



From Pam Hoekwater, Executive Director

Dear Legal Aid friends, clients, partners and supporters:

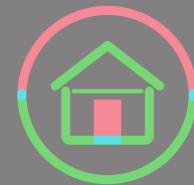
A new year, a new newsletter. Each month we'll share with you a summary of our work, our impact on behalf of clients, and ways for you to support our mission. This edition includes a client's story about hanging onto his family home, data on our impact in 2020, and info on an upcoming free, online community education event.



We are so proud to serve our clients, honored to work with great partners, and grateful for vital donor and volunteer support. Thank you!

In this issue:

- Client story: A single-parent family hurt by the pandemic hangs onto their home
- By the Numbers: Client impact data
- Legal Aid honored for eviction diversion work
- From the Board: Jim Brunner is retired and still does pro bono. You can, too!
- Staff Spotlight: What's Sarah Rocco reading, watching, & hearing?
- For Sharing: Spread the word on our new resources for clients & service partners



A Single Dad Keeps His Home - J.A.

I'm a single dad with joint custody of my two children. In 2019 I sold my house in Grand Rapids and bought a trailer in a more rural county. I had a 5-year plan to live cheap in order to buy some property up north after my kids graduated from high school. But that November, the company I'd worked with for several years "downsized," and I lost my job. I lived off of my savings while looking for work. In early 2020 I got work through a temp agency. But the pandemic, and the shutdowns, hit in March. I was out of work again. Things were getting tight... [Read more](#)

By the Numbers



9,878

Total children & adults served in 2020



1,048

Eviction Diversion Program cases closed July - Dec 2020



2,500

Hours volunteered through our Pro Bono Program in 2020

## Legal Aid Honored for Eviction Diversion Work



Managing Attorney Dolores Trese accepts the award on behalf of LAWM.

**Our Holland office's** hard work with the Eviction Diversion Program was recognized with a **Social Justice Award** from the City of Holland Human Relations Commission.

This year the Commission **recognized the collaboration of Legal Aid, Good Samaritan Ministries, and the 58th District Court**, for their work in **saving over 600 tenant households from eviction**. It was a team effort by everyone in the Holland office, and we were glad to be able to save so many families from additional heartache and struggle during this crazy year!

From the Board: Pro Bono Anytime!



**Jim Brunner, LAWM Board Member and active volunteer attorney, on what pro bono service means to him:**

“I’m retired from 37 years of corporate law practice. Today, pro bono service with LAWM is among the most rewarding experiences of my life. I meet very nice clients who *really* need my help. This is a unique opportunity to deploy my talent and experience for a truly worthy purpose. I recommend it to any lawyer.”

Attorneys: [volunteer right here](#) and we’ll contact you!

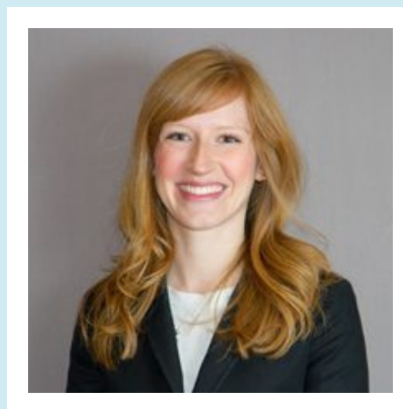
## Staff Spotlight: Sarah Plays "Read/Watch/Listen"

**Sarah Rocco, Staff Attorney, Muskegon**

**Read:** *Half Moon Bay* by Jonathan and Jesse Kellerman. In this mystery novel, new father and Deputy Coroner, Clay Edison, finds himself in the midst of two unsolved mysteries involving young children.

**Watch:** *The Flight Attendant* on HBO Max. Kaley Cuoco stars as a flight attendant who wakes up in a murder scene after a wild night out in Bangkok with one of her passengers. She has no memory of what happened, and is left to put together the pieces, with the FBI on her tail.

**Listen:** Taylor Swift *Folklore: The Long Pond Studio Sessions*. Taylor wrote, produced, and released this album during the pandemic. She performed the songs live from a small cabin in upstate New York. You can watch the session on Disney+.



## For Sharing!

Spread the word:

### **FREE ONLINE: 10 Tax Tips for Working People and Families**

Kent District Library is livestreaming this free program (see flyer below):

- January 28 at 6:30pm
- [Watch here](#)

**New criminal-record expungement rules** in Michigan. Learn about “Clean Slate” and broader expungement options:

- In [English](#)
- En [español](#)

Info for our partner nonprofits on what we do in our shared client communities:

- [Serving People with Disabilities](#)
- [Serving People with Family Law Problems](#)
- [Serving People with Housing Law Problems](#)

# 10 TAX TIPS

## from Legal Aid of Western Michigan



Legal Aid attorneys will highlight important issues for working people and families filing income taxes this year

Presented by:

- Karen Tjapkes, Director of Litigation
- Tom Toft, Low Income Taxpayer Clinic Staff Attorney

**JAN  
28**  
6:30pm

Watch for **FREE** online at [www.kdl.org/livestream](http://www.kdl.org/livestream)



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