

## Highlights 2000-2001

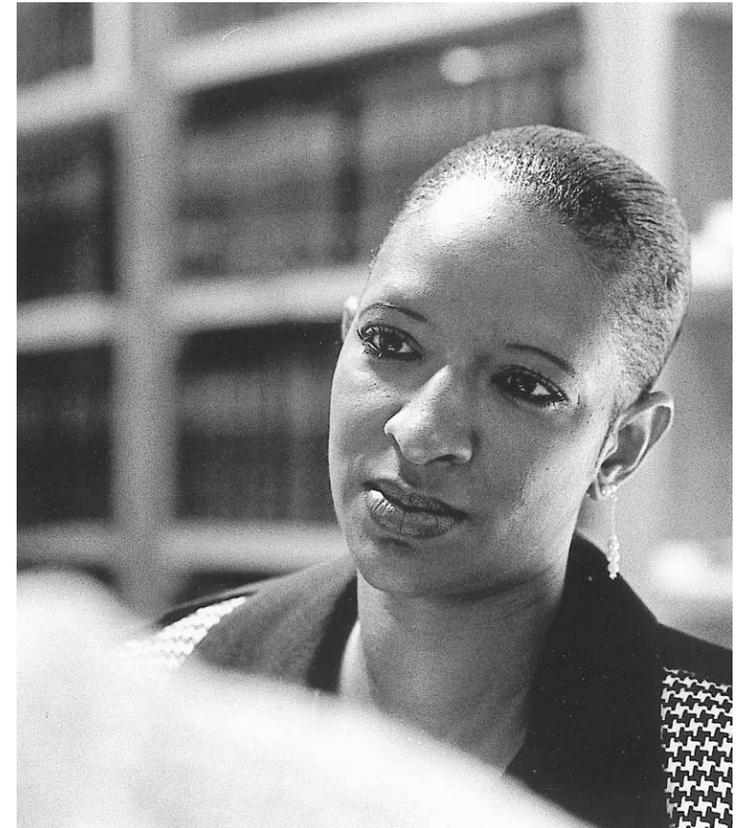
- Assisted clients with over 2,500 legal matters in the areas of housing, employment and income support, HIV/AIDS and community economic development
- Trained and supervised over 60 student interns from UC Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law and other law schools throughout the nation
- Helped open the People's Community Partnership Federal Credit Union, which offers financial services and counseling to low-income Oakland residents
- Organized a World AIDS Day 2000 educational event for over 2,000 community members featuring gospel artist Melba Moore
- Carried out a year-long strategic planning process focusing on leadership development, team-building and client involvement
- Helped two mentally disabled clients win a settlement of \$500,000 against landlords who illegally locked them out after their long-time home was flooded with toilet water from the upstairs apartment
- Conducted over 20 trainings and workshops on a wide variety of HIV/AIDS-related issues including disability programs, confidentiality laws and permanency planning
- Offered legal advocacy and case management to over 115 families transitioning from welfare to work through the Family Advocacy and Services Team

*Continued on inside back cover*

## East Bay Community Law Center

A core value of our society must be equal access to justice. The complex nature of the legal system limits equal access, especially for people in poverty and those faced with language and cultural barriers. Well-trained legal advocates should be available to all, regardless of economic status. EBCLC works on these issues in two ways: by providing hands-on educational training to law students to make these future legal practitioners aware of and skilled in addressing the needs of indigent communities and by providing desperately needed legal services to the low-income community in the areas of housing, employment and income support, HIV/AIDS law and economic development.

Since its founding in 1988 by law students at UC Berkeley's Boalt Hall, EBCLC staff attorneys have supervised over 500 law students through the clinical internship program. During this time, staff and students provided free legal assistance to more than 15,000 clients. EBCLC is now both the largest provider of legal services for poor people in the East Bay and Boalt Hall's primary community-based clinic. EBCLC continues to make the lives of East Bay community members more healthy, secure, productive and hopeful.



## Dear Friends

What a challenging and dynamic year this has been! Recent events have reminded us of the necessity for peace and justice in our communities, locally and around the world. In the past year, we have recommitted ourselves to this vision by expanding existing programs and bringing in many new faces, new ideas and new projects.

