



ANNUAL REPORT (CY22)

Increasing numbers of families have been juggling multiple challenges related to liberty, educational access, and basic needs: maintaining safe and affordable housing, addressing family conflict, accessing public benefits, and reorganizing their lives to stay safe and well. Across all of our practice areas at the Moran Center – legal, social work, and restorative justice services – when comparing Calendar Year 2021 to Calendar Year 2022, we saw the demand for our services exponentially increase. With few additional resources, the Moran Center managed to handle a **33% increase in both clients and cases**. We then project a **20% increase** in both cases and clients in CY23.

The following report highlights the Moran Center's impactful services to meet the critical needs of disinvested youth and families during Calendar Year 2022:

Youth and Emerging Adult Criminal Defense Practice: Advocates for children and emerging adults caught in the criminal legal system – ensuring due process of law. In CY22, the Moran Center counseled **17 children** and **74 emerging adults, totaling 91 young people altogether**, zealously advocating for legal outcomes that avoided them from being defined by their worst mistakes.

In 2012, the Moran Center managed 60-80 juvenile delinquency matters at any given time including cannabis possession, batteries, and retail theft cases. Today, those low-level offenses have been diverted away from the criminal legal system and only more serious cases are being litigated in the juvenile delinquency system. Yes, admittedly, this local trend reflects national, state, and regional trends but Evanston's rate of juvenile prosecution has fallen faster than other surrounding communities and that's directly attributable to the Moran Center's advocacy in developing local off-ramps from the system. In CY22, the Moran Center defended 17 children compared to 188 in CY13. We have made real progress!

Social Work Services: Provides case management, crisis intervention, and trauma-informed therapy to foster clients' emotional health and resilience. During CY22, Moran Center Social Workers provided wraparound services to 120 individuals, and **82%** of clients served successfully grew in self-efficacy (i.e., self-awareness, confidence, self-advocacy, and conflict resolution skills). Anticipating greater demand for comprehensive therapeutic and case management services, we forecast to serve **140** individuals, including **250** family members, in CY23. As reflected in the Moran Center's three-year strategic plan, we aim to meet this challenge by hiring a fourth, full-time Mental Health Professional in January 2023.

“Erik” is a 20-year-old who began social work services when he was arrested and entered into the criminal legal system at the age of 16. Erik had an unhealthy relationship with his parents. He also had suffered severe trauma at the hands of the police within his community. Erik began meeting with his social worker weekly. He identified wanting to work on developing positive coping skills and addressing the trauma he had experienced at home and within the community. While in services, Erik finished high school, earned his diploma, and completed probation successfully. He was able to obtain full time employment, move out of his parent’s house, and rent his own apartment. Four years later, Erik continues to participate in case management and therapeutic services with his Moran Center Social Worker.

Criminal Record Relief: Remediates eligible criminal records, removing barriers to employment, housing, and education. In CY22, we served **621** individuals – representing a **30%** increase over CY21. With financial support from the Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois, we contracted with a part-time paralegal to assist with the backlog of requests for criminal record relief. During CY23, we aim to serve more than **745** individuals in clearing their criminal records. We will achieve this objective by increasing the Moran Center’s paralegal hours and leveraging technology made available through our partnership with the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation, as well as ensuring community members are aware of “special” relief for those with certain cannabis convictions.

Kyle, a youth charged and tried as an adult, spent 12 years in prison. The Moran Center prepared petitions to seal Kyle’s convictions - armed robbery and aggravated discharge of a firearm. Based on having obtained a GED and Associate’s Degree while in prison, Kyle was able to immediately petition to seal his criminal record following his release from custody. Unsurprisingly, the State objected to Kyle’s petition given the nature of the offenses. The Moran Center prepared Kyle at length for his court hearing which resulted in Kyle’s petition to seal being granted. Kyle was then promoted at work - a promotion that he was previously barred from!

