COMMUNITY JUSTICE UNIT

July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019
WHO WE ARE

The Community Justice Unit (CJU) was established in 2011 by The Legal Aid Society as part of the New York City Council’s Task Force to Combat Gun Violence. Recognizing the critical need to treat neighborhood violence as a public health crisis, the CJU follows the Cure Violence (CV) model: empowering impacted communities to develop proactive strategies to reduce violence, especially involving young people. The CJU partners with other Cure Violence community based organizations to create empowered, engaged and safer impacted communities. Every day, in every borough, the CJU brings comprehensive legal representation to underserved communities, helping all New Yorkers effectively access legal services.

The CJU’s comprehensive legal representation consists of community outreach, including legal education, clinics and trainings to the CV network. These clinics empower thousands of New Yorkers in high schools, community organizations and jails. Our efforts are a key component of the CJU’s larger goals: supporting healthier communities by teaching New Yorkers their rights in the criminal and civil contexts, by demystifying legal systems and by explaining how to effectively access legal services.

Cure Violence participants and staff are guaranteed access to legal advice and counsel from The Legal Aid Society. Community members in CV catchment areas also have access to the our services. Our support staff meet with clients and connect them to attorneys who can provide trainings, advice and even representation. Individuals from CV sites and their communities gain access to all of the services that The Legal Aid Society offers, including housing, immigration, employment, criminal, family, benefits, and health care.
The CJU currently employs:

6 Staff Attorneys
- Brooklyn - 1
- Bronx - 1
- Manhattan - 2
- Queens - 1
- Staten Island - 1
*Remote Coverage - Attorney on Call

2 Community Organizers
- Manhattan (HQ) - 1
- Queens - 1

2 Supervising Attorneys
- Manhattan (HQ) - 1
- Queens - 1
CURE VIOLENCE
Provide legal services to Cure Violence sites across the city

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Citywide community engagement under a public health model

Program Participants
Employees of the Organizations
Community Members at Large

Partner Area
Rap Sheet Clinics
School KYR
Tabling
Community Debriefings
Gang Database
Marijuana Legalization Campaign

Partner Area
Project Reset
Project HOPE
Good Call
Client Community Advisory Board
Immigration KYR
IMPLEMENTING THE CV MODEL

Interrupting Transmission

**MODEL GOALS:**
- Prevent Retaliation
- Mediate Conflicts
- Keep Conflicts Cool

**CJU ROLE:**
- Provide support to CV partner agencies/participants; intermediary role between communities and law enforcement

**SERVICES PROVIDED**
- Safe Surrenders
- 24/7 Hotlines
- "Good Call" Hotline
- Emergency Legal Support

Reducing Highest Risk

**MODEL GOALS:**
- Assess Highest Risk
- Change Behavior
- Provide Treatment

**CJU ROLE:**
- Vertical Representation Model; Connect CV partner agencies, community members and participants to social/legal services

**SERVICES PROVIDED**
- Rap Sheet Clinics
- Job Fairs/Employment Training
- Clean Slate
- Access to Benefits (Housing, Disability, Education, Healthcare)
- Case Closed - Record Sealing
- Immigration Issues
- Court Information/Legal Advice

Changing Community Norms

**MODEL GOALS:**
- Respond to Shootings
- Organize Community
- Spread Positive Norms

**CJU ROLE:**
- Amplify Community Voices; Challenge policies negatively impacting communities (e.g. MJ reform, gang database)

**SERVICES PROVIDED**
- Shooting Responses
- Know Your Rights Events
- Community Events (Tabling)
- Policy Advocacy/Reform
- Awareness Campaigns
- Pathways to College
- Gun Violence Awareness
From July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019 the Legal Aid Society's Community Justice Unit held 106 community events throughout the five boroughs of New York City.
THE BRONX

Cure Violence Partner Organizations

B.R.A.G. West Bronx - Good Shepherd Services
B.R.A.G. North Bronx - Good Shepherd Services
Release the Grip - Bronx Connect
S.O.S. - South Bronx
S.O.S. - Morrisania

14 Total Community Events

1 - RHR Event
13 - CCN Events
BROOKLYN

Cure Violence Partner Organizations

B.I.V.O. - Brownsville
G.M.A.C.C. - East Flatbush
Man Up! - East New York
Operation Hood - Coney Island
S.O.S. - Crown Heights
S.O.S. - Bedstuy

