

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



PEGASUS
Legal Services for Children

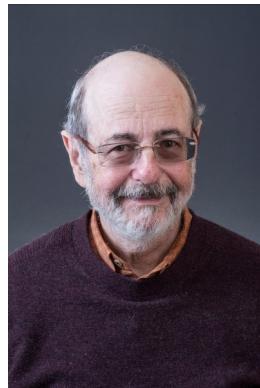
LETTER FROM THE BOARD

Two years ago it would have been hard to imagine the world today. Although the world has changed, our dedication to our mission has only deepened. Our community needs our support more than ever as the children, youth, and families of New Mexico face a world nearly two years into the pandemic.

The children and youth of New Mexico have faced new challenges over the past two years: some were lost by our school systems during a year or more of remote learning, others lost caregivers as COVID tore through our community. These are just two examples of the experiences our clients shared with us this year. **While our mission remains the same, the demand for our services has skyrocketed.** At the same time, our fundraising efforts have been hampered by the pandemic.

Through the great generosity of our donors,

in fiscal year 2020-2021 Pegasus raised a total of \$78,011 for our work. **Unfortunately, this is about half as much as we were able to raise pre-pandemic.** As expected, our biggest fundraising events- the Jewelry Extravaganza and the annual Day of the Tread bike race (both virtual in 2020)- were also much smaller than usual in order to keep our commutes safe. We have similar expectations for our 2021 fundraising events. **Your kindness and donations mean even more to Pegasus this year as we work to bridge the fundraising gap brought on by the pandemic.**



DAN SHAPIRO, MD, JD
Co-Chair



**MATTHEW LOEHMAN,
MBA** Co-Chair

Our mission is part of the COVID-19 response. We will continue to fight for the children and youth of New Mexico and their right for safe and stable homes, quality education and healthcare, and a voice in decisions that affect their lives. Thank you for supporting us in this effort.



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THE PEGASUS TEAM



From Top Left: **Morgan Demic**, Kinship Guardianship Program Director; **Lucia Espinosa-Gonzalez**, Client Advocate; **Bette Fleishman**, Executive Director; **Jennifer Gamboa**, Paralegal; **Dani Garcia-Grijalva**, Program Specialist; **Marta Hines**, Senior Paralegal; **Lily Hofstra**, Corinne Wolfe Fellow for Transformative Advocacy; **Jerri Katzman**, Education Director; **Alma Olavarria Gallegos**, Paralegal; **Jen Jones Prakash**, Controller; **Ana Rabut**, Office Manager; **William Townley**, Staff Attorney; **Mariel Willow**, Staff Attorney.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Child wellbeing in New Mexico is now ranked 49th in the nation, up from 50th in the Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data Book. This is a stark reminder of how much work we still have to do. As we approach the end of the second year of the pandemic, we are seeing some of the hardships suffered by families. **A recent study shows that for every four deaths associated with COVID-19, one child was left without a mother, father, grandparent or other caregiver who provided the child's home and basic needs, including love, security, and daily care.** The findings highlight orphan-hood as a hidden and ongoing tragedy caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Identifying and caring for these children throughout their development is a necessary and urgent part of the pandemic response, and will continue to be so in a post-pandemic era. These children have been left the most vulnerable by the pandemic.

Pegasus sees this hardship close-up on a daily basis. We have had abuse and neglect cases where the mother, working on reunification, passed away from COVID-19, resulting in the grandmother becoming the permanent guardian.

We have also seen a significant increase in requests for Kinship Guardianships. We get calls for help from grandparents and other kin who have taken in children due to the parents either losing their houses and jobs due to COVID-19, or in some cases, their lives.

We continue our efforts to improve the systems for children in New Mexico. In addition to our ongoing work to improve the child welfare system, we have expanded our efforts to support changes in the juvenile justice system. This past year Pegasus was invited to be a member of the Justice for Youth Collaborative, comprising community based organizations, advocates, and system-impacted youth people and families. We have received support that allows us to provide civil representation to incarcerated youth in New Mexico.

Pegasus continues its commitment to the children of New Mexico and, along with our partners, being part of the COVID-19 response.



