



## VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4—SEPT 1, 2015

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### Kudos to the Children's Law Center, a BLS Clinic Partner

Adjunct Professor of Clinical Law Karen P. Simmons, executive director of the [Children's Law Center \(CLC\)](#), a non-profit law firm representing children in custody/visitation, domestic violence and child protective proceedings, is the 2015 recipient of the Kay Crawford Murray Award, presented by the Committee on Women in the Law of the New York State Bar Association. Prior to CLC, she was the Attorney in Charge of the Brooklyn and Staten Island office of the Legal Aid Society Juvenile Rights Practice. The award, recognizes an attorney who enhances diversity in the profession and advances the professional development of women attorneys. For Prof Simmons, a crucial element of her work with CLC is mentoring staff, students, interns and volunteers, whom she values and considers to be the next generation of advocates and leaders serving children and families.

In 2009, BLS alum Tanisha McKnight joined The Children's Law Center as its first Director of Paralegal and Volunteer Services. She was just named a Rising Star by the NY Law Journal. When Tanisha began at CLC, there were virtually no students or *pro bono* volunteers at CLC. Tanisha created a dynamic, year-round volunteer program for law, social work, college, and high school students, who conduct interviews and investigations, draft documents, and research a broad array of topics under the supervision of experienced CLC mentors. Tanisha has also led the wave in using technology to streamline CLC's legal practice and deployed her team of seven paralegals across New York City, who provide invaluable support to thousands of CLC clients every year.

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#### Clinical Education Program Office

One Boerum Place, 3rd Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
T: 718-780-7994  
F: 718-780-0367  
E: [clinics@brooklaw.edu](mailto:clinics@brooklaw.edu)



Karen Simmons, Executive Director

## BLIP Director Featured in ABA Journal Article About Legal Hackathons

A legal hackathon is a workshop, meet-up or conference bringing experts from different disciplines together with technologists looking for innovative ways to tackle long-standing problems. It is also proving to be a way for like-minded lawyers to find each other and help some find new directions in their careers. BLS Professor of Clinical Law, Jonathan Askin, whose many innovations include instituting legal hackathons in the hub of the Brooklyn Tech Triangle, was the focus of an article in the June issue of the [ABA Journal](#).



Prof. Jonathan Askin

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## The Maimonides Project: A Trial in Clinical Education, Simulation, and Law

This spring, Brooklyn Law School's [Prosecutor's Clinic](#) partnered again with the [Maimonides Infants and Children's Hospital of Brooklyn](#) on a novel program involving physicians in court proceedings. The program was designed to educate physicians about the role of testifying and the impact they have on the outcome of a child abuse case and to educate student prosecutors about the importance of thorough preparation for trial.

The curriculum was spearheaded by [Professor Lisa Smith](#) and [Doctor Ingrid Walker-Descartes](#), the Director of the Maimonides Pediatric Residency Program. The program centered on a simulated case with a mother presenting her 4



Professor Lisa Smith (as judge) swearing in a medical student witness.

year old daughter who she believes is the victim of sexual abuse to the pediatric residents. Over the course of two days, 20 pediatricians from Maimonides Hospital participated in a court hearing, along with Brooklyn Law School students serving as mock prosecutors. After the mock trial, the Student Assistant District Attorneys explained the courtroom process and how to provide expert testimony. A general pediatrician with experience testifying also provided instruction. A key factor in determining the outcome of many child abuse cases is the quality of the written communication, such as the medical evaluation and documentation of the findings. Previous studies indicate that physicians often lack knowledge and confidence in addressing child abuse and neglect.

On June 11, both Professor Smith and Dr. Walker-Descartes spoke about their program at conference in Philadelphia sponsored by the Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research entitled One Child Many Hands, A Multidisciplinary Conference on Child Welfare. Their presentation, "Building Bridges Between the Clinic and the Courtroom," showcased their innovative curriculum to teach the requisite skills for effective management of cases of child abuse for medical providers, social workers, agency employees and law enforcement.

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## Health Policy Research Seminar, An Innovative Collaboration Between BLS and Outside Governmental and Non-governmental Organizations

In response to a request from the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the law school offered a new practicum course in the spring semester that focused on health policy research and afforded students a unique opportunity to work with organizations in a consulting capacity. CRS entered into a contract with the Health Policy Research Seminar to conduct an analysis of legal issues related to insured medical tourism. Students engaged in research and drafted a series of documents that culminated in a final report that was presented to the senior management of CRS at their offices in Washington DC on April 20. The report considered (1) the issue of medical malpractice in the context of outbound insured medical tourism focusing on the question of whether a party who is injured in the course of outbound medical tourism can seek

compensation; (2) how the Affordable Care Act may impose obligations on plans offering medical tourism benefits; (3) employer-sponsored healthcare and the legal issues that these plans raise when they offer medical tourism benefits and, specifically, whether there may be liability under ERISA when an employer-sponsored welfare plan provides medical tourism benefits; (4) the individual rights of a patient who may engage in outbound medical tourism. The report submitted by the students will be turned into a CRS report to Congress.

The class also took on a project from the National Center for Children in Poverty to assess state Medicaid requirements for mental health services for children and their families. The class was taught by [Professor Karen Porter](#) and received additional support from Professor Loreen Peritz, one of the law schools very skilled librarians. The students in the class were Erika DiMarco '16, Timothy Durbin '15, Ashley Fertig '15, Ashley Huddleston '15, Jacob Marks '15, Ariana Pabalan '15, Alysha Sabarwal '15, Eric Schmidt '15, John Scifo '15 and Mallory Turk '15.

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## Corporate and Real Estate Clinic Closes on Six-figure Loan

Major leaks in a fifteen-unit central Bronx building will be addressed with rehabilitation loan funds in the next few months as a result of five months of effort by [Corporate and Real Estate Clinic](#) students, under the supervision of [Prof. Debra Bechtel](#). This sort of assistance can be crucial to low-income cooperatives struggling to make ends meet and continue to provide affordable housing. Two summer students, Connor Kraus '16 and Anthony Tufano '17, conducted the closing on June 18 for a \$670,773 loan from the City of New York which will also pay for new kitchens and bathrooms and abatement of code violations. Spring semester students, Dan Sweeney '16 and Ara Kokshanian '16 met with board members to explain the loan documents and closing process and also began resolving title issues. Connor Kraus began in May to address boiler violations, draft resolutions, prepare an opinion letter, review and seek revisions in the promissory note and resolve closing cost and other issues with the lender and the title company.



Connor Kraus and Anthony Tufano with co-op board members.

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