Education Advocacy Program (EAP): Represents students with special needs to obtain the services they need to make progress in school, advocates for students facing school exclusion, and equips students and caregivers with the knowledge and tools to advocate for their child’s educational rights. The EAP had **69** active educational matters in CY22, representing an **82%** increase. Impressively, **100%** of students engaged with the EAP achieved their legal objectives of increasing or improving educational services, making progress toward IEP goals, improving school attendance, and/or reducing school disciplinary actions. In CY22, we expanded outreach to Spanish-speaking students and their families, resulting in a **3.5%** increase within our client population, as well as piloted an expansion into the Rogers Park neighborhood to further disrupt the local school-to-prison pipeline, assisting more than 20 students in the first year of the pilot. In CY23, the EAP will prioritize public policy advocacy efforts to address the disproportionate impact of school discipline on BIPOC youth, children with disabilities, and low-income students within our local educational systems.

Lauren, a sixteen-year-old client, lost two family members to COVID-19 and then her cousin was shot and killed. In the aftermath of these traumas, Lauren refused to attend school and threatened to drop out. The Moran Center requested for Lauren to be evaluated for special education services. Lauren was ultimately found eligible. We then advocated for the school to provide Lauren with access to an online learning platform in order to accommodate her debilitating anxiety. The school conceded. Lauren recently finished all of her high school classes online and obtained her diploma!

School-Based Civil Legal Clinic (SBCLC): Stabilizes low-income families challenged by civil legal issues such as evictions, public benefit denials, guardianship/conservatorship needs, and orders of protection so that children can stay in our community and stay on track in school. The SBCLC handled a **15%** increase in clients this past year, helping **180** families. And thanks to support from the Bradley Yusim Memorial Foundation and the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation, the SBCLC welcomed a second staff attorney in March 2022, who primarily focuses on the ongoing housing crisis in Evanston/Skokie. [Also, of note, the SBCLC hosted five, in-person clinics to seal community members' evictions, two of which were in partnership with the Moran Center's Criminal Record Relief Practice. From these events, we sealed 10 evictions!](#) We anticipate the need for civil legal assistance to rise further in light of the unstable economy and the end of the eviction moratoria. Our goal next year is to serve **250** families by increasing community outreach efforts, optimizing our use of volunteers, and collaborating with other Moran Center practice areas and external partners (e.g., Evanston Public Library).

An Evanston mother with two children, ages 6 and 17, was injured by the father of her 6-year-old daughter. Pro se, the mother obtained an emergency order of protection (EOP). Angered by the EOP, the father, retained an attorney to dismiss the EOP and file for visitation. At the time of the filing, the father was barely involved in his daughter's life. School personnel advised the mother to contact the Moran Center. The SBCLC extended the Order of Protection and secured a pro bono Guardian Ad Litem to investigate a child-centered parenting plan, all to ensure the safety and stability for the family and success for the young daughter.

Roger Pascal Restorative Justice Initiative: Advocates for restorative practices and principles throughout the community, as well as provides training in restorative practices to school personnel, other social service agencies, and community members. The Moran Center continues to support the City of Evanston's Juvenile Administrative Hearings, an off-ramp for children with low-level offenses to avoid arrest and court involvement. During CY22, the Moran Center's Roger Pascal Restorative Justice Initiative impressively consulted on more than **90** matters including internal client cases and Juvenile Administrative Hearing cases, reached more than **1000** community members through healing circles, trainings, and advocacy events, and held more than **40** support circles for front-line staff of local nonprofits, impacting more than **300** individuals. In July, Executive Director Patrick Keenan-Devlin spoke at the National Association of Community and Restorative Justice's International Conference on Illinois' new privilege law, leading to three other jurisdictions following suit – Georgia, Maine, and Oregon. Lastly, the Cook County Justice Advisory Council recently awarded the Moran Center a three-year grant, totaling \$616,000, to develop local alternative systems of accountability in Evanston. With this funding, the we will hire residents impacted by the criminal legal system (i.e., Community Peace Builders) to serve as restorative justice facilitators and build upon our efforts in facilitating reparative conversations and offering community-based trainings. We will leverage another grant from Microsoft and the Urban Institute to measure the impact of our ongoing work.

