



# DISABILITY LAW COLORADO™

Protecting the rights of Coloradans of all ages since 1976

December 2, 2015

Dear Disability Law Colorado Friends:

As the holidays approach, all of us at Disability Law Colorado have much to be thankful for – 2015 has been a year of significant achievements, changes and celebrations. Some of those changes, like the retirement of my dear friend and colleague Randy Chapman, after 38 years at Disability Law Colorado, are cause for both celebration and sadness, but we end 2015 on a happy note as we look back on a rewarding year.

**In FEBRUARY**, The Legal Center for People with Disabilities and Older People became **Disability Law Colorado**. The new name was chosen to emphasize our commitment to changing the **law** on **disability** that impacts so many people in **Colorado**. Along with the new name, we launched a new website, **www.disabilitylawco.org**, in both English and Spanish.

**In APRIL**, we hosted the **Luis D. Rovira Award** to recognize and celebrate two of our wonderful volunteers, **Fern Black** and **Randy Parcel**. This very special award, named for former Colorado Supreme Court Justice Luis Rovira who was a founder of Disability Law Colorado, honors attorneys who have made significant gifts of their time or financial resources to our organization.

**In MAY**, we enjoyed our 4<sup>th</sup> outing as charity partners in the **Colfax Marathon**, and later that same month we partnered with the **Denver Bar Association Young Lawyers Division** to host the **10th Annual Attorneys' Night Out**. We are so thankful for the many sponsors, volunteers and participants who help us raise funds and have fun at the same time!

**In JUNE**, the **Disability Law Colorado Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI)** Program received the **National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) Outstanding Advocacy Award** for our work on juvenile justice issues and other priority case work.

**In SEPTEMBER**, we celebrated **Randy Chapman's** many achievements at a reception at the Denver Art Museum. Disability Law Colorado has established the **Randy Chapman Lifetime Achievement Award** in his honor.

**In OCTOBER**, the staff from the Denver office drove through the first winter storm of the season to join their Western Slope colleagues in welcoming the local community to an open house celebrating **20 years of Disability Law Colorado in Grand Junction**.

This has been a year in which we saw the tide turning for some of our long-term legal initiatives that are creating real change in the lives of the vulnerable people we serve –



Randy Chapman



Fern Black



Randy Parcel



Attorneys' Night Out – May 2015

- ✚ Our **Special Education Program** is gradually changing the culture in schools so that children with developmental disabilities can learn alongside their peers in an inclusive and supportive environment free from the fear of inappropriate restraint and seclusion.
- ✚ Our fight for decency and humanity in the **federal and state prison systems** has improved the way inmates with serious mental illness are treated. There is a long way to go, but inmates with serious mental illness will no longer be held in solitary confinement and prisoners now have better access to treatment.
- ✚ Our **Nursing Home Initiative** is giving hope to residents that a better life is possible. Progress is slow, but we continue to press the state to fulfill the promise of the U.S. Supreme Court's 1999 "Olmstead" decision, that services for people with disabilities must be provided in the most integrated setting possible.



*Randy Chapman and Mary Anne Harvey*

In addition to our major systems change initiatives, in 2015 we provided direct service to more than **one thousand people**. That's one thousand people for whom life will be just a little bit better because of our intervention.

The vulnerable people whose rights we protect and promote often receive little public sympathy. Very few people care about criminals, many people do still think that people with severe mental or physical disabilities "would be better off" in a home, and we even encounter resistance to the idea of educating young children.

I know that you do care about the people who are hidden away from public view, and whose daily lives are often very, very difficult. That's why I'm asking you to make a contribution today so that Disability Law Colorado can continue the fight to protect their rights.

We send grateful thanks for all you do to support the rights of people with disabilities and elders, and we send best wishes for very happy holidays.



**THANK YOU** from the staff of Disability Law Colorado!

**Colorado Gives Day is December 8th.** Please consider making your donation at [www.coloradogives.org](http://www.coloradogives.org). The Incentive Fund increases the value of every donation – making your gift even more valuable!

You can set up your gift ahead of time – **you could make it today** - and it will still be recorded on

Sincerely,

*Mary Anne*  
Mary Anne Harvey  
Executive Director

**P.S. Your gift on Colorado Gives Day goes further! Give where you live on Colorado Gives Day.**