



# 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.

# ANNUAL REPORT 2016





**Happy 15th birthday Pegasus — what an exciting time as we experience transition and opportunity during fiscal year 2017-2018! As we say goodbye to past leaders and welcome new ones, the Pegasus Board of Directors commits to supporting on-going success for the organization's team members, partners and clients.**

*Thank you, Liz, for your leadership, vision and energy.* As Executive Director, Liz guided the strategic work that empowered Pegasus to become an organization providing comprehensive, high-quality legal services to the most vulnerable children and youth in our state. The next executive director will further develop this work. Read more from Liz in her letter on page four.

*Thank you, Betul, for your stewardship and coordination of the Board.* As Board President, Betul spearheaded our activity as we prepared for a leadership shift, expanded the Jewelry Extravaganza

and managed our budget. She generated powerful momentum for our board.

The upcoming year will be transformative for Pegasus. Thank you to the community members who make the transformation possible: donors and volunteers who invest resources; professionals who work for positive change, and advocates who promote justice for children. I'm eager to serve with you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script.

Ian Esquibel, MBA  
Pegasus Board President



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Let's celebrate Pegasus' 15 years, Liz, and past Board members by creating an endowment for Pegasus. This year, I invite you to make two investments — one designated to the 2017-18 operating budget and another designated to the endowment (at least 15% of the former; 15% to recognize the 15 years of operations). We have a \$25,000 goal to open an endowment. Please join me in contributing to the current and on-going financial health of Pegasus.

# THE PEGASUS TEAM



BACK ROW: **Ella Brown**, Social Worker; **Cindy Quiñonez**, Receptionist; **Matthew Bernstein**, Staff Attorney; **Lawrence Kronen**, Senior Staff Attorney MIDDLE ROW: **Cassandra Dennis**, Office Administrator; **Bette Fleishman**, Managing Attorney; **Miriam Rea**, Staff Attorney; **Lynda Romero**, Administrative Assistant FRONT ROW: **Nicole Saunders**, Paralegal; **Liz McGrath**, Executive Director; **Jennifer Romero**, Staff Attorney; NOT PICTURED: **Tara Ford**, Legal Director.



## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

After almost 15 years at Pegasus, I am stepping down as executive director. Pegasus' Board has initiated the search for my replacement, and I expect to be moving on sometime this summer or early fall. Without a doubt, I can say that founding Pegasus and acting as executive director has been the most rewarding experience of my life.

I owe an incredible debt of gratitude to my co-founder, Tara Ford, for her brilliance, dedication, and friendship. I am also grateful to all of the amazing individuals who have served on our Board over the years – I wish I could name them all here. I leave Pegasus with great confidence in our staff; they hold the vision and values of Pegasus, and they will give the new Executive Director the time he or she needs to become a leader who can drive Pegasus' future work.

One of the things that has given me tremendous satisfaction as executive director of Pegasus is the generosity of all the people who have supported us

over the years. It is as though there had been a dark, blank space in the community, and when Pegasus filled that space, the community of people who care most about children and youth breathed a sigh of relief. They hadn't realized Pegasus was missing until it showed up. That support has buoyed us through some very difficult times. I leave with confidence that the incredible support will continue – no one wants that blank space to reappear.

Finally, I want to thank all of our clients – from the infants in foster care, to the teenagers experiencing homelessness, to the grandparents raising their grandchildren – for the honor of serving them. I don't know exactly what I'll be doing after I leave Pegasus, but one thing is sure: I will continue to fight for the right of all the people of New Mexico to live a full and joyful life – especially the children.

Sincerely,   
Liz McGrath, Executive Director



**BETTE FLEISHMAN,**  
Managing Attorney

**In 2016, Pegasus significantly expanded its representation of children and youth in foster care when it entered into a contract to represent children and youth in 40% of the cases filed in the 2nd Judicial District, the largest judicial district in the state.**

We put together a team of staff and contract attorneys, and managing attorneys with over thirty years of experience in the child welfare system.

During the past year, Pegasus attorneys have identified several areas where the rights of foster children are not receiving the attention and respect they deserve. For example, too often children with developmental disabilities are identified as having a mental health problem without consideration of their developmental disability. Consequently, our

clients sometimes are placed in services that are inappropriate. When the child does not respond to the services, he or she is labeled as seriously troubled, leading to placements with higher and higher levels of restriction.

Pegasus is working hard to ensure that children in foster care who have a developmental disability receive appropriate services, and that they have the opportunity to live in the least restrictive placement appropriate for their needs.

# SPOTLIGHT ON EARLY INTERVENTION



Currently, New Mexico lacks a universally accepted screening tool for pediatricians and other primary care providers to use to identify risk for mental health and developmental delays in young children. Linking families to needed services early helps reduce behavioral and emotional problems (depression, anxiety, aggression), suicide rates, substance use, involvement with juvenile justice, and improved school attendance and grades. Screening also improves lives for families and extended families through decreased caregiver strain, increased capacity to handle the child's challenging behavior, and increased ability to work and earn money. The Alliance for Early Success is supporting Pegasus' work to identify and promote screening tools that capture developmental progress and the need for early intervention services.