With our newly expanded staff and office space, we were able this year to launch programs such as the courthouse-based Low-Income Eviction Project and the AIDS Lanka Project. We also delighted in the growth of the Family Advocacy and Services Team collaborative which, in its first year and a half, helped over 100 individuals regain control over their lives in the tumultuous wake of welfare reform.

Equally energizing, we celebrated the birth of two community programs which EBCLC helped to “midwife” over the past several years. Five years in the making, the People’s Credit Union in West Oakland opened its doors with \$1.7 million in deposits and operating capital to the cheers of dignitaries and community members alike. And the Bay Area Construction Sector Intervention Collaborative, another endeavor we helped launch, took a giant step forward with receipt of a \$182,000 grant procured by EBCLC to open a one-stop employment resource office at the closed Oakland Army Base.

At the same time, we were (and still are) involved in an extremely productive strategic planning process with board, staff, students and clients. Through this process we have been exploring ways to increase the involvement of clients in our work, to develop leadership among younger staff, to incorporate wider social and political trends into our organizational planning and to better evaluate the effectiveness of our work.

We hope you will share our pride in all that EBCLC has accomplished this past year and join us as we continue to bring legal services to those with the fewest resources and leadership to the community of organizations serving them.

In community spirit,



Bernida M. Reagan

*Executive Director*



Michael J. Loeb

*Chair, Board of Directors*



# Listening to Community Voices: Increasing Client Involvement at EBCLC

**A**nthony Wilson knows all too well the fear and desperation that bring people to EBCLC. Remembering his own panic at receiving a five-day eviction notice, he says, "EBCLC kept me from losing my mind. Just having someone to talk to gave me half a chance."

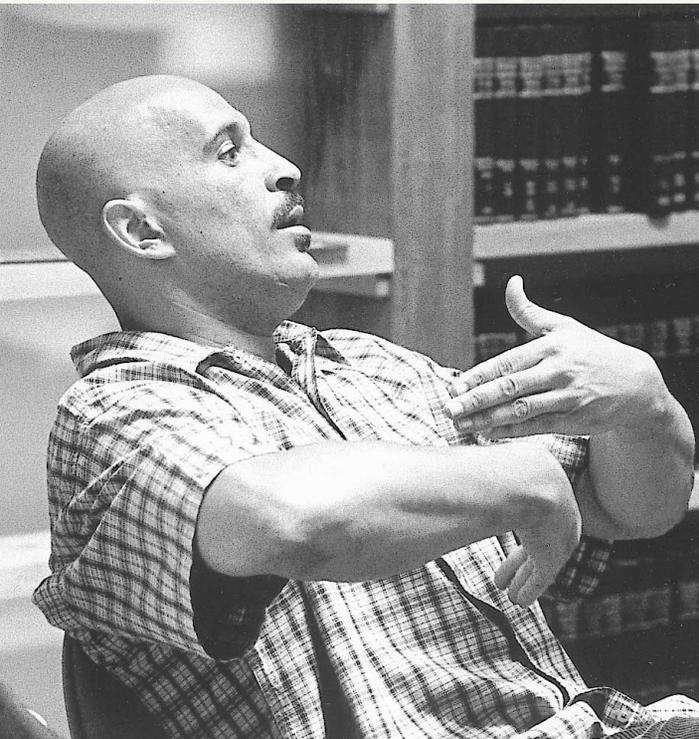
Given Anthony's up-close perspective on the client experience, it is no wonder that Center staff asked him to join their effort to increase client participation in EBCLC's operations.

"If you've never been homeless or gone through the eviction process, you just can't know how powerless people feel," he says. "If you want to help the clients, you need someone who has been there — been in the desert and is now in the oasis."

Board member Rhonda Ngom, a civil rights attorney, couldn't agree more. Through client involvement, she explains, "You gain authentic insight into the services you provide. Consequently, there's no limit to your quality and effectiveness. It enables us to improve exponentially based on the actual needs of the people we serve."