Joseph was thriving until 7th grade. His grades dove from A's to D's and F's. His perfect attendance record tumbled. He refused to go to school. Joseph was being bullied and harmed both by his peers and by adults in school. After numerous pre-circle conferences held separately with both Joseph and his mother and the school administrators, the family and school leaders circled up. When asked why we're here, Joseph stated: "I fell out of love with school. I'm not going. It's not safe for me." Once the harms were laid bare and accountability taken, together, the circle created a concrete plan for Joseph's return. We created 'Team Joseph' - points of connection - that included administrators and staff. Joseph agreed to participate in several mentorship programs. The circle closed with Joseph sharing a prediction he had for himself: he's going to have a great year at school.

2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

After adopting the Moran Center's latest three-year strategic plan in July 2021, we have achieved the following objectives:

Operational

- ✓ **Building a Winning Workplace:** Build a workplace that optimally values, supports, and develops all staff – personally, professionally, and financially.
 - ✓ Conducted a salary comparison study to set compensation benchmarks, raising staff salaries across the board this year by an average of 10% in FY23, over and above the average 9% salary increase in FY22, totaling \$366,307.91. Additionally, we increased the employer match from 50% to 60% for monthly health insurance premium payments and invested 25% more in professional development as part of the FY23 Annual Budget.
 - ✓ Purchased laptops for all team members to allow staff to more easily work remotely.
 - ✓ Implemented a staff survey to measure workplace satisfaction, receive input about alignment with the organization's values, and invite suggestions for new solutions to promote a healthier workplace environment.
- ✓ **Committing to Racial Equity:** Make a commitment to equity within every aspect of our work. We are anti-racist – personally and organizationally.
 - ✓ Researched and hired an expert to conduct intercultural development inventory assessments of the Board and Staff, as well as to perform an assessment of all internal policies/practices, including within direct service settings, through a racial equity lens.
 - ✓ Studied other organizations – locally and nationally – that have successfully included clients, former clients, and clients' family members in organizational decision-making.
 - ✓ Increased BIPOC representation from 25% to 33% on the Moran Center's Board of Directors and from 25% to 50% among staff members with 40% of leadership and program staff now identifying as BIPOC.
- ✓ **Fundraising for Mission Impact:** Tell our story, grow our base of supporters, and meaningfully engage donors to ensure sustainability, growth, and impact.
 - ✓ Developed moves management plans and objectives for top-tier donors.
 - ✓ Established the James B. Moran Giving Circle for donors who make annual gifts of \$1,500 or more, totaling more than \$180,000 in annual, reliable donations.
 - ✓ Secured funding from 8 new foundations since July 2021.
 - ✓ Grew Gala sponsorships by 40%.

Programmatic

- ✓ **Advocating for Systemic Change and Expanding Restorative Justice Work:** Develop an intentional, local, regional, and statewide policy agenda – directly informed by our clients – that radically benefits and materially improves the lives of historically marginalized youth and families. Build on the Roger Pascal Restorative Justice Initiative to enhance our internal practices as well as seed, support, and deliver restorative practices more broadly across the community.