# RIDE FOR CHILDREN

OCTOBER 29, 2017



Pegasus is the primary beneficiary of the Day of the Tread (DOTT), an annual cycling event that benefits children's charities and brings people and families together. The DOTT promotes healthy choices for people of all fitness levels. New Mexicans celebrate with food, music and costumes. Last year the DOTT raised over \$20,000 to help with the legal needs of New Mexico's children and youth. We hope you will consider supporting Pegasus in 2017 by participating in, volunteering for, or sponsoring the Day of the Tread.

[www.dayofthetread.com](http://www.dayofthetread.com)



MIRIAM REA,  
Staff Attorney

When I explain the type of work that I do, people often react with sadness or preoccupation about my ability to deal with issues of abuse and neglect of children. It is true that my work involves tough subjects and very emotional situations involving a very vulnerable population:

substance abuse, domestic violence, homelessness and poverty are reoccurring factors leading to children ending up in foster care or with relatives seeking guardianship. There are times that I feel discouraged and sad. But there are joyous moments too, like when a grandmother hugs me with happiness and relief upon obtaining guardianship

of her grandchild or when a child runs up to me during a home visit. Establishing trust with my clients is a priority for me and I work very hard at it. Small gestures of trust and kindness such as this one makes me love my job. I also get to hold and cuddle babies – and who is not going to love that!



**LARRY KRONEN,**  
Senior Staff Attorney

**Larry Kronen, director of the Kinship Guardianship Program, is leaving Pegasus after more than ten years of service. Larry will be opening a private practice through which he will continue his work protecting the health, welfare and rights of New Mexicans.**

Larry is known throughout New Mexico as the leading expert on the Kinship Guardianship Act. He has helped hundreds of grandparents and other caregivers become legal guardians of children whose parents cannot raise them due to substance abuse, mental illness and incarceration. Larry's many former clients are unstinting in their praise and gratitude for Larry's sensitive and compassionate work. Larry is known not just for his zealous representation of his clients, but

for his compassion for the opposing parties who are usually unrepresented and struggling to overcome their own histories of abuse, neglect, substance abuse, and mental illness. We will miss Larry and we wish him well in his new endeavors.



Larry received the 2016 2nd Judicial District Pro Bono Committee's **Pro Bono Attorney of the Year** award for his years of work on the committee and his commitment to providing legal services to low income people.



# SOCIAL WORK INTERNS

Pegasus recognizes the importance of serving its clients in a comprehensive and holistic manner, beyond the legal realm. To address that need, Pegasus provides internships to students in social work programs. Interns receive supervision from Ella Brown, the staff social worker, to develop practice that promotes advocacy for clients along the spectrum from micro to macro work. Interns accompany clients to court, do foster home visits, provide thoughtful referrals, research relevant support systems, do outreach to community agency partners, and participate in statewide efforts to create legislative changes that better the lives of children in New Mexico. Interns work in partnership with attorneys across all Pegasus programs, rounding out the services provided while gaining a wide range of experience that informs their future practice.



# GRANTS + CONTRACTS

## DONATE DIRECTLY

Go to our website [pegasuslaw.org](http://pegasuslaw.org) to donate through a one-time donation or setup monthly donations.

## AMAZON SMILE

Sign up online at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and a percentage of your regular Amazon purchases will go directly to Pegasus.

## SMITHS REWARDS

Sign up online at [smithsfoodanddrug.com](http://smithsfoodanddrug.com) and Smiths will donate a percentage of your purchases to Pegasus at no extra charge to you.

## MY CHANGE

Have your purchases automatically rounded up to the nearest dollar. Your "change" will go directly to Pegasus. Sign up at [mychange.com](http://mychange.com).



**SAVE THE DATE**  
FOR THE TENTH ANNUAL PEGASUS  
JEWELRY EXTRAVAGANZA  
Sunday, DECEMBER 3, 2017  
12:00-3:00 @ BOSQUE SCHOOL

Pegasus continues to increase and grow support from the community in its important work on behalf of children and youth in New Mexico.

Jewelry donations, corporate sponsorships, and business sponsorships are now being accepted. Please email [info@pegasuslaw.org](mailto:info@pegasuslaw.org) for more information.

Donations are tax-deductible.

# GENEROUS DONORS:

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Laura Bassein  
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Vita Zodin

## AUDITED FINANCIALS: FY16

REVENUE:	\$786,566	100%
Contracts	523,383	66%
Grants	130,000	17%
Donations	106,714	14%
Attorney's Fees	20,326	2%
Other Income	6,143	1%
EXPENSES:	\$870,383	100%
Program	686,171	79%
Management	141,351	16%
Fundraising	42,861	5%

## VOLUNTEERS:

Amanda Aragon  
Nancy Jo Archer  
Cecilia Alvarado  
Martha Alvarado  
John Alston  
Louise Archibeque  
Jasmine Baillio  
Troy Baillio  
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Deborah Solove  
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Adriana Vargas  
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# PEGASUS

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[www.pegasuslaw.org](http://www.pegasuslaw.org)