



PRESS RELEASE

The Florida Bar Foundation Awards Grants To Law School's Children's Advocacy Center

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. -- The Florida Bar Foundation has awarded the Children's Advocacy Center at the Florida State University College of Law two grants totaling \$100,000 to carry on work on behalf of children in the areas of special education and health care, and domestic violence and family law.

"A little bit of legal aid goes a long way, whether for a child or an adult, but legal aid for a child can have an astounding and almost immediate impact for good," said Foundation President William H. Davis. Davis, a Tallahassee attorney, noted that the Foundation also had awarded more than \$1.1 million for other children's legal services programs throughout the state.

The Florida Bar Foundation's gift includes a \$75,000 Children's Legal Services Grant and a \$25,000 Law School Civil Clinic Grant.

The center, which is divided into the Children's Section and the Domestic Violence/Family Law Advocacy Section, is home to one of the nation's leading legal internship programs. Its mission is to instill in law students a sense of professional responsibility toward poor children and to create a pool of future lawyers trained and motivated to do pro bono work for children. In 2005, the Clinical Legal Education Association presented the center with its Excellence in Public Interest Award.

Students are certified by the Florida Supreme Court to practice law as interns and, under the supervision of a clinical professor, are responsible for all facets of cases to which they are assigned. Their clients are referred by the Refuge House, the Tallahassee Bar Association Legal Aid Office and Legal Services of North Florida. They include children with disabilities, children involved in custody disputes and in foster care, and those who have been denied proper medical care.

"We are grateful for the Florida Bar Foundation's continued support of the Florida State University College of Law Clinic," said Clinical Professor Ruth Stone, who heads the CAC's Domestic Violence Section. "The new grant allows us to increase our representation of other underserved populations in our area, including persons referred to us by the local battered women's shelter, the domestic violence hotline, Legal Aid, and other agencies referring indigent people who would not otherwise receive legal representation."

The clinic's work has been featured in the national and international media, including 60 Minutes II, Fox News, The O'Reilly Factor, the German newspaper Bild and Madrid's El Pais. It has received front-page coverage in the New York Times and was a cover story in the New York Times Sunday Magazine.

"Without legal advocacy, children's health and special education rights will not be enforced, and they will not receive the health care and special education that they need to flourish or even get by in life," said Paolo Annino, a clinical professor heading the Children's Section.

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