



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 the decisions that affect
their lives.

ANNUAL REPORT 2018 - 2019



Pegasus is an organization close to my heart, and it has been a privilege to serve as Board President since July of 2018. As an attorney representing indigent children in delinquency cases, I recognize and fully appreciate what an amazing asset Pegasus is to our community.

Pegasus was founded to create a space where children's rights are protected and defended. Under the leadership of Executive Director Bette Fleishman, Pegasus has continued its reputation for providing fearless representation to many of New Mexico's most vulnerable children & families.

Our work is possible only because of the generosity of our donors. During the 2018 – 2019 fiscal year, this generosity enabled us to raise a total of \$95,578 for our work. We appreciate your financial and time investment in support of Pegasus. As I continue as

President for the next year, I am excited to help Pegasus continue its mission of quality legal representation for children and young people in New Mexico.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alison Pauk'.

Alison Pauk, J.D.
Pegasus Board President



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THE PEGASUS TEAM



Left to Right: **Louise Archibeque**, Social Worker; **Barbara Mathis**, Volunteer Attorney; **Jen Jones**, Controller; **Mariel Willow**, Staff Attorney; **Lily Hofstra**, Law Clerk; **Morgan Demic**, Staff Attorney; **Marta Hines**, Paralegal; **Bette Fleishman**, Executive Director; **Sophie Asher**, Staff Attorney; **Ana Rabut**, Administrative Assistant; **Cindy Quinonez**, Intake Specialist; **Nicole Saunders**, Senior Paralegal

NOT PICTURED: **Matthew Bernstein**, Senior Staff Attorney; **Jerri Katzerman**, Education Director



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This past year has been exciting and challenging. We have directed more of our energies into systematic change for all children in CYFD custody, expanded our work to rural communities, increased representation for education issues, and expanded our ability to respond to the increasing need for kinship guardianship representation.

The 2019 Kids Count Data ranked New Mexico as 50th in child well-being, reminding us of the work to be done to improve the quality of life of the children of New Mexico.

We continue to respect, listen to, and learn from our clients. We strive to provide excellent representation, while advocating for policy reform to improve the state of affairs for all children and families. Through our representation we continue to remove systemic barriers that our clients face. We strive to be collective and creative problem solvers.

Our entire society benefits when children's needs are met. We have seen how children are able to thrive when they stay connected to their families and their communities. Young people have rights, and through quality representation, Pegasus assures those rights are protected and upheld.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Bette Fleishman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Bette Fleishman, JD, *Executive Director*



Kevin S.

A lawsuit to fix New Mexico's broken foster care system

In September 2018, fourteen children in New Mexico's foster care system, joined by Disability Rights New Mexico and the Native American Disability Law Center, demanded that the state agencies responsible for foster care in New Mexico provide the State's 4,700 foster children with the essential care, stability, treatment, and support that they need to grow and prosper. Pegasus attorneys are "Next Friends" for several of the plaintiffs.

Despite a budget of over \$33 million for fiscal year 2019, New Mexico's child welfare system remains the worst in the nation.

It is the State's responsibility to protect the health and wellbeing of the children in its care. Every child entering foster care in New Mexico is highly likely to have experienced multiple forms of trauma. We know 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 experiences of the Kevin S. plaintiffs painfully illustrate that children in State custody in New Mexico are repeatedly re-traumatized by being uprooted and cycled in

and out of short-term emergency placements, such as homeless shelters, government offices, and residential treatment centers.

Pegasus, with Munger, Tolles & Olson, Public Counsel, Nancy Koenigsberg, Deborah Poulin, Vincent Ward, Michael Hart, Kelly Sanchez, Tara Ford, Kelly Waterfall, Sara Crecca, Andrew Schultz, and **the fourteen children who are plaintiffs in this case are taking a stand to hold accountable the child welfare system that has failed to keep them safe.**

To view the complaint please visit:
publiccounsel.org/newmexico



Children have rights, yet those rights are meaningless unless they are defended and honored. Pegasus was founded on the premise of promoting and protecting the rights of children. To be empowered, children need more than just the protection of well-meaning adults— they need a voice in the critical decisions that will decide their future.

