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client’s home of 36 years saved

ALRP client JT has been living in downtown San Francisco on the same street, in the same building, and in the same apartment since escaping from a war-torn Vietnam in 1979. As is unfortunately the case for many of our clients, JT’s home of 36 years is far from perfect. Mold and pests are recurring issues, and the plumbing is unreliable. The elevator frequently breaks, and this is particularly difficult when the arthritis in his knees flares up. Because JT has a Section 8 voucher (a federal housing subsidy), he has been somewhat protected from the unprecedented rent increases driving out many long-term San Francisco residents. A tenant with a Section 8 voucher can, however, become a target for landlords and property managers who would prefer to have the unit occupied by a tenant paying market-rate rent. JT recently experienced this pressure to vacate when he received a 3-Day Notice to Pay Rent or Quit. “I was so scared that I couldn’t sleep,” he said, adding that his building manager once told him that he “complains too much for someone on Section 8.” It wasn’t the first time his tenancy in this building had been threatened, but ALRP is hoping it will be the last.

An interruption in housing can be deadly to someone living with HIV/AIDS, so JT has his rent automatically transferred from his bank account to the building’s account each month, with a portion of the rent paid by the agency that administers his Section 8 subsidy, the San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA). Despite his steps to ensure timely rent payments, his landlord claimed that he owed nearly five thousand dollars in back-rent. In addition to HIV, JT survived squamous-cell carcinoma and lives on about $800 a month from SSI; it would have been nearly impossible for him to cover such a large bill. Beyond being impossible, it also would have been simply wrong. The missing rent was not a result of JT’s negligence, but rather, it seems, a direct deposit error within SFHA – an error that occurred several times before. JT’s very limited English proficiency makes it difficult for him to communicate his defense, so his friends Mark and Thomas often serve as points of contact. “I tried several times to tell the manager about the situation,” explained Thomas, “but we weren’t hearing back.” When JT, Mark, and Thomas learned that JT’s landlord had procured a lawyer, they knew it was time for JT to do the same.
32nd year of service to people with HIV/AIDS at our biggest event of the year.

**alrp wines**

ALRP has teamed up with JK Cellars/Sierra Foothills Wine Services to bring you ALRP Private Reserve Wines & Gift Baskets.

Purchase of these wines helps support ALRP’s free legal services for people living with HIV/AIDS. JK Cellars donates $30 per case, $2.50 per bottle, and 30% of all gift basket and wine glass sales back to ALRP. All case orders receive a free set of ALRP stemless wine glasses. Delivery within San Francisco is free.

For more information or to purchase, please call, text, or e-mail Kimberly Hathaway at (415) 994-1097 or kimberly@hathawaypr.com

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JT’s case was handled by ALRP Housing Attorney Kim Shindel. “After confirming that JT did not want to move,” said Kim, “I began building a case and served discovery to opposing counsel.” While working on the case Kim also learned that building management was attempting to enter JT’s apartment to take photos, unlawful behavior that she quickly put a stop to. “I don’t think the manager likes me very much,” shared JT. “He is trying to find any way to get rid of me.” This sentiment is not uncommon among housing clients, and highlights why it is so important to ALRP that our clients feel welcome, respected, and heard – even if it’s just inside our office.

Fortunately for JT, his property manager admitted that the missing rent was SFHA’s share and not JT’s. Kim then contacted SFHA to ensure their share of the rent would be given to JT’s landlord as soon as possible. She filed a motion to end the case in JT’s favor, and almost immediately after received a request from the building’s attorney to settle the case. Following negotiations between the building’s attorney and ALRP, a settlement agreement was reached: JT will remain a tenant, the habitability issues in his apartment will be remedied, and his property manager will no longer conflate delayed SFHA payments with JT’s nonpayment of rent.

Being a vigilant tenant, particularly in San Francisco for 36 years, is a challenging job – one JT isn’t confident he would be successful at without the support of Mark, Thomas, Kim, and ALRP. “Kim was a godsend,” said JT, “and ALRP was very sensitive to my needs.” JT’s housing situation isn’t completely without issue; some of his habitability problems have been addressed, others await future repairs. Still, for JT it’s home – and in the City’s housing crisis that’s certainly something worth holding on to.