23 Total Community Events

3 - RHR Events
20 - CCN Events
Cure Violence Partner Organizations

S.A.V.E. - East Harlem
Street Corner Resources - Central Harlem

25 Total Community Events

1 - RHR Event
24 - CCN Events
Cure Violence Partner Organizations
Central Life Family Center (True 2 Life)

16 Total Community Events
1 - RHR Event
15 - CCN Events
**QUEENS**

**Cure Violence Partner Organizations**

- 696 Build - Long Island City
- L.I.F.E. Camp, Inc. - Jamaica
- Rock Safe Streets - Far Rockaway

**28 Total Community Events**

- 3 - RHR Events
- 25 - CCN Events
## Individual Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who We Helped</th>
<th>Services Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interrupting Transmission</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>331</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Members</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reduce Highest Risk</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3,167</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,076</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants</strong></td>
<td><strong>Changing Community Norms</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>863</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,268</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, the Legal Aid Society's Community Justice Unit provided 3,154 individual services to Cure Violence partner organizations within the five boroughs of New York City.
From July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, the Legal Aid Society's Community Justice Unit provided 1,207 individual services to community members within the five boroughs of New York City.
From July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, the Legal Aid Society's Community Justice Unit provided a total of 4,361 individual services within the five boroughs of New York City.
The CJU worked with the Legal Aid Society's Case Closed project to help an employee from CV partner site, Man Up, Inc. successfully seal a previous conviction.

In Manhattan, S.A.V.E referred a young community member facing a school suspension. With the support of the Legal Aid Society’s Adolescent Intervention and Diversion Program, the CJU attorney represented the student, and the school withdrew the charges before the hearing.

A social worker in the Bronx trial office reached out to the CJU, because she had a client facing jail time due to alleged ties to a gang. The CJU provided information from the research the CJU had done on the NYPD gang database in order to help the social worker and her team advocate for no jail time for their client.
Two CJU attorneys led a training series with S.O.S Bronx participants who were incarcerated at Horizon Juvenile Center. The SOS Bronx staff found that violence within the detention center could be reduced by having lawyers available to talk to them about the criminal justice system and explain delays that could arise in their cases. The participants were deeply engaged. As a result, SOS Bronx asked CJU to implement a series of trainings, with the intention to reach all nine dorms at the center.
The CJU’s early involvement in a high-profile surrender in New York County resulted in the person accused being released on his own recognizance and not being charged with multiple felonies. CJU received a call from a community affiliate about a young person who was not charged with a crime, who wanted to voluntarily surrender himself. Nevertheless, the case was in the press and an investigation was immediately underway concerning a hit and run in New York County. The CJU attorneys and community liaisons were able to protect the young person’s rights by speaking with the police and coordinating with the precinct to ensure his safety. The CJU’s presence and involvement empowered the young person, the family and the Cure Violence site with critical information about the next steps in the process.

Because the CJU was able to invoke counsel early on and work with the family and the community affiliate to obtain mitigation information, the young person was released on his own recognizance. Now the young person has a better chance of receiving a probationary disposition in lieu of incarceration, meaning one less New Yorker trapped at Rikers Island.
The CJU immediately intervened when alerted by a family in Far Rockaway that their son, who was a gun shot victim and on a respirator was shackled by his hands and feet to a hospital bed against medical advice. He had no outstanding warrants, nor was he currently under arrest.

Within 24 hours, the CJU was able to get him unshackled, and made sure the family received 24 hour hospital access to visit their son without police interference.

He survived.
At the end of 2018, the CJU filed a lawsuit in partnership with Pro Bono council Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP, against the NYPD's gang database. The CJU filed on behalf of a client who was facing an unusually severe charge and high bail request on his criminal case. The prosecution claimed that he was a member of a violent gang, a claim based on unsubstantiated information from the NYPD's gang database. The CJU helped this client submit a FOIL request for the database records. His request was denied so he appealed the denial. He was denied again, and then he sued.

The CJU is committed to challenging the discriminatory nature of the NYPD's gang database as it puts individual's liberties at risk, particularly Black and Brown men who are disproportionately represented in the database.