- ✓ Surveyed how other community-based organizations across the nation engage in public policy advocacy, as part of which we concluded that we need to prioritize the immediate needs of our clients, align with regional, statewide, and national advocacy coalitions, intentionally prioritize our role in advocacy campaigns, and center clients' and community members' voices in our systems change work.
- ✓ Conducted internal and external stakeholder interviews with pro bono consulting support from [Rakove & Strassberger](#) to gauge the Moran Center's positioning and capacity to engage in public policy advocacy, ultimately crystallizing our goal - to achieve locally, and then to preach regionally, statewide, and nationally, the vision of a "Building a Restorative Community" - collapsing two strategic priorities together.
- ✓ Studied the national legal aid landscape to demonstrate the exceptionality of the Moran Center's integrated legal and social work model and offered one national training focused on teaching about the Moran Center's innovative practice model.
- ✓ Increased the Restorative Justice Manager position from part-time to full-time and added further capacity by establishing an additional full-time position.
- ✓ Facilitated transformational, restorative practices within Evanston/Skokie School District 65 referred to as "*game-changing*" by Administrators.
- ✓ Continued supporting the City of Evanston's Juvenile Administrative Hearings, advising on the development of individualized repair of harm agreements for referred youth.
- ✓ Convened a Working Group in partnership with Northwestern University's Prison Education Program and Center on Negotiation, Mediation, and Restorative Justice to explore alternative systems of accountability (i.e., alternatives to arrest and the criminal legal system).
- ✓ Advocated for the passage of Senate Bill 64, providing an evidentiary privilege for participants in a restorative justice practice (i.e., what is said and done during a restorative justice practice cannot be later used against participants in court). Governor Pritzker signed the bill into law on July 15, 2021. Since enactment, we've been "on the road" educating local restorative justice practitioners about the implications of the new law as well as speaking with national policymakers about how to advance this policy in other jurisdictions, including Georgia, Maine, and Oregon.
- ✓ Evaluating & Learning: Become a learning organization. Use evaluation to improve programming and practices on an ongoing basis – and tell our story of change.
 - ✓ Created a part-time staff position within the organization solely dedicated to providing broad oversight of reporting capabilities related to the agency's programmatic work.
 - ✓ Determined priority metrics needed for internal programmatic learning and external communication.
 - ✓ Enhanced data collection processes and tools, including launching client text surveys to gauge programmatic impact and establish a feedback loop with clients regarding organizational and policy issues.
 - ✓ Engaged full staff quarterly in reviewing programmatic data with the goal of informing and improving program/service delivery.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM CALENDAR YEAR 2022

The Collective: In the fall of 2018, Evanston's youth and family agencies formed a "Collective," supported by Evanston Cradle to Career, to work towards designing an accessible, culturally attuned, and responsive safety net for young people and their families. The Collective members include [The City of Evanston's Youth & Young Adult Division](#), [Connections for the Homeless](#), [Curt's Café](#), [Erie Family Health Centers](#), [Infant Welfare Society of Evanston](#), [PEER Services](#), [Youth Job Center](#), and [Youth & Opportunity United](#). Since 2018, the Collective has:

- ✓ Prioritized referrals from the City of Evanston's Juvenile Administrative Hearings (i.e., prioritizing youth in crisis);
- ✓ Surveyed 190 youth, young adults, and caregivers and 33 frontline staff to inform how we collectively improve services, increase care coordination, and achieve systems change;
- ✓ Convened Collective frontline staff members in October 2019 and October 2021 to learn about Evanston Cradle to Career's collective impact model and deepen individual/organizational relationships. Inspired by those gatherings, the Collective offers monthly trainings for Collective staff members on various topics sponsored/hosted by each organizational member of the Collective;
- ✓ Invested grant funding in Collective agencies on the frontlines of the pandemic – Connections for the Homeless, Erie Family Health Center, and PEER Services;
- ✓ Coordinated healing circles for frontline staff throughout the pandemic; and
- ✓ Established a Crisis Response Team to respond to community violence, impacting youth and families within 24 hours.

This past year, the Collective refined our vision¹, developed/piloted a cross-agency referral system, and co-hosted the second annual safe summer initiative – My City, Your City, Our City (“MCYCOC”) – with the goal of providing connection and safe spaces for youth, young adults, and their families, including BLOCK (Building Love for Our City & Kids) Parties and the opening of community centers for youth during weeknights. [Check out the local coverage of the MCYCOC 2022 Initiative.](#)

THANK YOU

We are proud of the work we've done, are doing, and will do to strengthen our community and facilitate transformative experiences for youth and families who have been most impacted by longstanding inequities and injustices. We are extremely grateful for your partnership. Together, we will continue the unrelenting work toward ensuring justice in the courtroom, access to the classroom, and restoration in the community for all youth and their families. Thank you!

¹ “The Collective envisions a relationship-based, youth-centered network of strong social service nonprofits in Evanston collaborating for holistic service provision & systems change, working to help youth and families thrive...”