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## What's New, Autumn 2014

By: Omar Mallick

The Milwaukee Justice Center is excited to be starting the new year with several new staff and volunteers. From new executive and legal directors to a fresh batch of student volunteers, the MJC is happy to work with a quality group of people.

With the end of the 2014, Dawn Caldart decided to pursue a new employment opportunity. Her position as Executive Director of the MJC is now filled by Mary Ferwerda who was previously serving as the

Legal Director.

The MJC is also happy to welcome Angela Cunningham as the new Legal Director. Angela's commitment to serve has already proven valuable since she began.

Lastly, Katie Mayer teamed with Dean Angela Schultz and is the assistant director of public service for MULS.

We are fortunate to have such hardworking people to add to our team and look forward to what the future holds. ●



Atty. Omar Mallick  
MJC Attorney Supervisor

## Goodbye and Thank You, Dawn Caldart

By: Mary Ferwerda

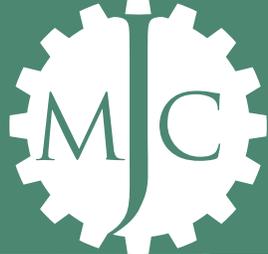
The Milwaukee Justice Center thanks former Executive Director, Dawn Caldart, the unwavering leadership, strong vision, and unlimited inspiration that she has provided. After five years with the MJC, Caldart recently accepted the Pro Bono and Professional Development Director position at Quarles and Brady LLP.

Since April 2009, Caldart worked to expand MJC and build collaborative relationships that are the hallmark its success. Recently, she oversaw the creation of the MJC Mobile Legal Clinic, a model of legal assistance that has received multiple awards and media recognition for its innovative approach to increasing access to justice within Milwaukee County.

Under her leadership and direction, the MJC

underwent an extensive renovation, completed in July 2014, which increased both the space and technology available for its services. Additionally, Caldart wrote a grant that will provide furniture, toys, books, and activities to fill the children's area in the MJC's waiting room.

For all of her work to develop, enhance, and sustain the work of the MJC, Caldart was the recipient of the 2014 MULS Howard B. Eisenberg Service Award. Caldart's impact upon civil legal services in Milwaukee has been immense, and will continue to grow in her new position. ●



## Q3 2014 Numbers Show Turn Around

By: Mary Ferwerda

The MJC's early-July move back to the renovated space in G-9 allowed us to see more clients than in the MJC's temporary home in Room 511. In July, August, September, the MJC assisted 2,461 people in forms assistance and brief legal advice clinics, which represents a 6.8% increase from the 2013 third quarter and a 9.1% increase in the historical average for the same period.

Though the year-to-date comparison remains slightly low (4.4% below 2013 third quarter), the MJC remains 13.9% ahead of historical third quarter numbers.

Importantly, the new space has created an environment where clients feel welcomed and comfortable. We regularly hear positive feedback about the client's ability to be heard, to learn information about his or her case, and to be treated with respect. These intangible components are hard to measure, but we look forward to exploring ways to gather this important, annotative data in the new year while continuing to report on the number of clients served at the MJC. ●

## Mary Ferwerda Selected New MJC Executive Director



Mary Ferwerda

By: Justin A. Metzger

"It's been an exhilarating two years," said newly-minted Executive Director Mary Ferwerda. "I am humbled by the opportunities that I've had to professionally thrive here, and am excited about all the good things to come."

Mary took over the Executive Director role officially at the beginning of 2015, and performed the role on an interim basis since it opened up at the end of October. She started as the part-time attorney supervisor, moved up to Legal Director, and her new role has her approaching the beginning of her third year with the Milwaukee Justice Center.

"My goal was to work with an organization that was focused on improving access to the legal system for those struggling to overcome the many barriers inherent in it," Mary said.

"I could not imagine a more fitting place for me than here with the MJC. It is the realization of a life-long goal."

Mary started her professional life as a youth care worker at Boys' Town in Omaha before moving into education administration at Creighton University, and then at Marquette. While a law student at MU, Mary volunteered with the MVLC, and that's where she got her first exposure to the MJC. Fast forward a few years, and a lot has changed.

"We are on the edge of opportunity, as we make our home in this new and expansive space in the Courthouse," Mary said. "We have a great foundation on which to build and grow our services. Our team is all relatively new, as well, and this confluence of energy and ideas is so positive and inspiring. It's a fantastic time to be a part of this organization." ●



Katie Mayer

## MULS Adds New Assistant Pro Bono/ Public Service Director

By: Justin A. Metzger

In a quarter of the year where we saw plenty of new faces in new roles, it hasn't been just at the MJC. Katie Mayer is Marquette University Law School's new Assistant Director of Pro Bono and Public Service.

MULS was where Katie's interest in public interest work developed. She volunteered with the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinics and with M-LINC (MU's non-profit clinic).

