



EAST BAY
CHILDREN'S
LAW OFFICES®

2023 Impact Report

Children
should be
**seen and
heard.**™



From the Executive Director

1,709
total clients
served in 2022

Children should be seen and heard is not just a motto to us—it's at the very core of our advocacy. As is true for any lawyer, listening to your client's goals is critical. But when you represent kids, it takes so much more: it's listening to their words and their actions, the context of their family, their community and culture, their long-term goals, and their short-term needs. We go to kids' homes, schools, and communities instead of meeting at our office or the courthouse so that they know their experience is at the center of our work. Yes, it's time consuming. And it's the only way we can be sure that the kids we represent feel empowered and that the judge making the decisions that will deeply impact their lives truly knows what is important to them.

As a society, we get closer to justice every time a client sees that the justice system can work for them and with them. Where better to start than with children who have found themselves in court through no fault of their own—children experiencing the child welfare or probate guardianship system. Children need to know their voices will be heard in the decisions that shape their lives and that the justice system values them, values their families, and prioritizes their futures.

We do this by listening to individual clients in the context of their own cases and also by stepping back to hear client experiences collectively.

Last year, we anonymously surveyed 100+ current clients to better understand where we might be falling short. In 2020, we established our Empowering Youth Voices team to bring together former clients willing to share their experiences. It's not easy to receive feedback that there is room for improvement, yet of course there is. We are grateful for the opportunity to stay authentic to our mission and evolve according to what our clients are telling us. **It is our duty and our privilege to listen to the experts—the children we serve.**

This impact report is a reflection on our past year, the numbers that illustrate how we work, and a testament to the children we have seen and heard.

Thank you for listening,



Kristin Mateer

480
new cases
opened
in 2022

Empowering Youth Voices

I went into foster care when I was 13, and I was represented by Joy Ricardo, a public defender that would go on to create EBCLO in 2009. At the time, I found the courtroom threatening and overwhelming, but Joy tempered that for me by taking me into the hallway to talk. “Here’s what we’re doing today,” she’d explain to me, “this is the goal.”

Two years after I left foster care, I attended UC Irvine on a full-ride scholarship for theater. There, I shared time with classmates in the Guardian Scholars for Foster Youth program who wanted to leave their foster care experiences in the past, and my theater colleagues who couldn’t believe the outrageous stories of my four foster families and encouraged me to turn these stories into a show. For my senior thesis, I went for it, performing my show *From Foster Care to Fabulous* and leaning into sharing my story as I saw it—the hard parts, yes, but the wins, too.

Today, I am a playwright, and I think of empathy as a superpower and an essential tool for connection. When I was younger, I never thought of myself as a writer, but my show was picked up by producers and then received by audiences in theaters all over the country and at EBCLO’s 5th year anniversary gala in 2015. This never would’ve happened if I hadn’t been brave enough to tell my story, something that I started learning how to do as a kid in foster care.

I hope you’ll remember my story as you think about how transformative it is for a youth in care to be seen and heard and how much empathy can change their future. I know firsthand that we need to be able to provide them with a safe and supportive environment where they can learn and grow and an opportunity to be understood.

I am so proud to be a part of EBCLO’s Youth Voices team. We are a group of individuals with lived experience in foster care working together to learn about what youth in care need and (most importantly) how we can help. Together, we can work to make our community happier and healthier.

Sincerely,



Patrick Burns
*Playwright, Actor, Director,
and Youth Voices Member*

59
youth
successfully
completed
extended foster
care in 2022

105
transition-aged
clients surveyed

Our Outcomes

Today we represent over 1,000 children and youth. Some of those kids became our clients yesterday. One has been our client for more than 13 of her 20 years. But we don't want to represent kids for years and years. Our work is to guide them to the outcomes they want and need as closely as we can. We want them to return safely to their parents' home. And we are so proud that again in 2022, the most frequent reason we closed a client's case is because they are home.

Sometimes the cards are so heavily stacked against a family that the government timelines for reunifying them with their kids quickly are impossible to achieve. In that scenario, ideally, children's relatives have stepped in to become a child's legal guardian or people who began as complete strangers become a child's forever family through adoption. We celebrate the permanency achieved for every child that allows them to leave "the system."