Bette Fleishman

2020-2021 Kevin S. Update

Steering and securing a landmark settlement on behalf of foster care children

In March 2020, the plaintiffs, on behalf of all children in New Mexico's foster care system, reached a groundbreaking settlement with the state's child welfare agency, New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department and the Human Services Department. Both agencies agreed the complaints were credible and that partnership was needed to fix the system and to do a better job of protecting our children and ensuring they are not re-traumatized while in state custody.

Every child entering foster care will have experienced multiple forms of trauma. It is well established that exposure to complex trauma deeply impacts the development of a child. When unaddressed, the effects of trauma result in problems with sleep, cognition, behavior, and emotional self-regulation.

The child welfare system should provide stability, support and services to the children in its care to overcome the trauma that is inherent in being removed from their families. As members of the Implementation team, Pegasus, along with our partners, continue to play an integral role in the effort to hold the

state's child welfare system accountable to develop and implement a trauma responsive system for the children of New Mexico. Our work is to make sure that CYFD and HSD have the right policies in place and make sure that the policies are carried out for every child.

While there has been some improvement during this first year of the implementation we still have a lot of work to do. We continue our commitment to work with our partners to improve the conditions for all children in New Mexico.

We will be providing updates during the year on our website www.kevinssettlement.com.

SPOTLIGHT: EDUCATION FELLOW

Corinne Wolfe Fellow for Transformative Advocacy, Lily Hofstra, has been making consistent progress in her project's educational reform goals. Among her many tasks, Lily recently completed and launched a guide, *How to Advocate for Children and Youth in General Education School Discipline Proceedings: A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and Advocates*, which can be found on our website. It has been distributed widely to partner organizations around the state, and Lily has begun leading trainings on its material. The Spanish language translation will be completed this fall.

We have also released a brochure for health care providers describing their role in the education of students with disabilities. The



LILY HOFSTRA, JD
Corinne Wolfe Fellow for
Transformative Advocacy

publication provides an overview of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and describes the various ways in which medical providers can positively impact the education of these students.

Prior to beginning her fellowship at Pegasus, Lily attended the University of New Mexico School of Law, where she graduated *summa cum laude*. Lily also worked as a student intern at Pegasus throughout law school. She received her Master of Science from the London School of Economics and Political Science, focusing on social policy, rural development, and international affairs. She received her B.A. from the George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

EDUCATION TEAM CREATES STATEWIDE SYSTEMIC REFORM

Over the past year, Pegasus' education team has undertaken a number of projects to address the persistent and varied inequities that exist in our state's public education system. The team filed a systemic administrative complaint against the state's largest school district, Albuquerque Public Schools, on behalf of all students with disabilities and suspected disabilities enrolled in the district. The complaint alleges that the school district has engaged in a variety of unlawful actions that have resulted in the delayed identification and evaluation of students with disabilities. The district's practices prevent students with disabilities from receiving the special education services they need in order to be successful at school.

In a report issued on August 11, 2021, the New Mexico Public Education Department ("PED") issued a scathing rebuke to the systems as it relates to the identification of school district. Following an extensive data review, the PED found that the school system "has a practice of creating delay" and that this, in turn, "raises concerns that the practice is intended to conceal obvious disabilities in our state. delays by manipulating the information required to be reported to the PED regarding federal IDEA indicators on timely evaluations."

As a result, the district has been ordered to undergo a comprehensive revamping of its monitoring by the PED. The education team also obtained important relief from the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil

Rights (“OCR”) on behalf of limited English proficient students and parents against Los Lunas Public Schools. Pegasus filed a civil rights complaint on behalf of a monolingual Spanish speaking parent whose child was expelled without adequate language assistance the entire discipline process. As a result of the complaint, Los Lunas has entered into an agreement with OCR to overhaul its interpretation and translation services for all families in the district. Among the many reforms required by the resolution, the district has agreed to:

- Develop and fully implement a “Plan for Oral and Written Language Assistance” to provide language assistance services to limited-English proficient parents/guardians of students;
- Develop plans for initial and ongoing training of staff that provide oral interpretation and/or written translation for parents/guardians at the district;
- Hire an independent, approved interpretation and translation service to provide language assistance until the district implements its Plan; and
- Provide individual relief to the student, including removing the underlying discipline record from the student’s file.
- This agreement will help ensure that students and families will no longer be discriminated against because of their national origin or English language proficiency.