SPOTLIGHT: EDUCATION LAW

We are a leading voice for children in New Mexico and have become one of the most effective advocates for equal educational opportunity in the state. We work against a backdrop of extreme inequities in funding and educational resources.

Poor children populate the hallways of low-performing schools. **Practices such as tracking, grade retention, out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and one-size-fits-all zero tolerance policies continue to contribute to the discouragement, disengagement, and eventual dropout of countless children throughout the state.** Huge numbers of youth are pushed out of school and pulled into prisons and jails. In many communities, this transforms schools from places of learning to dangerous gateways into the criminal justice system. **This is more than an education crisis; it is an equal justice issue as the students pushed out through harsh discipline are disproportionately students with disabilities and students of color.**

Our mission is to keep children in school and out of jail by reforming institutions and systems

so that all children can live to their fullest potential.

The ultimate goal of our educational advocacy is to ensure equal access to quality educational services for all children. To achieve this long-term goal, we have identified the following three specific priority issues:

- Creating substantive school discipline reform, including the decriminalization of school misconduct and the removal of harsh disciplinary practices from our public schools.
- Ensuring equal access to public education for special and vulnerable populations.
- Ensuring the provision of high quality educational services, including the use of evidence-based practices, adequate language supports, and the expansion of early childhood education.



JERRI KATZERMAN
Education Director

I've been honored to be associated with Pegasus for the past few years – first as a volunteer and now as an attorney working to improve the educational outcomes of New Mexico's children.

I've been on staff since February of 2019. With the support of Pegasus, I am able to take on the unique challenges that face parents and youth in our state. **Our objective is simple: we work to keep kids in school and out of jail. But school doesn't just mean passing, it means providing high quality education that allows all kids to contribute to our society.** legal justice for our clients. **With my background, I have been able to bring a focus to our educational commitment and expand resources to this practice area.** Through this approach, we've been able to directly impact the lives of youth in New Mexico.

I love the staff and team at Pegasus. Together, we can make a difference.

I'm so proud of our team. In the past year, we developed innovative ways to pursue

SOPHIE ASHER
Staff Attorney



I help non-parental caregivers obtain legal guardianship over children and youth, and represent children in the foster care system. I make sure that my clients' cases move along in the court system, and that the rights of New Mexico's underage citizens are respected. My goal is to help New Mexico's children grow up in healthy environments.

I like finding innovative ways to solve problems. The problems my clients face are emotionally very difficult and I can help them through the often-overwhelming processes to ensure they and the children they care about have the legal representation they need. In one case, we were able to work within twenty-four hours to navigate the court process to allow an endangered infant to remain with her legal caretakers. In another, we helped a family find funding

to allow their child to participate in an after-school program, giving him desperately needed stability and structure.

I so appreciate the support of the Pegasus staff, their enthusiasm, commitment, and creativity. People are willing to fight for what they believe in and for the betterment of children's lives. **Most importantly, our work is always guided by the children themselves.**

Two cyclists are the central focus of the image. They are wearing helmets adorned with large, vibrant orange and red flower crowns. Their faces are painted with intricate Day of the Dead (Día de los Muertos) designs. The cyclist on the left has blue and white face paint with a heart on the forehead, while the cyclist on the right has green and white face paint. They are both smiling and appear to be on bicycles. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and a city street setting.