250
cases closed
because children
were safely home
with their parents

94
children
adopted

88 cases
closed because
children were
placed in legal
guardianships



Our Programs

④ Dependency Advocacy Program

EBCLO is the primary provider of court-appointed legal representation for Alameda County's youth experiencing foster care. When a family is brought into juvenile court with allegations of abuse, neglect or abandonment, EBCLO is appointed. We help children navigate the juvenile court system and relentlessly advocate on their behalf. Our goal is to support children in safely returning to their homes.



④ Probate Guardianship Counsel for Children Program

When someone who is not a parent seeks custody of a child, an extensive process through the Probate Court ensues. EBCLO is appointed by the court in the most complicated probate guardianship cases for our expertise in providing vigorous and holistic representation to children and connecting children and their caregivers to community resources.

④ Community-based Advocacy for Resources and Education (CARE)

Children and youth who become involved in the court system often have a wide variety of needs, including outside of court. CARE encapsulates EBCLO's specialty legal services as well as its advocacy beyond the courtroom including education advocacy, early childhood advocacy, cross-over youth advocacy and mental health advocacy.

Education Advocacy Program

317

clients served

37

Individualized Education
Program meetings attended

21

other school meetings
attended to ensure that kids
receive free and appropriate
public education

Strong Beginnings Program

47

0-5 year olds
screened for
developmental
issues

76

Help Me Grow
assessments of
0-5 year olds
reviewed

Crossover Youth Advocacy

34

visits to clients
in custody

7

delinquency or
criminal cases against
clients dropped or
dismissed thanks
to EBCLO advocacy

In the Courtroom

By Ginger Lewis Dole
Managing Attorney

“I’m over this \$%&# and I want the Judge to know it.” Carter (not her real name) told me this after she had spent weeks living at a temporary shelter for youth. Carter was exhausted, angry, and scared, traumatized by the indefinite wait for a stable placement and not knowing where she would be next. I explained to Carter that she could tell the Judge what was happening to her by testifying in court. Carter questioned what testifying would accomplish, and we talked through her rights and the legal options the Judge had. But maybe more importantly, we talked about why Carter mattered, why she was a human being worthy of a safe place to live, and we processed her incredible grief stemming from the long-term abuse she had experienced. Carter ultimately decided she wanted to speak at the court hearing.

The morning of court I brought Carter some breakfast, and we sat in our trauma-informed interview room at the courthouse with a sound machine playing ocean waves before her case was called. Carter was anxiously bouncing her legs, and slowly withdrawing into the chair. I asked Carter if she still wanted to tell the Judge what was happening to her. Her eyes filled with tears, and she nodded yes whispering, “But I don’t know that I can.” I reminded Carter that her words were a powerful tool to get what she needed, and that she could keep her eyes on me in the courtroom. Carter breathed deeply and simply said, “I want to try.”

Carter went on to bravely testify about the dehumanization she endured, the fear she had, and the powerless feeling that comes with being a child in foster care.

At EBCLO we believe that the right of children to present, be heard, and meaningfully participate in their own dependency proceedings is of paramount importance and vital to actually meeting their needs. We know that empowering a client to speak can contribute to a client’s own healing process and overall resilience while in foster care. Carter learned her voice mattered that day in court, and we are all better for it.

4,281
juvenile
dependency court
hearings

145
probate court
hearings

107
juvenile
delinquency
court hearings



In the Community

By Christie de Guzman
Assistant Director of Social Work

Representing children means having difficult conversations with our young clients. As a social worker, it's important to me that kids feel at ease which means meeting a child wherever they're most comfortable and doing the things they love doing. That's why we drive thousands of miles every year to meet our clients at their homes or in their communities. That's why we do puzzles on bedroom floors or let clients teach us how to play video games.

Sometimes to earn their trust we make frequent trips until they know we truly care about what they have to say even when they don't feel like talking. If our client wants to play with the sand tray or walk to the boba shop, we do that. When a teen has told us that adults aren't listening to her, it's our job to be the one who does. If we represent six sibling clients in one family? I bring a pizza for a picnic! Sitting together on the blanket and having the kids teach me how to Go Fish allowed everyone to feel comfortable and soon they were opening up about what they really wanted for themselves and their family.

Being in foster care can be a challenging and turbulent time for kids — that's why we do everything we can to show up and be responsive to them. And it's not just our social work team that visits kids at home—it's the lawyers too! No courthouse interview or appointment at our office could replace what we gain by meeting kids where they are.

