



## Our Work at CCA

In the last several months, families and children in our communities have faced recurrent crises, and we continue to prepare for more to come. Cuts to healthcare and basic needs support, as well as the continued dismantling of federal civil rights oversight have had an alarming impact for vulnerable adults and children. CCA is partnering every day with youth, families, and community providers to protect the legal rights of children to safety, healthcare, and education, and advocate for a stronger Connecticut for the state's most vulnerable children.

### CCA's Youth Homelessness Advocacy

Recent actions by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are threatening essential support that youth and families rely on to access safe and stable housing. Abrupt changes in HUD's funding structure will cut 70% of Connecticut's permanent housing services and force communities to criminalize homelessness. Given that the state's housing support resources rely heavily on federal dollars, the changes announced by HUD are a body blow for vulnerable adults, families, and young people.

CCA is standing with youth and families experiencing homelessness, providers of homeless services, and advocates to call on HUD to reverse these changes and urge the State to address the housing support gaps before homelessness triples in Connecticut.

CCA continues to provide individual legal representation throughout the state to young people experiencing homelessness and housing instability, some involved with the child welfare system, others involved with the homeless service system, and yet others struggling to find stability and services in the community. CCA is also working with municipalities and state and local agencies to strengthen knowledge and partnerships that will better serve these youth.

For more information about the rights of students experiencing homelessness contact Stacey Violante Cote, [sviolante@cca-ct.org](mailto:sviolante@cca-ct.org)

### CCA Works to Increase Protections and Services for Children with Autism

CCA worked with legislators and the state Office of the Child Advocate to create a new state task force that will make recommendations for increased oversight and reimbursement rates for service delivery to children with autism. Children receiving Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) services from community clinics are typically very young and often in need of intensive support. Currently, these service clinics are not licensed by any state agency and reimbursement rates for ABA services are so low that many families experience long waiting lists for even basic evaluations and support. The new task force, created by Public Act 25-3 will tackle these urgent issues in the months ahead.



For more information on the new legislation, contact CCA Senior Attorney Bonnie Roswig, [broswig@cca-ct.org](mailto:broswig@cca-ct.org).



### CCA Advocates for Safe and Nurturing Homes

Little Marlanie, age 2½, shown here on her special Adoption Day with her grandmother and Judge Nguyen-O'Dowd, reaches permanency with the help of her attorney, CCA's Founder and Special Counsel, Martha Stone. Marlanie's grandmother had agreed to step up and become her foster mother through the Department of Children and Families (DCF) when Marlanie's own parents were unable to care for her. Through Martha's legal advocacy and Marlanie's grandmother's loving care, Marlanie was able to get the resources she needed and a safe and secure home.

Marlanie is one of many children to whom CCA attorneys provide legal representation through its Child Welfare Project. Often, CCA's attorneys become the only consistent advocacy voice in a child welfare system that has constant turnover of staff and providers that serve children. The bond between attorney, child and family endures even after the cases close.

## CCA's Disability Rights Advocacy

Over the last 9 months, thousands of US Department of Education employees have been displaced or terminated, including the majority of staff that investigate civil rights violations for children with disabilities. In the wake of these cuts, CCA is partnering with families to make sure that we don't go back to a time when children with support needs were denied their right to attend school and obtain the life skills and education they deserve and are legally entitled to.

When multiple families in Bridgeport came to CCA concerned that their children, many with profound developmental disabilities, were denied access to special education teachers and trained support staff in school, CCA filed a systemic legal complaint on their behalf, and secured an order from state education officials entitling dozens of children to compensatory individualized services. The lack of trained staff in these children's classrooms not only denied these children their right to an education but directly jeopardized their safety.

Records reviewed by CCA revealed that children were harmed in a variety of ways—including being allowed to engage in self-injury without staff intervention, and being denied access to the help needed to use the bathroom and coming home in soiled clothing and diapers. CCA is continuing to work closely with state government officials to ensure that all of the harms experienced by these children are remedied and that the school district is operating special education programming with resources necessary to ensure children's education and safety.

For more information about CCA's disability rights work, contact Executive Director, Sarah Eagan, [seagan@cca-ct.org](mailto:seagan@cca-ct.org).

## CCA is Partnering to Empower Families and Protect the Rights of Children with Special Health Care Needs

Through partnerships with community foundations and providers, CCA can reach more families and youth that need help. With grant support from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County and the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority, CCA worked with the Epilepsy Foundation of Connecticut to hold a day long training and empowerment Bright Futures event for families to provide legal information and advocacy tools so that their children can access the education and health care services they are entitled to. This "healthy child clinic" directly led to multiple families getting connected with resources and peer support through the Epilepsy Foundation. Because of training from CCA at the event, pediatric neurologists are improving their provider recommendation letters for children to better educate schools about the needs of the child in the school setting.