Toward this end, EBCLC is seeking ways "to bring the client voice and perspective into the decision-making processes of the Center," she says. "Our task now is to provide a forum where clients themselves can articulate and manifest the format in which they wish to contribute. We don't want the board to create a structure that clients just have to slip in to."

One of the Law Center's first steps in realizing this goal was to include client voices in the spring 2001 Strategic Planning retreat by inviting several clients to the weekend and by showing a video of client stories — including Anthony's. Through the process he





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met many of the Center's board and staff for the first time and was introduced to the Center's client involvement effort.

"I've had a lot of problems in my life," he says. "But watching the video, I saw that I was articulate. I looked halfway decent. It really felt good. All this for spending time getting to know these people, who were really down to earth. They weren't there for the money."

Rhonda was also moved by the experience. One of the clients she talked with was a single mother of five who had struggled with substance abuse issues throughout her life and had recently discovered she's HIV positive. "She looked right in my eyes and said, 'Rhonda, getting AIDS saved my life.' Her life was in such dire straights that it took a huge, dramatic wake up call to value her life, to be

there for her children, to pursue her creative ambitions, which she is now doing. I felt so honored to be sitting with her."

After premiering the video at the retreat, EBCLC has moved forward with several board-staff-client brainstorming sessions. Ideas on the table include a client advisory committee or forum, a program for former clients to serve as client advocates, clients on the board and a phone line for clients to call in anonymous suggestions to the Center.

As dialogue transforms into action in the months ahead, Rhonda knows that the Center's high quality work will only get better. "Because we respect our clients so much, it's only logical — who better to critique and evaluate our services than the beneficiaries of our services?"



## EBCLC Maps Growth through Strategic Planning

"Strategic planning provides a map for future growth," says EBCLC Executive Director Bernida Reagan. "It assists us as an organization in setting priorities and strengthening our capacity to be proactive in a dynamic environment." In 2000, EBCLC embarked on a strategic planning process unlike any other in its 13-year history. Facilitated by Dr. Margaret Paloma Pavel, this process honored EBCLC's vision of itself as a continually growing organization.

One particularly exciting effort has been the Creciendo Project. Creciendo, which is Spanish for growing, encourages EBCLC community members to bring whatever passions they have — revolutionary, cultural and/or visionary — to the work we do as an organization. At the retreat, staff, board, students and clients created individual art collages reflecting their motivation for doing social justice work and a group mural capturing their vision for the future. Upcoming activities include a monthly reading group and a calendar of social and political events.



# Going That Extra Mile: The Family Advocacy and Services Team

**W**hen asked what she'd advise women who are struggling to stay on track with their life goals, Laura Moreno says, "Keep studying, strive, persist with what you want." And few know better the strength — and challenge — of those words.

It was just nine years ago that Laura's 13-year marriage and middle-income lifestyle dissolved, leaving her to raise two young children without an income, job qualifications or English skills. With the help of government assistance and counseling for herself and her kids, she began to put her life back together.

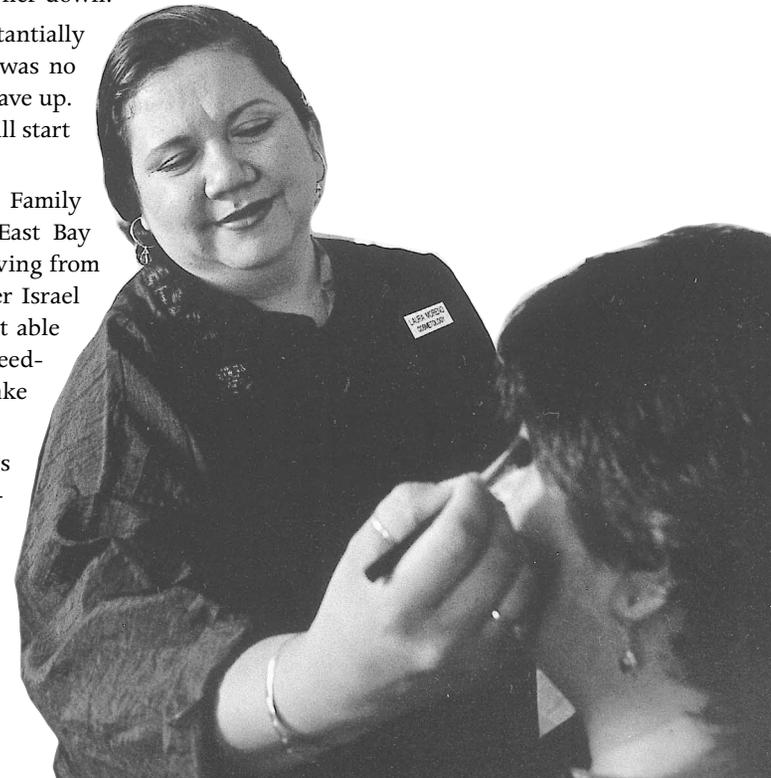
The next step was school and certification as a cosmetologist. "My goal was to get my license and work. In that field, you can't work without a license."

