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CGLA Volunteer, Virginia, Offers Heart-Felt Service

"Most of the CGLA clients whom I have interviewed have real and pressing needs and few options. One who particularly stands out in my mind was a Latina woman who had suffered severe emotional and physical abuse from her husband. All of her children had as well. She was in tears throughout much of the interview, but CGLA was able to take her case and provide real hope for her."

- Virginia Beckett, CGLA Intake Volunteer

Virginia Beckett's passion for zealous advocacy and commitment to volunteer at CGLA sends her all over the city to meet with potential clients, listen to their stories, and then report back to our staff. Since 2010, Virginia has interviewed over 100 potential clients at either Breakthrough Urban Ministries in Garfield Park or St. Sabina's Parish in Auburn-Gresham.

Since passing the bar in 2009, Virginia's passion for service has turned her into a full-time volunteer, and CGLA is just one of an impressive six legal aid organizations she works with, doing "a little bit of everything" from conducting intakes to handling cases. "There's just such a need for volunteers," she says, "and organizations like CGLA are a great way for attorneys to use their skills in a meaningful way."



Virginia has interviewed over 100 potential CGLA since beginning volunteering with us in 2010.

But most of all it's the human connection that brings Virginia back, week after week, to listen to the stories of CGLA's clients. "It's definitely about the human contact. Being present and attentive to someone coping with an eviction or a custody dispute can be a service in itself, even if CGLA can't handle the cases of all the clients who come in for an intake." CGLA's client specialist, Dierdre Johnson works with Virginia almost every week and described her this way, "Virginia listens not just with her ears, but also with her heart...[she] presents each case with great advocacy and compassion; it feels as if the potential client is actually presenting their own case."

Volunteering with CGLA also allows Virginia to hone her legal skills. Virginia explains, "passion [is] not enough...objectivity and careful work are also crucial." According to Johnson, Virginia has made an intentional effort to improve her skills, and it's paid off, "Virginia takes her time and is more thorough with the facts and their presentation. It's clear she takes pride in her work."

CGLA thanks Virginia for the tremendous amount of support she has given to us and our intake program. Her passion for improving our clients' lives and her dedication to her craft are exemplary.

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