Attorney Ilana Ofgang with James Hart, Executive Director of the Epilepsy Foundation of Connecticut.



Attorney Bonnie Roswig answers a parent's legal questions at the Bright Futures event.

## CCA is Helping Connecticut Families Keep the Power On!

There is little that alarms a parent more than worrying about being able to meet the basic needs of their child — concerns that are rapidly growing more acute for too many families in our state. CCA's Keep the Power On Project is helping meet the needs of hundreds of Connecticut's children.

When "Myra" was laid off from her job in September, her world came crashing down as she worried how she could provide for her children. She lived in subsidized housing and received a tiny amount of child support that did not cover the light and heating bill. When the shut off notice came — and with colder weather rapidly approaching — Myra was at a loss for what to do. Even more distressing for Myra was that DCF was involved with the family because of her ex-husband's physical violence against her. Myra's case worker told her the children might not be allowed to stay with her if she could not provide for their basic needs.

Luckily, the social worker at her health center told her about a project at the Center for Children's Advocacy. Under that program, CCA Attorney Bonnie Roswig works to protect clients' access to utility service and assists families like Myra's in

accessing available protections and affordable payment plans. CCA partnered with Myra and made sure she was enrolled in an appropriate affordability program. Myra reported that the relief she felt knowing that her children will be safe and warm and that she can pay her bills going forward, is "life changing."

Affordability plans like the one CCA helped Myra with — as well as protections from shutoff for some families — exist in the state but too many families and the social services organizations that support them do not know about the programs. CCA is working to promote, protect, and defend low-income families' access to these services so that children do not suffer the impact of utility termination. Loss of utilities can be devastating for children — scary and harmful, resulting in poorer health, a decline in educational achievement, and housing instability.

The Center holds trainings and clinics throughout the state to educate health care providers, social services agencies, and the community about how to prevent utility shut-off for families. Since January 1 of this year, the Center has helped over 130 families, including 250 children, keep the power on! We continue to meet with legislators and state officials to advocate for statewide protections for our most vulnerable children and families.

**Center for Children's Advocacy**  
FIGHTING FOR THE LEGAL RIGHTS OF CT'S MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

**Are You Struggling To Keep The Lights And Heat On?**  
Center for Children's Advocacy Can Help  
Our mission: To protect and promote the legal rights of Connecticut's low-income children and youth so they have equitable opportunities for good health, a quality education and a successful transition to adulthood.

**WE CAN HELP:**  
• Contacting the Utility Company  
• Working to Get You an Affordable Payment Plan

**CONFIDENTIAL CONTACT:**  
Attorney Bonnie Roswig  
Call: (860) 545-8581 or Call or Text: (860) 566-0836 or  
Email: [Broswig@cca-ct.org](mailto:Broswig@cca-ct.org)

**Are You Struggling To Ensure You Can Feed Your Family?**  
CT Foodshare/SNAP: <https://www.ctfoodshare.org/snap>  
Are you struggling to feed your baby?  
WIC: [https://dphsubmissions.ct.gov/CTWIC\\_Interest\\_Form](https://dphsubmissions.ct.gov/CTWIC_Interest_Form)  
Are you struggling to afford diapers?  
Diaper Bank: <https://thediaperbank.org/ddn-member-directory/>

[www.cca-ct.org](http://www.cca-ct.org)





**Speak Up! youth visiting Hartford PAL to discuss opportunities for positive youth engagement.**

## CCA's Speak Up! Youth Advocacy Group

CCA's Speak Up! Youth Advocacy Group has been busy in the community, positively impacting the lives of youth in the Hartford area through advocacy, legislative work, relationship building, and community beautification projects. Speak Up! was awarded a \$25,000 Love Your Block grant from the Hartford Foundation of Public Giving to refurbish a park in a neighborhood that is known for high rates of youth arrests. The youth are currently building relationships with other community organizations like Hartford Police Athletic League (PAL), Our Piece of the Pie, and COMPASS Youth Collaborative Peace Builders to help create safe zones and build bridges between city youth and organizations.

Two Speak Up! youth have recently been selected to be a part of the Tow Youth Justice Institute's "Change Can't Wait" fellowship, a program that teaches young people about advocacy and connects them with people and organizations that can help them implement their visions of change in our community. One of our youth is helping to spearhead innovative legislation that would address transportation barriers for youth across the state. CCA and Speak Up! youth are working together to make sure that youth voices are heard loud and clear in Connecticut!

## CCA's Immigrant Children's Advocacy Update

CCA's Immigrant Children's Justice Project is helping to meet the unprecedented need for representation of immigrant children and youth in a rapidly changing immigration landscape. We are doing that on multiple fronts:

Due to halted and inconsistent federal funding to agencies that were providing representation for unaccompanied immigration children, CCA has taken on representation of detained youth in federal custody who have experienced abuse, neglect, or abandonment to assist them in obtaining a path to legal status and protection in this country.