**director’s message**

**Assessing the Need for Legal Services**

We have known for a long time that the legal needs of our clients are changing as the HIV/AIDS epidemic changes. We also know that in many studies examining the needs of people living with HIV, legal services is not always at the top of the list. How can this be, given that legal complications have such a monumental impact on the lives of our clients? From my experience, most people just do not anticipate the need for an attorney, and thus focus on other issues. Also coming into play is probably the public’s tendency to err on the side of caution when trusting attorneys and our sensitivity towards stigmatized subjects such as HIV.

But now we have a study that will greatly shape our approach to legal services in the future. We can thank our colleagues at The Williams Institute, an independent research organization within UCLA School of Law, for taking on the challenging task of documenting how people living with HIV are (or are not) utilizing legal services. The results were surprising even for those of us who have been doing this work for a very long time. A stunning 98% of respondents indicated that they had at least one legal need in the year prior to the survey, but a mere 28% sought legal help, and only 16% received help from a lawyer.
Of course, different groups of people living with HIV have varying legal needs. For example, Latino clients often have disproportionately greater needs in the area of immigration law. Transgender women reported needing criminal law assistance more than other respondents, likely speaking to the fact that transgender women (regardless of HIV status) are incarcerated at a higher rate than the general population. But the study showed that there are some areas of law that impact the entire spectrum of people living with HIV, including housing, employment, and health care access. Many folks reported legal needs in multiple areas of law and astonishingly 85% of those surveyed did not have wills or advanced health care directives in place.

Despite this study showing prominent need, people in many areas of the country still do not have access to free and low cost legal services. Case in point, Southern California’s sole HIV specific legal services agency folded a few years back. Fortunately, because of ALRP’s extensive network of volunteer attorneys and our dedicated staff, people living with HIV in the Bay Area have greater access to legal assistance than most other HIV+ folks in the country. We are committed to ensuring that our clients continue to have access to justice.

recent events

**Up Your Alley Street Fair**

ALRP was proud to bring over two dozen volunteers to this year’s Up Your Alley Street Fair on July 26, 2015. Every year Folsom Street Events raises hundreds of thousands of dollars for San Francisco non-profits, and ALRP is fortunate enough to receive some of those donations because of the awesome volunteers who support us. We can’t wait for [Folsom Street Fair 2015 in September](#)!

![Security, Registration, and Green Team volunteers at the fair](image)
AIDS Walk 2015

We did it! On Sunday, July 19, 2015, 35 ALRP Legal Eagles team members joined a united community of 20,000 strong to come together in Golden Gate Park and take crucial steps toward an HIV-free generation.

THANK YOU to all of the individuals who were a part of this year’s extraordinary event, and for helping us raise a record $31,131 to support ALRP’s legal services for people with HIV/AIDS. Our team made the Top Ten this year, as did individual fundraiser and Super StarWalker Paul Richardson who raised over $7,000 by himself! Special thanks also go out to StarWalkers Amy Black, Gina Gemello, Tom Hadid, Hailey Hibler, Jeffrey Jacobi, Tom Pack, James Picerno, and Michelle Roberts. see gallery

ALRP Legal Eagles
Major Donor Party
ALRP held its annual Major Donor Party on May 20, 2015 at The Plant Cafe. This was a celebratory evening honoring Kerne Matsubara of Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP and BALIF for their leadership, generosity, and ongoing support of ALRP and our clients. see gallery

Clockwise from upper left: Paul Casas, Jessica Bogo, John Unruh, Kerne Matsubara, Jeff Flora, James Picerno, Bill Hirsh, Emily Nugent, Thompson Chambers, Beth Brandon

Volunteer Appreciation Party
ALRP celebrated its 15th Annual Volunteer Appreciation Party on Thursday, April 16, 2015 at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP. We were proud to honor Panel attorney and former Board member Michelle Roberts as Volunteer of the Year. Special thanks to Dashe Cellars for donating wine to the event as well as a free wine tasting for Michelle and her friends. see gallery
Clockwise from upper left: Isabel, Max, Michelle Roberts, Alex Taylor, Bill Hirsch, Jason Hain, Amy Orgain, Adam Neuffer, Emily Nugent, Jeff Jacobi, Chuck Adams, Eric Bull, Kimberly Hathaway, Steve Scholz, Mike Bordelon

upcoming events

32nd ANNUAL ALRP FROM THE HEART RECEPTION & AUCTION
Wednesday, October 14
6:00pm - 9:00pm
Julia Morgan Ballroom

Help ALRP commemorate its 32nd year of service to people living with HIV/AIDS at our biggest event of the year - the ALRP From The Heart 32nd Annual Reception & Auction.

