



PEGASUS

LEGAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

Promoting and defending the rights of children and youth to safe and stable homes, quality education and healthcare, and a voice in decisions that affect their lives.



Letter from the Executive Director



Greetings from Pegasus! This year has been full of changes. Long time staff attorney Grace Spulak has moved on to an exciting new opportunity, and several new staff members have joined us: Cindy Quiñonez, Miriam Rea, Jennifer Romero and Nicole Saunders. See our website for new staff bios, and read on in this Annual Report for more about Grace's new position.

Recently, I was asked to cover a presentation at *Head to Toe*, the conference for school health professionals. Initially, I was not happy about having to rearrange my schedule. But as I walked into the Convention Center, I overheard a man telling his friend about the presentation I was about to give. He was predicting that the presentation would be very good because he had heard Larry Kronen (for whom I was substituting) speak before. When I walked into the room, I was immediately bombarded with questions about different scenarios with which the professionals were struggling: a child who couldn't

get her asthma medication; grandparents who couldn't enroll their grandchild in school.

In the end, I was grateful for the opportunity to present that day. I felt proud of the work that Pegasus' staff does every day to address the urgent needs of children and youth all over New Mexico. And there is so much more to be done.

Everything we do is made possible by hundreds of people like you: donors, volunteers, and supporters in the community. The coming year promises to be difficult in terms of revenue. I hope you will consider making an extra generous donation to Pegasus — it could make all the difference for a child or youth who needs our help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Liz McGrath".

Liz McGrath
Executive Director

The Pegasus Team



Back Row: Lawrence B. Kronen, *Staff Attorney and Director of Kinship Guardian Program*; Jackie Sagastume, *Legal Assistant*; Matthew Bernstein, *Staff Attorney* **Middle Row:** Jennifer E. Romero, *Staff Attorney*; Nicole Saunders, *Paralegal*; Miriam Rea, *Staff Attorney* **Front Row:** Cindy Quiñonez, *Receptionist*; Liz McGrath, *Executive Director*; Cynthia Gibbons, *Office Administrator/Paralegal* **Not Pictured:** Tara Ford, *Legal Director*; Cassandra Dennis, *Development Assistant* and David Munson, *Bookkeeper*.

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GRACE SPULAK & **FosterEd: New Mexico**

Former Pegasus staff attorney, Grace Spulak, is now directing the FosterEd: New Mexico initiative aimed at improving education outcomes for young people in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. FosterEd, an initiative of the National Center for Youth Law, based in Oakland, California, was invited to work in New Mexico by the New Mexico Supreme Court and CYFD through their Joint Education Task Force. FosterEd currently runs a demonstration project in Lea County through which an education liaison works directly with students and families to ensure that the student's education needs are being met, and that, in general, education is treated as a priority for young people in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. FosterEd is also working with stakeholders to expand FosterEd statewide, and implement the new federal Every Student Succeeds Act, which contains specific protections for young people in foster care and the juvenile justice system. Grace will be co-locating at Pegasus. We look forward to partnering with Grace and FosterEd to ensure education success for young people in New Mexico.

Pegasus staff
members share
their stories
about some of
the people they
serve...



"When I took over this custody case, Maya was five and ready to have overnight visits with her dad. I represented mom, Alicia* (19), while dad, Javier* (22), represented himself.

Alicia and Javier had struggled for years to develop a workable parenting plan. Alicia was resistant to overnights, but she acknowledged that Maya has a great relationship with her dad. I explained to Alicia that the court would consider what was best for the child, even if it was hard for mom, and that it would be better to work with Javier to develop a plan they were both comfortable with rather than leave it in the hands of the court. Working with both parents, we developed a visitation plan that allowed the child to spend longer stretches of time with dad, including overnights.

The process allowed Alicia and Javier to talk about their expectations for each other: *being on time, making sure Maya's needs are met, and being flexible with each other's schedules.* The new schedule is less stressful for everyone and Maya is happy she has plenty of time with both her parents."

Jennifer E. Romero,
Pegasus Staff Attorney



"A couple of months ago, a young man walked into our office. I noticed right away that he was distressed, worried and scared. He refused to give me any contact information. While talking with him, I realized that we had spoken on the phone before. He had been sent to another state to live with a relative, but wasn't doing well in the new school. He wanted to come back to New Mexico and continue with his schooling. I asked Matthew Bernstein, one of our Pegasus attorneys, to speak with the youth. *He was able to establish that the youth just wanted to enroll in school.*



Matthew provided the youth with information regarding his rights to enroll in school under the McKinney-Vento Act and referred him to the **APS Title I Homeless Project.**

As the youth was leaving Pegasus, I attempted to gather his contact information again. This time when he turned to look at me, he had a smile on his face and the fear and distress he felt earlier seemed to have melted away."