And so she entered Laney College, persisting for a year and a half with support from the state's welfare program, CalWORKs. The financial and language obstacles, however, so piled up that she turned to CalWORKs for help with the cost of supplies, tutoring and the exam itself. Notifying her that her contract was over and that it was time to get a job — any job — they turned her down.

Having now been sanctioned (welfare benefits substantially reduced), Laura had to face the bitter reality that school was no longer feasible and took a temporary job — but she never gave up. "I wanted to set a good example for my children that you will start school and complete it."

At that point, Laura received a phone call from the Family Advocacy and Services Team (FAST), a collaborative of East Bay agencies, including EBCLC, which assists individuals in moving from welfare to work. With the assistance of FAST case manager Israel Ortiz and EBCLC attorney Liam Galbreth, Laura was at last able to argue with the County for the financial assistance she needed — and won! So now, she says, it's time to get a tutor, take ESL classes and take the licensing test.

Looking back over the past year with FAST, she says "They are there to help you, and they speak your language." Plus, she says with a shy smile, "We won."



## FAST Weighs in on Welfare Reform

Piquing the interest of policy makers, funders and community organizations alike, EBCLC attorneys Ed Barnes and Liam Galbreth have just released "Lifting CalWORKs Sanctions: The Experience of the Family Advocacy and Services Team (FAST)," a groundbreaking report that coincides with the fifth anniversary of welfare reform.

In the report, EBCLC recommends that state law provide exemptions for homelessness, that federal law allow disability exemptions for 30 percent of the caseload, and that the County improve its capacity to work with clients who face depression, have limited English skills or want to pursue education. For copies, contact Liam Galbreth at (510) 548-4040, extension 331, or [liamgalbreth@ebclc.org](mailto:liamgalbreth@ebclc.org).





## Serving Those Who Serve: The Regional Non-profit Pro Bono Initiative

A tireless advocate for battered women, Carolyn Russell has been executive director of A Safe Place, Oakland's first battered women's program, for nearly two decades.

While domestic violence remains a "day-to-day epidemic," as she calls it, Carolyn is proud of the strides the battered women's movement has made. "It used to be that when the police were called to a home there wasn't even a place on their form for anything related to domestic violence. And now even physicians have to report domestic violence cases," she says.

With such growth have come new requirements from government and foundation funders, challenging formerly small, all-volunteer programs such as A Safe Place to grow in sophistication as well as size. "We have had to realize that we're a business even though we want to keep some of our grass roots mentality."

It was with organizations such as A Safe Place in mind that the Regional Pro Bono Initiative was launched. The Initiative is a new collaborative involving EBCLC, the San Francisco Bar Association and the National Economic Development and Law Center, which aims to build the strength of community-based organizations in the Bay Area through free legal assistance. With support from the National Association for Public Interest Law and the McKay Foundation, the Initiative has worked with over 20 organizations in its first year, assisting with personnel policies, incorporation, tax filings and other matters.

"Organizations like ours just don't have the funding to start human resources departments," Carolyn explains, "so as the executive director you

end up being the personnel person. The Law Center's technical assistance has been extremely valuable."