With increased federal efforts to detain and deport immigrant parents, CCA has been training parents and community organizations such as Hartford Deportation Defense by running family preparedness clinics to assist parents in making legal arrangements, such as executing "standby guardianship" arrangements, and making practical plans in the event a parent is suddenly deported.

CCA recently trained 30 staff who work in school-based health centers in Stamford schools on immigration options for immigrant children. This collaborative project is aimed at preparing staff to identify when a youth may be eligible for immigration relief and to refer them to CCA for evaluation and possible representation.

**For more information on the project:** <https://cca-ct.org/our-work/immigration>.

## CCA's New Partnership: Filling in the Blanks

With the support of long time CCA sponsor and community partner, Silver Golub & Teitell LLP, CCA partnered with Filling in the Blanks, a Connecticut based non-profit dedicated to addressing food insecurity in the community, this October. Working in tri-partnership together, CCA supplemented Filling in the Blanks' weekend meal bag provision for students facing food insecurity across Fairfield County and shared a flyer identifying ways families can access basic needs from SNAP, WIC, and local Diaper Banks. We also ensured each family had information about CCA's utility-shut-off prevention program. We are so very grateful to the team at SG+T for facilitating this cross-county partnership this year!



## Training and Empowering State and National Partners

CCA lawyers trained partners throughout the state in recent months on helping children and families access essential healthcare and education services. Our lawyers and staff have trained school nurses, parent advocates, peer support organizations, and lawyers for children in foster care. Our goal is to strengthen the network of advocates who can speak up for vulnerable children and families.

CCA's Senior Attorney Bonnie Roswig and our Connecticut Children's Medical Legal Partnership Project Medical Director, Dr. Robert Keder, presented at the national meeting of the Academy of Pediatrics in September on "Understanding the Laws that Protect Children in School."

Martha Stone, CCA's Founder and Special Counsel, was one of the featured speakers on a panel at the Status of Connecticut Women in the Law Symposium held on October 17, 2025 at Quinnipiac University School of Law discussing "Changes/Innovations Necessary for Women to Work and Thrive in the Legal Profession." Martha was also one of the women who was included in the History of Women in the Legal Profession in Connecticut Timeline, which was released at the Symposium.





## CCA at the Town & County Club

Marcia Howard, a valued former Board Director, recently hosted CCA at the Town & County Club in Hartford. Our Executive Director, Sarah Eagan, and our Founder and Special Counsel, Martha Stone, jointly introduced the Center's mission and pillars of activity, shared some stories, and participated in a thoroughly engaging Q&A session. We were delighted CCA was included in the Club's Centennial Year Education Program this fall!

## CCA at Mitchell's

At the suggestion of CCA Ambassador and Patron, John Pollack, CCA was the charity of choice at the Nili Lotan personal shopping experience event on November 6 at Mitchell's in Westport. CCA introduced our activity and impact as part of the welcoming remarks and a donation to the Center was made with each purchase. Thank you to the team at Mitchell's and to Nili for supporting and elevating the impact of our work!



## CCA's Impact in 2025

Over the past year, CCA's statewide team of lawyers and professionals expanded legal representation for children and created new pro bono and community partnerships around the state. The Center:

- Engaged in successful systemic litigation to ensure equal access to education for children with disabilities.
- Diverted more children and youth away from unnecessary involvement with the juvenile justice system and toward more appropriate support systems and services.
- Helped protect the right of adolescents to confidential reproductive care.
- Helped secure two new laws that strengthened state oversight of programs and placements for children and youth with disabilities.
- Helped hundreds of children and their families access safe housing conditions and avoid utility shut-off.
- Helped almost 100 undocumented children who had experienced abuse, neglect, or abandonment find safety and stability in our state.
- Kept hundreds of children engaged and moving forward with their education.

One of the families we worked with was "Charley" and her mother, "Grace":

"Charley" is a young student with autism who was not getting the school services she was eligible for and was afraid to go to school. Her mother, "Grace," contacted CCA and worked with her CCA attorney to uncover problems with her daughter's education: Charley's classroom did not have a certified special education teacher for almost the entire school year; the classroom aides had never received training to support children with autism; and, on two different occasions, Charley had been left to hit her head against a wall more than 250 times without anyone intervening. CCA, in partnership with Grace, successfully advocated for Charley to be moved to an educational environment with trained staff, where she is now safe and able to learn. CCA also filed a legal complaint with the State and secured compensatory help and education for dozens of children with unmet needs like Charley.

Can we count on your support this year to ensure CCA is there for children like "Charley" when they need it most? **GIVE TODAY!**



Want to support the work of the Center for Children's Advocacy?  
**Help give children a voice**

**Double Your Impact: New and increased gifts matched 1:1 up to \$25,000 through 12/31. Thanks to the generosity of our Board!**