Welcome Back to the ChildLaw Center

The Civitas ChildLaw Center houses Loyola's programming relating to child and family law, policy and practice. The Center is located on the 11th floor of the Corboy Law Center. You can find a full schedule of Center activities and opportunities in this monthly newsletter and in Law School Announcements. Programming is open to the entire Loyola community and we look forward to your participation.

Professor Weinberg Receives Ignatius Teaching Award

On September 14th Professor Anita Weinberg received the University’s inaugural Ignatius Loyola Award for Excellence in Teaching. This award, which will be presented once every two years, is the University’s most prestigious honor for teaching. The Loyola Award recognizes faculty whose teaching involves a commitment to excellence, raises global awareness, promotes social justice and educates the whole student. The award honors the faculty member who embodies excellence in all aspects of teaching, including advising/mentoring, teaching to mission and engaging students in their learning. Congratulations, Anita!

Discipline in Schools: Moving Beyond Tolerance

The Children’s Legal Rights Journal will host its annual symposium on October 17th. This one-day conference will explore the issue of school discipline. In January 2014, the Obama administration issued guidelines calling for an end to zero-tolerance policies in schools across the nation. Speakers will discuss the changing landscape of school discipline, including achievements and challenges in implementing new school practices. This event will also focus on how reform efforts impact both the school-to-prison pipeline and discipline in charter schools. You may register for the event at [here](#).

Lead Poisoning Prevention Curriculum

Thanks to the leadership of Mary Burns, former Community Projects Coordinator for the Lead Safe Housing Initiative, efforts of Pam Witmer, JD ’11 and the technical savvy of Emily Forestieri, administrative assistant of the Civitas ChildLaw Center, the ChildLaw Policy Institute has produced and published a three-part video entitled “Lead Poisoning Prevention for Pregnant and Parenting Teens”. The video can be viewed on YouTube and at [leadsafeillinois.org](http://leadsafeillinois.org)
Summer Summits & Conferences

A day-long summit to address the burden of unhealthy housing in communities and begin development of a blueprint for the City and County focused on the problem was held in June at the Law School. Over 150 professionals attended with a keynote by Ron Sims, former Deputy Secretary for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. The University’s Healthy Homes & Healthy Communities Initiative is a broad interdisciplinary university-community-public-private partnership with the goal of tackling the problem of environmental toxins and health hazards in homes and communities of the Chicagoland area. It grew out of the ChildLaw Center’s Lead Safe Housing Initiative.

The Education Law & Policy Institute hosted the First Annual “Education Law: A Year in Review” seminar. The event brought together over 130 attorneys, educators, students and others interested in education law, including alumni from both the School of Law and the School of Education. The topics addressed included recent federal guidance on school discipline, bullying, and sexual violence; best practices in special education due process hearings; and other hot topics in the area of education law.

The Education Law and Policy Institute co-sponsored a training on school discipline with Loyola’s School of Education and the Illinois State Board of Education. The event brought together School staff, teachers and administrators from around the state and was designed to highlight best practices in addressing student behaviors while keeping kids in school. A major area of focus was on restorative justice, as well as the new federal guidelines in school discipline jointly issued by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education last January. At the conclusion of the training, participants created action plans for implementing changes to school discipline policies in their respective districts.

New Faces at the ChildLaw Center

We are happy to welcome two new members to our ChildLaw Center faculty! Hasti Barahmand has begun a two-year Salisbury Post-Graduate Clinical Teaching Fellowship. Most recently, Hasti was working as an Equal Justice Works Fellow, representing youth dually involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems at Florida’s Children First in Miami, FL. Melina Healey joins us after a judicial clerkship with U.S. District Court Judge John T. Nixon in Nashville, TN. Melina will be here for a two-year Post-Graduate ChildLaw Policy and Legislation Teaching Fellowship. Welcome Hasti and Melina!

