



CLS Board Members, from left to right: Eric Wright, Court Skinner, Jane Howell, Barbara Mouton (Treasurer), Nozipo Wobogo, Aaron Myers, Andrew Valentine (Co-Chair), Lome Aseron (former Executive Director), William Webster (Secretary), Julia Lipez, Elizabeth Jackson (Co-Chair), Carolyn Tucher

## Greetings from Andy Cohen, Executive Director

To the CLSEPA Community:

I have assumed the title and responsibilities of Executive Director of CLSEPA.

I am grateful to the Board of Directors for giving me this opportunity to serve the community. I would also like to thank Lome Aseron for welcoming me and explaining some of the CLSEPA's recent history and the agency's current status, goals, and accomplishments.

My aim in this undertaking is to strengthen the already successful staff of CLSEPA, and to increase that effectiveness through fund-raising and administrative support of all our staff and volunteers in their work serving the communities of East Palo Alto, Bell Haven, and surrounding area.

I look forward to working hard for CLS and helping all our staff add to the many accomplishments of the past three years. The need is great; the worthy goal is legal representation for those who can least afford it.

Andy Cohen, Executive Director

### An Intern's View:

**Diana Olin: Immigration**  
UCLA, 2L

Interning at CLS provides a beautiful compliment to the 1L curriculum. CLS equips its interns with practical experience in housing, immigration, and consumer law. I intern in the immigration program where I have significant client contact with monolingual Spanish speakers. We interns must consult with the immigration attorney before relaying legal advice, but often the client's only interaction with our office is through us, the interns. My primary role entails informing clients of their options and assisting them in accomplishing their goals, be it a complex VAWA application or a simple work authorization application. The client-centered focus improves our Spanish language skills, our interviewing skills, and our knowledge of family based immigration. I'm happy I chose CLS for my summer internship; it's a great experience!



## CLSEPA Helps Ensure Safe Shelter for Families

Alma\* is a single mother with six children, ages 2-10. She and her children moved into a one bedroom rental unit in the fall of 2003. At the onset of winter, mold and mildew started appearing throughout her apartment. Several of Alma's children started to develop respiratory problems and were hospitalized. Alma asked her landlord to make the apartment safe for her children by cleaning up the mold and mildew. For two months, her landlord did nothing.

When Alma came into our office, she was distraught. CLSEPA Housing Assistance Program staff discovered that, due to the age of the house, the landlord was not required to install insulation, which would have alleviated the health threat to Alma and her children. Because she was afraid that the unhealthy conditions would return during the rainy season, and due to her landlord's refusal to provide a healthy dwelling, Alma decided that her best recourse was to move. CLSEPA supported her decision, and

helped Alma successfully terminate her lease. With our assistance, Alma received compensation from her landlord that helped her move into a new, safe apartment.

### VAWA at CLS (See insert, above right)

Community Legal Services has worked with many VAWA clients, and helped them become residents and citizens. One of the CLS clients is named Diana Rodriguez\*. Rodriguez moved to the United States ten years ago from Mexico City. Her husband had already moved to the country, and gained residency. However, he did not fill out the immigration forms for Rodriguez and her children. She was not informed of this problem until she went to the Fair Oaks Family Center to inform them of her new address. At this time, the Center referred Rodriguez to Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto. She met with Katy Henrikson, (former Supervising Immigration Attorney) and with that, Rodriguez was on her way to lawful residency. Her case was one of first impression in one sense, causing a national immigration director to

*(Continued on next page)*  
\*Names changed

## Immigration Visas

### Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

Congress passed VAWA in the early 90s, and one of its benefits was to help immigration victims of domestic violence. VAWA states that if a person's immigration status depends upon that of an abusive spouse, that person can self-petition for immigration relief without the abuser's assistance or knowledge. When the Act was created, it took into account the fact that many abusive spouses with US citizenship or residency status have undocumented spouses and use their status to fuel the abuse. VAWA has helped immigrant women and men to obtain safety and independence.

### U Visa Interim Relief

The U Visa was created as a way to encourage undocumented persons to report crimes to the police and assist with their prosecution, without risking deportation. Law enforcement must certify the undocumented person assisted or will assist, or that the investigation would be hindered without their assistance. Then the undocumented person can apply for a U Visa to gain legal status. The caveat is that no regulations have been issued for the U Visa, which means that a real U Visa is not issued, only interim relief until regulations are set.

### Intern Summer

#### Contribution - Clients

#### Six Interns (5/23/05-7/21/05)

Housing:	57
Immigration:	77
Volunteer Attorney Program:	23





CLS Summer 2005 interns from left to right: Leslie Eckles, housing intern, Jordan McEntyre, housing intern, Diana Olin, immigration intern, Yadira Gonzalez, office manager, Shaheen Adibi, intern, Oliver Louie, anti-predatory lending intern, Althea Uhlman immigration attorney. Also pictured are Lome Aseron and Andy Cohen former and present E.D.'s, 2nd & 3rd from L., and Yadira Gonzalez, office manager, 4th from R. Not pictured is Stuart White, immigration intern.

reverse the decision of a subordinate because of CLS advocacy. Rodriguez said of CLS, "They did a good job, and worked hard. I'm so happy for that." Rodriguez remains connected to CLS and continues to visit the office weekly. Diana now has a steady job at the dry cleaners in Palo Alto, and, with the help of CLS, is building a new life for herself and her family.

### Sally Jones\*: Community Courage

By: Oliver Louie, SCU 2L

Thinking about refinancing your home to pay off a VISA bill or create that ultimate dream kitchen? Before you rush off into the world of "Low, Low Rates!" it may be wise to get to know Sally Jones. Ms. Jones is a long time resident and homeowner in the com-

munity of East Palo Alto. In 2002 she responded to an unsolicited advertisement from Ameriquest in order to refinance her home to pay off bills and remodel the bathroom. This seemingly simple task turned into a nightmare as Ms. Jones unknowingly became the victim of a predatory lending scheme. She was targeted for undisclosed high interest rates, multiple financing charges and large penalty payments only discovered when she tried refinance again.

Ms. Jones felt alone and discouraged upon initially learning of the seriousness of her situation. Faced with a daunting amount of paperwork and legal intricacies she went to EPA CAN DO for help. She was referred to Shirley Hochhausen, a managing attorney at CLS. Through CLS Ms. Jones received easy-to-understand advice

that helped her navigate the complexities of the legal terminology. The Fenwick & West pro bono attorneys, led by Aaron Myers, and a team of volunteer attorneys partnered with Shirley Hochhausen and CLS on behalf of Ms. Jones and other victims predatory lending. This partnership led to the filing of a class action suit against Ameriquest that is currently pending.

Ms. Jones credits CLS and the volunteer attorneys with helping her regain a sense of community after being let down by companies she thought she could trust. She now warns others to always read and fully understand any document which they are signing and to seek legal advice before committing to anything. If the offer sounds too good to be true, it usually is.

**\*Name changed**

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## The Numbers: 2004

Low-income, under-served individuals and families served: 1,167

1. Housing Program:	198
2. Immigration Program:	512
3. Volunteer Attorney Program:	285
4. Referrals to cooperating agencies:	172
5. Tenants attended CLS' community presentations:	120
6. Law Enforcement personnel trained by CLS' Immigration Program regarding the rights of immigrant victims of domestic violence:	47
7. Seventh and Eighth grade students educated regarding their legal rights and responsibilities:	15

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