ALRP will be presenting our 2015 Clint Hockenberry Leadership Award to Andrew Westley, our 2015 Attorney of the Year Award to Shawn Matloob, and 2015 Firm of the Year Award to Perkins Coie LLP during the event. Enjoy amazing food and wines - including ALRP Private Reserve Wines - while connecting with colleagues and friends. This year’s reception is being hosted by San Francisco Supervisor David Campos. The evening will also feature a Live and Silent Auction.

Tickets start at $100. To purchase tickets or for more information contact Jim McBride.
Folsom Street Fair
Looking for a really unique volunteer opportunity? Look no further than Folsom Street Fair!

ALRP is a proud major beneficiary of this outrageously fun kink and leather-themed street festival. **We would love for you to join us out on the fair grounds on September 27, 2015.**

By volunteering, you can help ALRP keep our reputation as a star beneficiary while also helping us raise critically-needed funds to provide our free legal services to people living with HIV/AIDS. To meet our commitment ALRP must recruit over 50 volunteers, so we need your support! [click here for shifts](#)

Contact Alex at alex@alrp.org and stay tuned for our shift announcement e-mails to sign up and learn more.

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Castro Street Fair
The Fair is located in the heart of San Francisco’s Castro District, at the intersection of Market & Castro Streets and the surrounding area.

The Castro Street Fair is a community street celebration that was founded by Harvey Milk in 1974. Hundreds of local artists, vendors, craftspeople, and organizations line the streets and celebrate the diversity of the neighborhood. Stages with live entertainment and dance stages can be found throughout the fairgrounds.

Entertainers this year include Peaches and The Monster Show.

The Fair is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and all proceeds go directly to charitable causes important to the Castro community. Additionally, the Fair funds the rainbow flag that flies over the intersection of Castro and Market.

**Want to help out on fair day?**
ALRP is working two Gates shifts. Please consider signing up for one or both:  
10:00am – 2:00pm  
1:30pm – 5:30pm

To volunteer, e-mail alex@alrp.org with the information below.  
1) First and Last Name  
2) Age  
3) E-mail Address  
4) Shift Choice

If you are bringing friends or family (recommended!), please include their names, ages, and e-mail addresses as well. Castro Street Fair is a family friendly event so feel free to bring along the whole gang.
2015 summer law clerks

ALRP was lucky to spend the summer with five amazing clerks from law schools near and far. These full-time volunteers helped a combined total of 353 clients while exploring the many areas of law our clients need assistance with and getting hands-on experience. Law clerks significantly expand the amount of work ALRP is able to do by conducting initial intakes, drafting letters, and making attorney referrals. We are proud to have Alyssa, Hengameh, Jeremy, Shima, and Victor in the ALRP family!

![Image of summer law clerks]

From left to right: Hengameh Poya (GGU ’15), Jeremy Watson (GGU ’16), Alyssa Palatella (SMU ’18), Shima Vasseghi (UC Davis ’17), and Victor Ng (USF ’17)

hiv50+ project update

Currently, more than 55% of people living with HIV in San Francisco are over 50 years old. This reality inspired ALRP to acknowledge the needs of such a unique population.

Since we launched our HIV50+ Project last year, we have worked with a number of community partners - including Positive Resource Center, Let’s Kick Ass, the San Francisco AIDS Foundation’s 50-Plus Network, Shanti, and Face to Face - to reach out to people living with HIV who are aging. ALRP also helped produce two large community events where we joined our community in celebrating a future we never dreamed of and ensuring access to health care for people living with HIV who are aging.

Our HIV50+ Project is designed to help clients address housing, benefits and estate planning issues, which are of particular concern to folks as they are aging with HIV. We have assisted with nine educational presentations for clients and service providers in just the first six months of 2015. During that same time period, ALRP handled 37 estate planning cases, 204 housing cases, and 107 benefits cases for clients in our HIV50+ program. We are excited to see what the future holds for this very vital endeavor.