While all *pro bono* legal assistance is appreciated, Carolyn says, EBCLC provides the special insight and sensitivity that only another non-profit could offer. Furthermore, the Center staff know both the management and employee side of personnel issues. "It makes me feel they can look at our needs in an objective and fair way."

Carolyn concludes, "I don't know of any other local law center doing what they are doing. The need is huge."

## Paving the Way for Employment

EBCLC has long played a leadership role in building collaboratives committed to the East Bay community's economic development. One such partnership is the Bay Area Construction Sector Intervention Collaborative (BACSIC), a coalition of community and governmental agencies committed to increasing opportunities for local residents in the construction industry. In the past year, EBCLC was selected to be the community representative on the Port of Oakland's Social Justice Trust Fund. This fund, which will potentially raise hundreds of thousands of dollars, supports construction-related job training and economic development in low-income East Bay communities.

# Defending the Right to Housing: EBCLC's Low-Income Eviction Project

Luz Maria Conde and her family have come far since the day they arrived at the Oakland courthouse, eviction papers in hand, scared, angry and confused.

"It all started when the landlord wanted to double the rent," Luz Maria explains, "so we sued him. He asked me to drop the case. A month after we dropped it he increased the rent again, from \$725 to \$1650 plus \$10 each day for the garage. Then he sued us [for eviction], saying we had an extra person living with us and that we were using the garage for storage!"

It was with the stage thus set that Luz Maria discovered EBCLC's Low-Income Eviction Project (LIEP), housed one story up from the filing window at the Oakland courthouse. Started in 2000 as a joint project of EBCLC and the Alameda County Bar Association and funded by the state's Equal Access Justice Fund, LIEP has provided desperately needed tenant assistance to over 1,200 low-income individuals in its first year.

Working with LIEP's small but fierce band of attorneys and law students, Luz Maria eventually succeeded in convincing the landlord that he didn't have a case, so he dropped it. Luz Maria sums up the victory: "He told the filing clerk that he didn't have a chance against those Mexicans."

Luz Maria's story is all too typical, says LIEP director and EBCLC attorney Susan Lee. "I hear all of the horror stories, all of the illegal activity going on out there, and I'm incensed. But you have to take it one case at a time."

Oakland's lack of a just cause ordinance for evictions exacerbates the problem. "Landlords have a very high incentive to get rid of people with low rents — typically seniors and the disabled," she explains. And they don't have to prove anything. "The only way you can challenge this is to go to trial, but because you don't have a lawyer — and 80 percent of landlords do — you're outgunned at that point. So most people move out."



Which is exactly why LIEP is so valuable. Lacking knowledge of the law and intimidated by the process, too many low-income tenants are ousted illegally. Says Luz Maria, "The people not from here don't know how to defend themselves. There was a lady and the landlord wanted to increase her rent because she was pregnant. I told her to go to the courthouse."

Plus there are challenges with the courts. "I had a Spanish-speaking woman come into my clinic whose case had gone to trial," Susan says. "The court had attempted to find a Spanish interpreter, but no

one was available, and they went on anyway! So this woman lost her home because she couldn't communicate with the judge!" Susan now serves on the Self-Represented Litigants Workgroup, a county-wide committee of judges, lawyers and court administrators working to rectify the situation.

Jessica, Luz Maria's teenage great-niece, underscores all that the family has learned through their ordeal. "Now we have more information, like that the landlord can't increase our rent by more than three percent. We know now that they can't do just whatever they want."

*The people not from here don't know how to defend themselves.*



## Just Cause Oakland Takes a Stand

EBCLC has joined the Oakland Tenants Union and other community activists in the Just Cause Oakland Coalition to insist that a just cause ordinance be added to the city's rent laws. Says EBCLC attorney Laura Lane, "'Just cause' would make sure that long-term tenants who have paid their rent regularly — like the elderly and disabled — cannot be evicted for no reason." Laura emphasizes that a just cause provision would not restrict property owners from evicting tenants who do not pay rent, damage property or engage in unlawful activity.