RIDE FOR CHILDREN

OCTOBER 27, 2019



Day of the Tread is an annual cycling event for which Pegasus is the primary beneficiary. New Mexicans celebrate with food, music, and costumes, while promoting healthy choices for people of all fitness levels. Last year the event raised \$30,000, which helped support the legal needs of New Mexico's children and youth. We hope you will consider supporting the Day of the Tread by participating in, volunteering for, or sponsoring the Day of the Tread.

www.dayofthetread.com

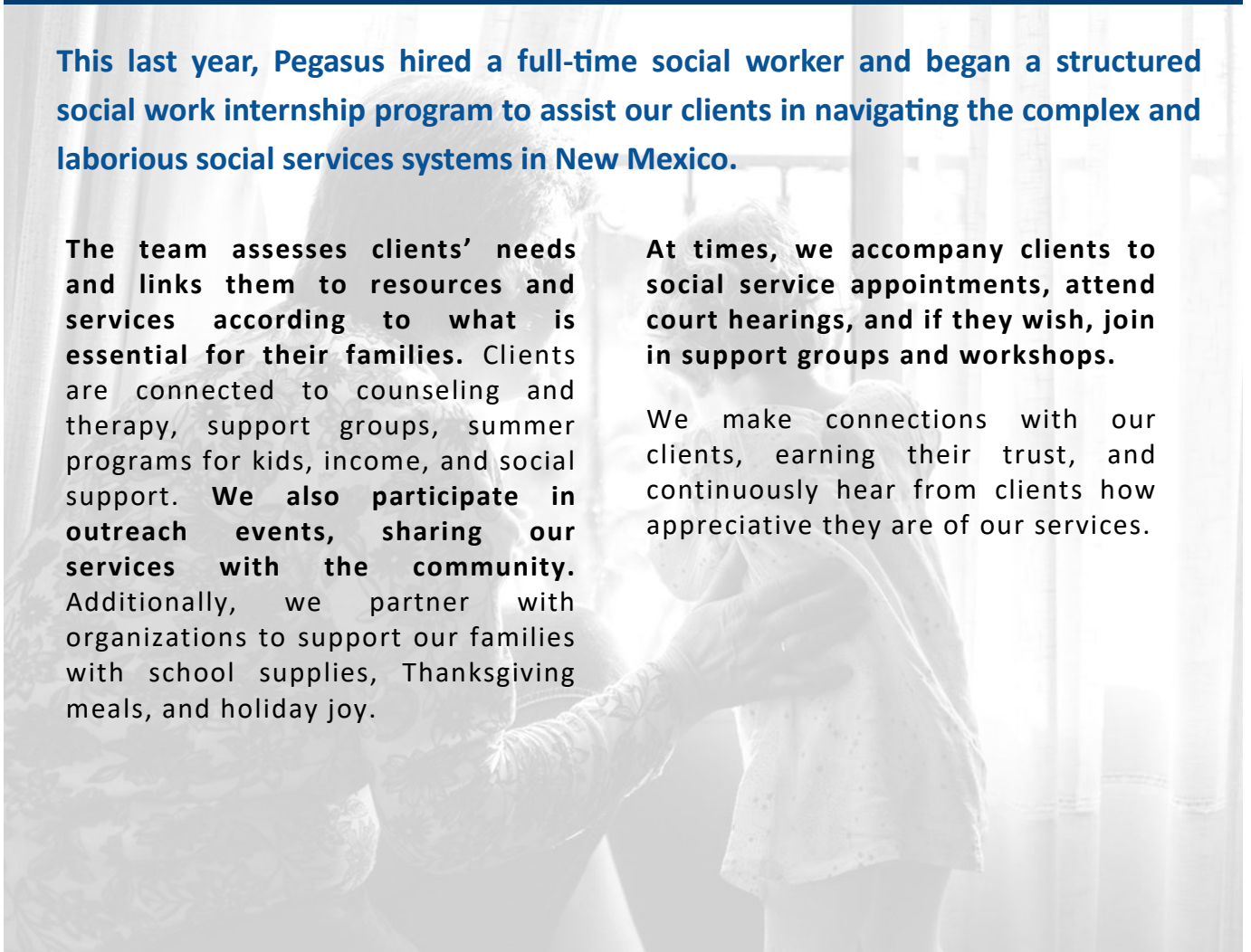
SPOTLIGHT: SOCIAL WORK

This last year, Pegasus hired a full-time social worker and began a structured social work internship program to assist our clients in navigating the complex and laborious social services systems in New Mexico.