Cindy Quiñonez,
Pegasus Receptionist



"I attended a hearing on an interesting and complicated case immediately after joining the Pegasus team this year. Jessica* (15) and Cheri* (13) lived with their verbally abusive mother who did not allow them to contact their deceased



father's family. Jessica ran to her paternal grandparents' home and contacted Pegasus for help when her mother sent Cheri to a "therapeutic" boarding school.

Staff attorney Grace Spulak helped the grandparents file for Kinship Guardianship. Because Jessica had told Grace of her concern for her little sister, Grace convinced the judge to order visits for the girls. Meanwhile, the judge granted the Petition for Guardianship. In a fit of anger, their mother removed Cheri from her school leaving her with all of her belongings at their grandparents' house, saying they could keep her. Cheri later disclosed that the "therapeutic" boarding school used physical abuse and restraint. *Jessica and Cheri are now living happily with their grandparents and are grateful to be reunited.*"

Miriam Rea,
Pegasus Staff Attorney



"Recently we worked with a Native American family in a very rural part of the state — *they had to drive a long distance to our first meeting*. They made the trip because the student, Nelson*, who had a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), was not getting the services he needed. Rather than providing the supports the student needed as a result of this TBI and learning disabilities, the school was threatening to call law enforcement. By the time we met with the family, their dilemma was 1) to access public education, Nelson risked getting in trouble with the police because he had a disability that impacted his behavior; or 2) to protect Nelson from criminal charges (*which required keeping him home*) the family risked truancy charges.



The family was stuck. Together we worked to understand the situation at the school *and* the needs of the student, helping the family advocate for a solution that made sense. Nelson was able to get evaluations and services so that he could be successful both vocationally and academically without risking getting in trouble with the law."

Tara Ford
Legal Director



Matthew Bernstein,
Pegasus Staff Attorney





"I represented Shirley* in her case to be appointed Kinship Guardian of her four-year old grandson, Jason*. Jason's mother and father have a long history of substance abuse and incarceration. Shirley's ex-husband had been appointed legal guardian of Jason's half-sister. After giving birth to Jason, mother appeared to be putting her life in order, but eventually fell back into substance abuse.

Jason witnessed his father brutally beating his mother: hitting, kicking, choking her, and threatening her life. Mother filed for an order of protection but when both parents tested positive for drugs, the court placed Jason in his grandfather's custody. Since grandfather was already taking care of Andres' sister, Shirley agreed to take him.

I helped Shirley intervene in the on-going case. A court-appointed guardian ad litem recommended that the guardianship be granted. Shirley was finally able to relax, knowing that Andres was safe and would never be exposed to his parents' sad, violent, and chaotic lifestyle again."

Lawrence B. Kronen,
Pegasus Staff Attorney



AN APPEAL FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIZ McGRATH

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AWARDS HONORED

Pegasus Legal Services for Children was recognized in 2015 by the New Mexico Community Foundation (NMCF) with its Chispa Award and by the State Bar of New Mexico with its Outstanding Legal Organization Award.

"By assisting and improving the lives of families and children in New Mexico, grandparents and caregivers, young parents, children in foster care, homeless and runaway youth, parents of children with special education needs, and youth involved in the juvenile justice system through programs, services and legislation, Pegasus has demonstrated that it is an outstanding and extraordinary organization and is most deserving of this special award."

— New Mexico State Bar

Grants & Contracts

We sincerely thank all of our partners who make Pegasus' work on behalf of vulnerable children and youth possible.



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NEW MEXICO GRADS

Save the Date

Sunday, DECEMBER 4, 2016

12:00-3:00 @ BOSQUE SCHOOL'S Budagher Hall

Please join Pegasus for its annual fundraiser to support our work on behalf of children and youth.



Corporate and business sponsorships for the 2016 Pegasus Jewelry Extravaganza are now being accepted. Your jewelry donations can be delivered to our office. Both are tax-deductible.

EASY WAYS TO GIVE

Try one of three easy ways to support Pegasus while going about your daily life.

1. **AmazonSmile** gives a percentage of your regular Amazon purchases to the organization of your choice.
2. **Smiths Community Rewards** gives a percentage of your purchases at no additional cost to you.
3. **MyChange** rounds up your daily credit and debit card purchases to the nearest dollar and donates the change to Pegasus.

For more information about passive fundraising and instructions to give: www.pegasuslaw.org

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Audited Financial Statement: FISCAL YEAR 2015

Revenue:	\$835,135	%
Contracts	\$490,421	59%
Charitable Donations	\$97,622	12%
Grants	\$92,000	11%
Attorney's Fees	\$155,092	18%
Expenses:	\$718,460	%
Program	\$619,630	86%
Management & General	\$68,263	10%
Fundraising	\$32,499	5%

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PEGASUS

LEGAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

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