Under Laura's supervision, Boalt Hall student Sara Zimmerman helped draft the ordinance that Just Cause Oakland is urging the City to adopt. The Coalition is now gearing up to gather signatures and place the ordinance on the city ballot for November 2002. With a win, says Laura, "Oakland will be in line with San Francisco, Berkeley, Hayward, and all other civilized cities that have this protection for tenants."



## Crossing Boundaries: The AIDS Lanka Project

**O**n first glance, the link between EBCLC and the tiny country of Sri Lanka may seem obscure at best. But to 67-year old Kamalika Abeyaratne, who contracted HIV six years ago, that connection is nothing short of a life-line. It is due to EBCLC's AIDS Lanka Project that she is able to obtain the life-saving medications — and support — that are so lacking in her own country.

Having been forced by public pressure to end her career as a physician due to her diagnosis, Kamalika is now a tireless educator and advocate and the country's only "out" person with HIV. "The degree of stigma here is unimaginable," she says.

Working to break the enormous isolation of people with HIV/AIDS, Kamalika offers support meetings at her house "to get people with HIV together, to help them get medication, to teach the women to do some kind of work, to help the men do whatever work they can so they can live a useful life."

The work, however, is entirely up hill. "We're trying to boost up positive people, but they are afraid to come out. People have burnt people's houses. One man was beaten up while he was in the hospital. Two weeks ago someone committed suicide."

In addition to prevention and education, Kamalika has taken up the battle for medications. While drugs that help people with HIV live longer, healthier lives are accessible here in the U.S., they are prohibitively priced or are unavailable in developing countries, thanks to complex patent laws and dollar-driven pharmaceutical companies.

"I want people to understand what the drug companies are doing," says EBCLC staff attorney Manel Kappagoda, who directs the AIDS Lanka Project and whose family has been long-time friends with Kamalika's. "We can no

longer think about this as a local issue — it's wiping out families and countries." Committed to changing this reality, Manel has been working closely with student interns Amy Kapczynski and Praveena de Silva to improve access to HIV/AIDS medications throughout Sri Lanka.

While the pharmaceutical companies may support rigid boundaries between countries, EBCLC and Kamalika know such divisions are meaningless when it comes to HIV. Kamalika says, "I would ask [other countries] to help the helpless. Give us some hope, or at least a healthier life, not only with drugs, but also with moral support."

### HIV/AIDS Services Reflect Women's Experience

**I**n response to the increasing numbers of women with HIV, EBCLC continues to participate in the Family Care Network (FCN), a collaborative of organizations providing medical, legal, case management and peer support services for families affected by HIV. This year EBCLC has helped to launch the FCN's newest program, *Alianza Latina en Marcha contra la Sida* (ALMAS), which addresses the specific needs of HIV-infected Latinas.

# Expanding Partnerships with the Community

## New UC Clinic Offers Students Real Life Experience



UC Berkeley's Institute of Urban and Regional Development (IURD) and EBCLC have come together to launch the Community Economic Development (CED) Clinic. In addition to providing communities with comprehensive technical assistance on neighborhood planning, the Clinic provides planning and law students with a clinical envi-

ronment in which they can collaborate as consultants to actual clients.

The Clinic builds upon IURD's work in West Oakland with the Seventh Street/McClymonds Corridor Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, a seven-year project that emphasizes resident leadership in the development and implementation of strategies to improve the community. Funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and managed by the San Francisco Foundation, the Initiative strives to improve the physical, economic and human conditions in West Oakland.

EBCLC Program Director Deborah Moss-West conveys the Law Center's excitement: "We are thrilled about this project — especially the interdepartmental nature of it. The CED clinic continues the Law Center's history of addressing community needs through multidisciplinary efforts."

## New Affiliation Agreement with Boalt Hall School of Law

Building on a 13-year relationship, EBCLC and Boalt Hall School of Law recently entered into an Affiliation Agreement ensuring the Law Center's role as Boalt's community-based clinic through at least 2005. In addition to extending Boalt's financial support of the Law Center, the agreement is particularly significant in light of the growth of Boalt's Center for Clinical Education, which now houses clinics in international human rights, law and technology and the death penalty.