As many students in New Mexico have returned to in-person learning after several virtual semesters during the COVID-19 pandemic, Pegasus’ education team is confident that their work of the past year will help ameliorate some of the many challenges New Mexico families experience in public schools.

WILLIAM BAHE TOWNLEY
Staff Attorney



William Bahe Townley, Member of the Navajo Nation and guardian ad litem/Youth Attorney for the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Court and pueblo courts, finds inspiration from his Mother's work as a Social Worker in the Bureau of Indian Education (previously known as the Bureau of Indian Affairs). "Her work provided an early understanding that systemic changes were needed to improve the lives of Native American children living through the court systems involving their parents, and oftentimes, their entire families," said William. Ensuring that indigenous children are afforded their right to be with family or a placement that is close to their family structure is a critical part of our work.

Along with Christy Chapman, Esq. (Pueblo of Zuni, member), Pegasus has expanded its guardian ad litem services into the Pueblos of Zuni, Isleta, and Santa Ana. Christy and William bring their indigenous values and perspectives in representing Native American children and youth within

these tribal communities as well as to the ICWA Court. With Christy's support, William has been able to learn from her and Bette Fleishman about best practices of working with children from these communities, and beyond.

The ICWA Court remains focused on in its aim to be the gold standard for ensuring the law applies as it should for Native American children. Historical antecedents require all of us to examine with great scrutiny what happens to an indigenous child when they are taken from their home by state actors. Federal law requires us, and those involved in the child protection system, to determine what efforts can and must be done in order to preserve the Native American family. These efforts have led to positive outcomes. According to the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, ICWA courts have expanded into 16 counties across the country. Along with these growing numbers, **recent data provided to Pegasus shows that the ICWA Court in the Second Judicial District has**

led to record numbers of indigenous children being placed into ICWA compliant settings throughout the state. We hope to further work with the ICWA court and its stakeholders to continue to improve the outcomes for indigenous children and their families.

Pegasus remains a leading voice in supporting ICWA court and its core goals of helping Native American children and families remain intact, and to maintain services and placements that are delivered with cultural humility, and done so with dignity.

Pegasus envisions a society where all children—regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, disability, gender, and sexual orientation—live in welcoming communities, supported by law, policy, and practices that help them reach their full potential.

SPOTLIGHT: PROGRAM SPECIALIST

This year, we brought on a full-time Program Specialist, Dani Garcia-Grijalva. Dani performs a role new to Pegasus. As the specialist for all of our programs, they ensure that callers receive a prompt and thoughtful response and are connected to appropriate referrals as necessary. Dani joined the team during a time where calls to Pegasus were increasing faster than we'd ever seen before. With Dani's dedication, we are confident that we are responding quickly to the need in our community, with the kindness and respect that clients deserve.

I have been at Pegasus since October 2020. I am usually the first point of contact for callers needing legal assistance. I started my work in the nonprofit world working towards youth rights and on the ground of youth homeless shelters. **Helping provide real legal solutions for young people has been one of my favorite things about working at Pegasus.**



DANI GARCIA-GRIJALVA

Program Specialist

One of my main goals is to expand our outreach beyond Albuquerque and into rural communities throughout New Mexico. We are currently working on translating all of our outreach material into Spanish, including flyers and presentations. I am excited to see an outreach department grow to better meet the needs of our community.



LUCIA ESPINOSA-GONZALEZ
Client Advocate

During this year, many nonprofit and public donations organizations closed their program due to COVID-19. Connecting our clients with the resources they required became even more challenging.

Lucia and our client advocate interns from the New Mexico Highlands University social work program worked hard to keep updated lists of organizations and community groups that continued providing resources to the community during this past year.

They also established a partnership with the Fostering Family program at the Southwest Family Guidance Center.

Through this partnership, we were able to distribute more than 865 gift cards to our community. In total, 245 families from Fostering Family, NM Legal Aid and

Pegasus received at least one gift card for gas, groceries, clothing, or general use VISA cards which were used to help purchase school supplies or any items for their children.

