co-chaired the benefit committee:

Mary Jo Quinn, Jorge Quezada, and Charles Smith. Click [here](#) to see the video Allstate produced that highlights their commitment to CGLA and the inspiring story of CGLA client Kimberly.

Guests who arrived early for the opening reception were welcomed with an open bar and over 40 incredible silent-auction items. The reception hall quickly filled up as people mingled and engaged in bidding wars on original artwork, a Jim Beam sampler basket, fine dining gift certificates, tickets to numerous sporting events, vacation homes, and all-inclusive vacation packages to places like Sonoma wine country in California and Paris. The silent auction, organized by [CGLA’s Young Professionals Board](#) and headed by Auction Chair, [David Saunders, Jenner & Block](#), had its biggest year to date, raising over \$44,500.

During the dinner, guests were led through the program by emcees, [Anna Davlantes](#) and [Corey McPherrin](#), co-anchors of Fox Chicago News’ [Good Day Chicago](#). Chicago Public Schools alumni, Kevin Harris, Lamar Jordan, She’Kira McKnight, and Charles Smith who form the ensemble, [Tha Steinmenautz](#), performed their poignant piece of spoken word poetry, “[Counting Graves](#)”. [Tha Steinmenautz](#) use their art to portray social-justice issues that plague our communities and the struggles of urban poverty that many of our clients also face. [Counting Graves](#) specifically takes a haunting look at drug dealing and the effects it can have on families, individuals, and the greater community.

Later in the program, many had their first opportunity to hear from CGLA’s [Executive Director, Gretchen Slusser](#). CGLA was also honored to recognize our former client, Willie, as the recipient of the “CGLA Client Courage & Character” Award. Willie came to us with an unjust eviction case in which he was falsely accused of purchasing illegal drugs. With his perseverance along with his [CGLA attorney John Bauter’s](#) expertise and dedication, Willie was able to prove his innocence, winning his case and keeping his apartment. To watch the video of Willie’s story that was shown during the program, please see the link below.



Allstate’s Executive VP, General Counsel, Michele Coleman Mayes accepts the “Spirit of Generosity” Award at CGLA’s Benefit.

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Willie suffered a medical emergency the night of the Benefit and was unable to attend in person. We're happy to say that after a short hospital stay, Willie is back at home and doing well.

CGLA is extremely grateful for all of the friends and supporters who made this evening possible including all of our sponsors, the benefit committee, our 90+ table hosts, volunteers and all of our guests. We hope you join us again for another magnificent evening for our 2012 Annual Benefit!

To see [pictures](#) from the evening, check out our album on [Facebook!](#)

To see the event videos, please click below:

[Allstate Video](#)

[Staff Video](#)

[Donor Story](#)

[Willie's Video](#)

Thank you to all of our other sponsors of the 2011 Annual Benefit!

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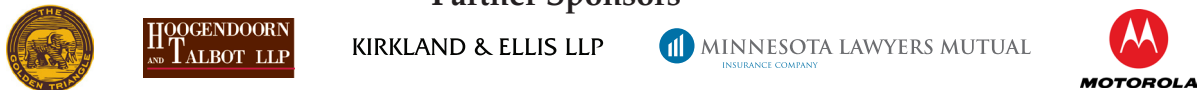
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