We would like to acknowledge the support of Dean John Dwyer and Boalt faculty and staff in reaching this milestone in our history. In the words of EBCLC Clinical Director Jeff Selbin, "This new agreement ensures that Boalt students will have the opportunity to participate in a first-rate clinical legal education program for many years to come. At the same time, it serves as an avenue for students to apply their exceptional skills toward meeting the needs of our underserved clients. This agreement is a win-win-win for the law school, EBCLC and the community."

## People's Credit Union Opens Its Doors!

EBCLC Executive Director Bernida Reagan, Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Mayor Jerry Brown spoke to a jubilant crowd on May 11, 2001, marking the long-awaited grand opening of the People's Community Partnership Federal Credit Union. Bernida was particularly delighted to join the celebration, as EBCLC has provided the credit union with technical assistance since its conception in 1995.

With the motto "Invest in yourself and your community," the credit union offers vital financial services and economic education to residents of Oakland's low-income communities. For more information, contact People's at (510) 267-0450.

# East Bay Community Law Center

## Statement of Financial Position - June 30, 2001

Assets		
Cash	\$1,181,628	
Grants and contracts receivable	286,888	
Prepaid expenses	27,863	
Other assets	45,758	
Property (less depreciation)	<u>101,539</u>	
Total Assets		<u>\$1,643,676</u>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Accounts payable	\$75,703	
Payroll related liabilities	2,433	
Trust funds payable	9,380	
Accrued vacations	<u>64,546</u>	
Total Liabilities		\$152,062
Unrestricted assets	1,095,155	
Restricted assets	<u>387,459</u>	<u>1,482,614</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets		<u>\$1,643,676</u>

## Statement of Activities - for the year ending June 30, 2001

Revenue	
Earned income	
Service contracts	\$1,385,237
Other earned income	13,166
Charitable contributions	
Grants	169,000
Contributions	137,926
Unrealized loss on securities	(14,913)
Interest income	<u>58,197</u>
Total Revenue	\$1,748,613
Expenses	
Salaries and wages	\$846,307
Benefits and payroll taxes	130,743
Contracted services	304,245
Credit Union	182,692
Non-personnel costs	<u>344,093</u>
Total expenses	<u>\$1,808,080</u>
Change in net assets	(\$59,467)

Audited financial statements are available upon request.

## Board of Directors

### CHAIR

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Joshua Stanbro

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Deborah Moss-West

*Program Director*

Jeff Selbin

*Clinical Director*

Ed Barnes

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Clinical Supervisor,  
Employment and Income  
Support Unit*

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*Staff Attorney/  
Clinical Supervisor,  
Housing Unit*

Sharon Djemal

*Staff Attorney/  
Clinical Supervisor,  
Housing Unit*

Liam Galbreth

*Staff Attorney/  
Clinical Supervisor,  
Employment and Income  
Support Unit*

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*Staff Attorney/  
Clinical Supervisor,  
HIV/AIDS Unit*

Sarah Horsley

*Development Associate/  
FAST Project Coordinator*

Marquette Jones

*Staff Attorney/  
Clinical Supervisor,  
HIV/AIDS Unit*

Manel Kappagoda

*Staff Attorney/  
Clinical Supervisor,  
HIV/AIDS Unit*

Laura Lane

*Staff Attorney/  
Clinical Supervisor,  
Housing Unit*

Susan Lee

*Staff Attorney/  
Clinical Supervisor,  
Housing Unit*

Cseneca Parker

*Client Liaison*

Ayana Roberson

*Office Manager*

Beatriz Rodriguez

*NAPIL Fellow, CED Unit*

Gail Silverstein

*Staff Attorney/  
Clinical Supervisor,  
HIV/AIDS Unit*

Brad Yatabe

*Administrative Assistant*

## Credits

Sarah Horsley  
*Project Management*

Z•Communications  
*Concept/Writing*

ZesTop  
*Concept, Design & Production*

Rick Rocamora  
*Photography*

QQ Printing  
*Printing*

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- Conducted over 20 trainings and workshops on a wide variety of HIV/AIDS-related issues including disability programs, confidentiality laws and permanency planning

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