The team assesses clients' needs and links them to resources and services according to what is essential for their families. Clients are connected to counseling and therapy, support groups, summer programs for kids, income, and social support. **We also participate in outreach events, sharing our services with the community.** Additionally, we partner with organizations to support our families with school supplies, Thanksgiving meals, and holiday joy.

At times, we accompany clients to social service appointments, attend court hearings, and if they wish, join in support groups and workshops.

We make connections with our clients, earning their trust, and continuously hear from clients how appreciative they are of our services.





LOUISE ARCHIBEQUE

Social Worker

I joined the Pegasus team after completing two internships, the first in Advanced Standing MSW Clinical Track and then the Bachelor program. For the last several years, I have volunteered for numerous Pegasus events and also participated in the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force.

Through the GRG Task Force, **Pegasus contributes to addressing the needs of grandparents and promotes policy change** in an effort to increase the availability of resources and assistance to grandparents and other caregivers raising children.

My joy is spending time with my family, husband, and two adult children, but my passion is in serving my community, especially the children and families of

New Mexico. I was excited to be offered a position as the first full-time Social Worker at Pegasus.

My goal is to make sure our clients are supported in every possible way. I have been told on many occasions by our clients and their families how grateful they are for Pegasus. **I am honored and proud to be part of what Pegasus Legal Services for Children represents.**

JEN JONES

Controller



When asked what she does for us, her response was, “A better question might be what wouldn’t I do for Pegasus?”

From the moment I started working here in January 2019, I found myself incredibly inspired. **I also found myself surrounded by coworkers whose work and professional ethics impressed me on a daily basis.** While I began familiarizing myself with our funders, grants, and the financials, I identified places where we could modernize our organization. **My goal is to make it easy to do our work at Pegasus, so that we can all focus our attention on where it really matters: our clients.**

Being a controller requires more than being an accountant, and that’s what makes it such a fun job. I work with a group of people who have become friends in my life. Every day we have fun, we push each other to grow, and help each other handle the difficult situations that we sometimes find ourselves in. **Something that still surprises me is how flexible everyone is - when someone asks how we can be better, we come up with a solution, and implement it!**

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through a one-time or
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“change” will go directly to
Pegasus. Sign up at
mychange.com.

AUDITED FINANCIALS: FY 2018-2019

REVENUE:	\$896,619	100%
Contracts	\$570,006	64%
Grants	\$97,711	11%
Contributions	\$95,578	10%
Attorney's Fees	\$103,158	12%
Other Income	\$11,057	1%
In-Kind Contributions	\$19,109	2%
EXPENSES:	\$868,972	100%
Program	\$709,820	82%
Management & General	\$116,672	13%
Fundraising	\$42,480	5%
SURPLUS	\$12,674	

INTERNS:

Law Clerks:

Yarrow Allaire, UNM Law
Lily Hofstra, UNM Law
Helen Lockett, San Diego Law
Sarah Marshment, William & Mary
Melanie McNett, UNM Law
Kateri West, UNM Law

Social Work Interns:

Camille Carpenter

High School Interns:

Christian Calloway, Amy Biehl HS

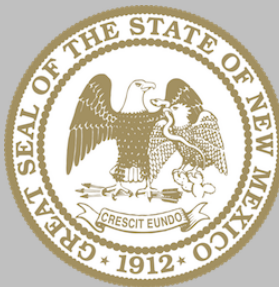


SAVE THE DATE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2019
12:00 - 4:00 @ SOUTHWEST CAPITAL BANK
JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE OUR 13TH ANNUAL
JEWELRY EXTRAVAGANZA

Jewelry donations, corporate sponsorships, and auction items are now being accepted. Please email info@pegasuslaw.org for more information.

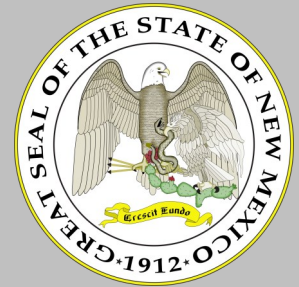
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PEGASUS

LEGAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

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www.pegasuslaw.org