The feedback we received from clients was overwhelming - every day we were receiving messages like this one- "Thank you for the gift card, it helped us purchase a crib for our grand baby."

This feedback reminds us that **even a small amount of support can make a huge difference in the lives of one of our community members.**

SPOTLIGHT: BILINGUAL PARALEGAL

Last Spring, we added Jennifer to the team as a part-time Paralegal. This year we were excited to bring her on full-time to support Pegasus during a complicated technology transition. We're extremely grateful that she is a permanent part of our paralegal team.

My name is Jennifer Gamboa and I am a Spanish-speaking paralegal at Pegasus. I previously worked at the Ronald McDonald House which gave me an introduction into the non-profit sector. **I enjoyed helping families stay together and providing support during a difficult situation.** I then began volunteering at the New Mexico Immigration Law Center as a translator. **This experience helped me understand the struggles that many families in our underserved community face** and how many of them struggle to even ask for help because of the fear of being told no, or not having the money to pay for services.

I began working at Pegasus in the middle of COVID-19 and was quickly welcomed and made to feel at ease during these challenging times. Everyone went above and beyond to allow me to join this



JENNIFER GAMBOA

Bilingual Paralegal

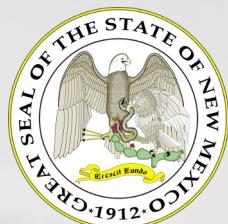
team and learn all I could while training and working remotely. Though it was a struggle at times, this team knows how to persevere.

I have enjoyed working at Pegasus and being able to improve not just my Spanish translation skills but my communication skills as well. **Thanks to Pegasus, I have been able to learn so much more about different legal issues beyond Kinship Guardianship, such as youth law and educational issues.**

I have had the pleasure of joining the youth law team to assist minors looking to getting emancipated and young parents with custody issues. I

have also had the pleasure of joining the Education Department, and look forward to assisting our wonderful attorneys and advocates to improve the lives of youth in New Mexico.

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JEN JONES PRAKASH

Controller



Pegasus has spent another year adapting to a changing world. Our work continued, mostly virtually, and our two main fundraiser events were held virtually as well. **Like many other nonprofits, we saw our individual donations fall over the past year as donors were pulled in different directions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.** Fortunately for Pegasus, an anonymous foundation made a one-time donation to help us update the technology that supports our work- something even more important in this new remote-work environment. **Our senior paralegal, Marta Hines, and I spent 8 months building and customizing a new Client Management System for Pegasus-** something that had not been updated since the founding of our organization. This new

system has enabled us to start tracking our work in much more detail: we can now more easily collect, report on, and fulfill our clients' needs, our outcomes, referrals in and out, and much more! This will, importantly, help us to more deeply demonstrate our impact and the need for our services to our funders. This new system has also enabled us to start accepting online applications for our services- something our younger clients seem to really appreciate. **We are grateful to this anonymous donor for recognizing the need for nonprofits to commit resources towards infrastructure,** and I am continually grateful to work with a team that consistently welcomes changes and improvements to our systems.

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recurring donation.

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smile.amazon.com and a
percentage of your regular
Amazon purchases will go
directly to Pegasus.

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Smiths will donate a
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Have your purchases
automatically rounded up to
the nearest dollar. Your
“change” will go directly to
Pegasus. Sign up at
mychange.com.

AUDITED FINANCIALS: FY 2020-2021

REVENUE:	\$1,206,452	100%
Contracts	\$671,276	56%
Grants	\$429,079	36%
Contributions	\$78,011	6%
Other Income	\$5,557	.5%
In-Kind Contributions	\$22,529	1.5%

EXPENSES:	\$1,105,061	100%
Program	\$882,082	80%
Management & General	\$196,433	18%
Fundraising	\$26,546	2%

THANK YOU INTERNS!

Social Work Interns

Highlands University

Alexandria Askew

Andres Aviles Ramos

Elsa Aguirre

Imelda Martinez

Staci Bostic-Baros

Law Clerks

Aanika Mike, UNM Law

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Monica Zamora

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