Coffee Talk Series Begins

Coffee Talk is held most Wednesdays from 4:00—4:50 in the ChildLaw Center and features a speaker on an important or emerging topic in child and family law. This year’s Coffee Talk series will kick off on Wednesday, October 1 with a presentation by Lisa Christensen Gee, policy analyst at Voices for Illinois Children. She will discuss a recently released report on disparities in access to preschool in Illinois. The report, examines existing preschool opportunities and outstanding needs in Illinois and provides recommendations for how Illinois can re-claim its place as a leader among states by renewing and strengthening its investments in early childhood education. You can check out the full report and issue brief on Voices’ website.

ChildLaw Legislation

In August, Governor Quinn signed two bills researched and drafted by Magda Derisma and Alex Rosney, students in the ChildLaw Legislation and Policy Clinic. The bills, worked on with members of the Youth Advisory Board to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), strengthens the DCFS scholarship program and establishes the Youth Advisory Board as a legislatively commissioned Board. Magda and some of the youth testified about the bills when they were being heard in committee in the General Assembly.
**Student & Alumni News**

**Weddings and Engagements**

**Kasia Opalacz** (right) married Jakub Majerczak on September 13th.

Third year ChildLaw Fellow **Alexandra Hunstein** (right) married Ben Roffman in St. Louis on August 16th.

**Aurelija Juska**, 10’ (below left) recently announced her engagement to Shane Fitzpatrick. **Elissa Johnson**, ’10 (below center) is engaged to Tracy H. Smith III. Second year fellow **Michael Montgomery** (below right) proposed to Jazzmyne Dickens and she accepted!

Congratulations to **Agnes Zielinski**, ’13 (left) on her wedding to Patrick Olechno on September 20th!

**Career Announcements**

**Annie Park**, ’13 was awarded a U.S Fulbright student research grant to assess child welfare laws and system in South Korea.

**Elizabeth Gresk**, ’14 has accepted a position at the Office of the Public Guardian in Chicago!

**Laura Hoffman**, ’10 is now working at Cuyahoga County Prosecutor’s Office as the Assistant Prosecuting Attorney.

**Meg Helder**, ’11 worked closely with a YMCA of Metro Chicago program called Urban Warriors, which pairs at-risk Chicago teens with military veterans. Learn more about this program at [www.chicagotribune.com](http://www.chicagotribune.com).

**Births**

**Riya Shah**, ’05 and her husband Veeral announce the birth of their daughter, Mika Saha Shah, on July 7, 2014!

**Faculty & Staff Updates**

**Diane Geraghty** served as a presenter at an international conference on access to legal aid in criminal justice systems in June, 2014 in Johannesburg, South Africa. Her presentation focused on core requirements for child-friendly legal aid. In July, she participated in a briefing with high-ranking Ethiopian officials on a possible audit of that country’s criminal and juvenile justice systems. In June, she also was named a “Legal Legend” by the American Constitution Society.

**Professor Stacey Platt** was elected to the board of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) this summer. She served as faculty for the National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA) in Boulder, CO, training litigators in the national program, as well as lawyers representing survivors of domestic violence. Professor Platt also taught at an ABA training on the Fundamentals of Domestic Violence in Washington D.C.

**Lisa Jacobs**, Program Manager of the Illinois Models for Change initiative, has been appointed Vice Chair of the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission. The Commission oversees juvenile justice policy for the State of Illinois.

**Professor Anita Weinberg** was a panelist at the AALS Clinical Teachers Conference. She also presented at the Statewide Child Advocacy Center Annual Meeting where she spoke on “Improving Illinois’ Response to Youth Offending: Considerations for Law, Policy, and Practice.” Professor Weinberg was a presenter at the National Healthy Homes Conference, speaking on “Building Community-Academic Partnerships for Improving Healthy Homes Outcomes.”
The Loyola Civitas ChildLaw Center is dedicated to promoting justice for children through interdisciplinary teaching, scholarship and service, and through the development of a new legal specialty, pediatric law.