

cгла PRO BONO PULSE

MONARCH TAKES FLIGHT

Creating New Beginnings: How Monarch Software Improved Expungement Work

PRO BONO SPOTLIGHT

JOHN O'DONNELL

Learn more about John and his work with CGLA!

GET INVOLVED

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES

Visit our website at www.cgla.net or contact Alex Antonacci at alexantonacci@cgla.net.



Retired attorney volunteers, Larry Hansen and Barbara Chasnoff, with CGLA paralegal, Schihidia Daley.

MONARCH TAKES FLIGHT

By: Charlie Kolodziej

Monarch, CGLA's software to aid in the sealing and expungement of client arrest records, launched in January of last year and has since helped our organization assist hundreds of people in creating lives free from the stigma of a criminal record. In the year since it launched, this new software has been awaiting a new logo, and while the CGLA team is good at many things, graphic design is not high on the list. CGLA enlisted the help of pro bono volunteer Jasmine Attanasio, a senior user experience designer with the private plane company NetJets, to help create a Monarch logo that would reflect the vital work that we do.



Jasmine Attanasio
Senior User Experience Designer
Designer of Monarch Logo



Jasmine was first introduced to CGLA at the organization's annual pro bono volunteer recognition event held at their 6 S Clark office this past November. She attended with her aunt Nicole Allen, a fellow pro bono volunteer lawyer and E-Discovery Of Counsel at Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP.

It was there that Jasmine toured CGLA's Art and Archives exhibition that celebrates 50 years of CGLA's history and contributions to the legal aid community. Inspired by what she had learned, Jasmine began to wonder how she might contribute her skills to the work of CGLA.

She quickly became connected with our managing attorney Steve Fus and our director of support programs Cynthia Cornelius. A user experience designer by trade, Jasmine didn't fit CGLA's typical pro bono profile. She did however have experience working with Safer Foundation, a similarly aligned non-profit that provides re-entry services to returning citizens, and felt moved by CGLA's mission to contribute her own skills.

Cynthia and Steve had recently launched Monarch, a software that streamlines and automates certain aspects of the expungement and sealing research and drafting process. Monarch needed a new logo to bring it into the CGLA fold and Jasmine's experience as a designer made her a perfect fit for the opportunity.

Typically, the process of sealing or expunging a client's record requires collecting information from an individual's Record of Arrests and Prosecutions (RAP sheet) as well as a criminal history transcript that contains a list of arrests that happened anywhere in the state of Illinois. A petitioner must collect the date and booking number of an arrest, an IR number that corresponds to an individual's fingerprints, the name of the arresting agency, the types of charges, and the dispositions of each charge. If an arrest resulted in a court case, this information must then be checked against court documents. In other words, a whole lot of paperwork.

Monarch automates the collection of data from court documents related to an individual's arrest, making it easier for CGLA's attorney's to determine if an individual is eligible for expungement or sealing for a given arrest.

From there it's as easy as clicking a button. Monarch generates a petition from the available information, something individuals would previously have had to do by hand, leading to a dramatic increase in the productivity of the expungement process.

The expungement process allows CGLA's clients to be eligible for jobs, housing, and government assistance, allowing for a transformation in their daily lives. It was this transformation that inspired the name Monarch, chosen by Cynthia to reflect how butterflies change and grow over their lifetime. The monarch butterfly is also the state insect of Illinois.

For the software's logo, Jasmine wanted a design that would reflect the story of the butterfly and created a simple drawing of a monarch that could be paired alongside the name of the software. After trying out several different fonts and colors, the team settled on a sloping font in CGLA's iconic dark blue, Jasmine's butterfly resting on top of the "h" of "Monarch" as if landing on a flower. "Creating New Beginnings," was added as the tagline.

"It's been a great experience," said Jasmine of working with the CGLA team. "It's very nice to know that they also appreciate volunteers who aren't well versed legally, because that's definitely not my area of expertise. I think just them being as welcoming to a non lawyer professional was also very heartwarming. I was able to see how I could fit into their world as well."

PRO BONO STAR

John O'Donnell

John O'Donnell has been a dedicated volunteer with CGLA for over 10 years. He continues to return because he sees how meaningful expungement is for clients, especially in removing barriers to employment.

John enjoys helping clients through the process, and the appreciation they show makes the work even more rewarding. He also credits the Monarch Software App for improving efficiency, allowing volunteers to focus on what matters most.

John values the balanced nature of his work at CGLA, as it allows him to leave the helpdesk without taking work home, something he found challenging in his other pro bono roles. Outside of CGLA, John also volunteers with Youth for a Better Future, arranging swimming and sailing instruction for kids in the Near North / Cabrini-Green neighborhood.

Thank you, John, for your unwavering commitment and the positive impact you've made in our community!



ALEX ANTONACCI

Phone: 312.374.6891

Email: alexantonacci@cglanet.org



Pro Bono Opportunities

In-Person HD

Volunteer at the Help Desk at The Daley Center to assist individuals seeking criminal records relief in person.

Volunteers support CGLA attorneys and paralegals by answering questions, facilitating intake, and providing brief consultations on expungement and sealing, with full guidance on site.

Virtual HD

Volunteer with the Virtual Criminal Records Relief Help Desk to assist individuals seeking to clear their criminal records through expungement and sealing. Volunteers help research records, determine eligibility, and prepare paperwork, all while offering consultations *remotely* and at their convenience.

Court Hearings

Gain hands-on experience in virtual court by volunteering to represent petitioners at objection hearings. Volunteers work with clients to develop mitigation, offering a valuable experience while advocating for those seeking criminal records relief.

Research

Volunteers have the opportunity to research a variety of legal issues related to criminal records relief, providing valuable support to the team. This role offers hands-on experience in legal research while contributing to important work in helping individuals clear their records.



WEEKLY OFFICE HOURS

Every Tuesday 12 - 1 PM

Every Thursday 5:30 - 6:30 PM

Please email Alex for more information or for the Zoom link!