"I often found that my shifts at the MVLC were the most rewarding parts of my practice," Katie said. "So when the position opened at MULS running the MVLC, I jumped at the chance." ●

# Volunteer Spotlight: Kyla Motz

By: Justin A. Metzger

Despite being a recent Marquette Law graduate, Kyla Motz is an MJC veteran. Originally a Political Science major and scholarship track athlete at Illinois Wesleyan University, she decided to take up the law after serving on jury duty, and deciding she would enjoy a career in the law. She started at the MJC in June 2012, her 1L summer.

Kyla recently accepted a position with a bankruptcy firm in Eau Claire.

**What brought you to the Milwaukee Justice Center?**

At first, it was because it was conveniently located, to be honest. But once I got here, it was one of the places I enjoyed most since you got actual human contact instead of just watching an attorney do things.

**What has kept you coming back for so long?**

First of all, I really love the people here. The staff here, they're all great. And it's a really great service.

At its best, it helps people help themselves, and we empower them to get through the court successfully. It feels good when you help someone and you've left them better than you found them.

**What's been your most rewarding experience at the MJC?**

We had a woman come in who was a victim of domestic violence. She was in a really bad situation. She made next to nothing, but not nothing enough to qualify for other services.

I helped her with both parts of her divorce, and I felt like it was a really positive thing in her life. Usually, divorce isn't a positive thing, but for her, it was. It felt like exactly what we are supposed to do here.

**What's been the biggest challenge you've faced here?**

I think the biggest challenges are the people you just can't help.

The people you tell, "you can fill this form out, but it just won't do anything for you."

And then the people who either need better or want better, and we just cannot accommodate what they need.

**What else should we know about you?**

I have bowled a 300 game three times in my life. Not kidding. That's real. I also had a time where I bowled sixteen strikes in a row. That wasn't one of those 300 games, though, since it started in the middle of one game and carried over into the next.

Basically, you should go bowling with me! ●

The best experience comes when a [person says] I've been trying to do this for a long time, and you're the first person to help me do it. ●



Kyla Motz  
Attorney at Law

# Tip of the Scale: Advising on De Novo Reviews

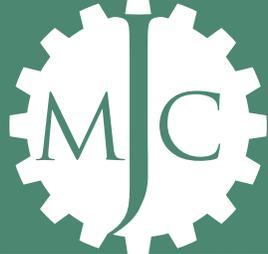
By: Mary Ferwerda

A common request at the MJC is to assist an individual with the de novo packet. Often, parties are informed of the right to request a de novo review during a motion hearing with a Court Commissioner, but rarely do parties understand the rules, requirements, or process of filing.

At the MJC, an individual requesting assistance with a de novo packet is referred to the Family Law brief legal advice clinic even though the de novo packet is a relatively easy form to complete.

The Milwaukee County Family Division Judges have requested that parties receive legal advice to ask questions about the current order and hear the potential consequences of a new hearing prior to filing the motion.

Though it may seem simple to experienced attorney volunteers, providing advice about and instruction on the de novo packet is a valuable service that the brief legal advice provides to parties and to the court. ●



Angela Cunningham

## Angela Cunningham is Next MJC Legal Director

By: Justin A. Metzger

Angela Cunningham has spent several years in the social services field prior to becoming a lawyer, and continues her dedication to the public good as the new Legal Director of the Milwaukee Justice Center.

Prior to attending law school, Angela worked with NJM Management Services in Kenosha providing help to the Kenosha County Department of Human Services, and then with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America's

(ELCA) Outreach Center in Kenosha.

It was during her tenure with the ELCA Outreach Center where she realized she could provide even greater benefit to those in need as an attorney. So she enrolled at the Northwestern University School of Law.

"I noticed many of my clients at the Outreach Center faced legal issues that compounded their already difficult lives," Angela said. "People were getting evicted from their homes, wages were being garnished, and some lost

their children in family court actions. I decided to go to law school because I wanted to be able to help people like my clients."

Since her graduation from Northwestern in 2012, Angela worked as a volunteer, then paralegal, then attorney with Legal Action of Wisconsin in Kenosha.

"I knew the amount of people I was able to serve in my position (at Legal Action) was miniscule compared to the number who needed help," Angela said. "I often saw people at

the courthouse asking the clerk questions about what to do in order to address various legal issues. It was that experience that led me to want to find a way to help people like that, and that's exactly what the MJC does."

Angela says it's her goal to see the MJC assist everyone who comes to the front desk. She's still actively involved in the Kenosha community, serving on various boards. ●

### Family Law Forms Assistance:

Monday - Wednesday  
8:30am - 12:00pm  
1:00pm - 4:00pm

Thursday - Friday  
8:30am - 12:00pm

### MVLC at the MJC Brief Legal Advice Clinic Hours:

Thursday - Friday  
2:00pm - 4:00pm

### Family Law Brief Legal Advice Clinic Hours:

Monday - Wednesday  
1:30pm - 3:30pm

### MJC Executive Director:

Mary Ferwerda, M.S., J.D.

### Legal Director

Angela Cunningham, J.D.

### Attorney Supervisor

Omar Mallick, J.D.

### Clerical Specialist:

Samantha Yee



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Thank you to all of our  
volunteers and supporters!