2,200
visits with clients
in their home or
communities over
last year

67,527
miles driven for
those visits



Our Staff



Stephanie Aguayo

Carol Barnett

Regan Bradley-Brown

CJ Connolly

Larita Cortez

Christe de Guzman

Nikki Garcia

Chris Han

Lovena Henry

Tenisha Lewis

Ginger Lewis-Dole

Ashley Lotti

Kristin Mateer

Sarah McElhinney

Jess Meeks

Angelina Nilssen

Tori Porell

Kim Rhody

Anthony
Rodriguez Yao

Roxanne Romell

Tatiana Smith

Amy Spierling

Emily Zia

We HEARD you!



EBCLO partnered with Listen4Good and we surveyed over 100 clients ages 14–21 to learn from you how we can be better advocates. And we listened!

Thanks to your feedback, we are working on:

- » Strengthening your connections with important people in your life and community supports
- » Identifying and sharing helpful resources about life after foster care
- » Increasing our communication with more regular and frequent check ins
- » Improving our response times

Board of Directors



Kristin Mateer
Executive Director



Jennifer Lee
Board President



Charmaine Wong
Board Secretary



Chip Conradi
Board Treasurer



Samuel Carter



James Isbester



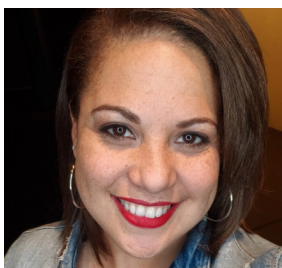
Reichi Lee



David Madson



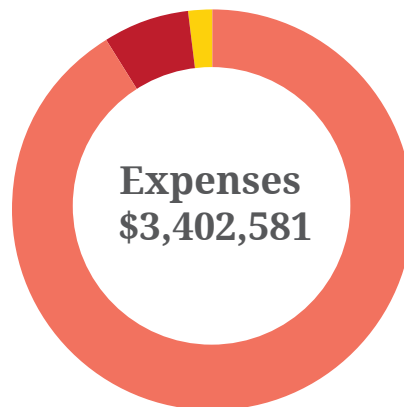
Greg Roberts



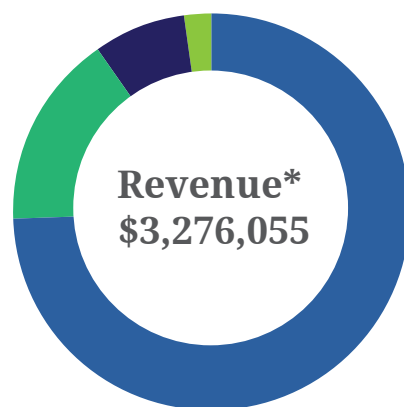
Katherine Steadwell

2022 Financials

January 1–December 31



- Program Services: \$3,103,233
- General and Administrative: \$238,359
- Development: \$60,989



- Program Service Fees: \$273,261
- Foundation Grants and Corporate and Individual Donations: \$556,632
- Government Contracts: \$2,651,586
- Other Income: \$69,743

* Revenue includes unrealized loss

Our Supporters

*Donations received October 1, 2022,
through September 30, 2023*

Advanced Cooling Technologies, Inc.	Paul Bruschera*	Katie & Nick DeVries		
Sue Alexander	Jim & Meredith Bushnell	Amy Doocha		
Amazon Smile	George & Nancy Buth	Bonnie Dowler		
America's Best Local Charities	Michele Button	Liz Dunn & Kathy Phillips		
Robert & Cheryl Arenson	Jeff Campbell & Lily Tavi	Danielle Eldridge		
George & Laurel Arroyo	Tony Canini & Isa Howard	Jennifer Eskenazi		
John & Jody Atkins	Phil Caruthers & Margaret LaFrance	Diana Estrin	Matthew & Brenna Hall	Linda Kazares & Peter Meeks
Nicole Baarts	Cecilia Castellanos	Facebook Fundraisers	Dawn Hallsten & Don Mateer	John & Kathy Kenny
David Baer & Jing Lin	Leanna & Jason Castello	Haley Fagan	Margaret Hand & John Hartog	Leland and Lois Kent
Bank of America Charitable Foundation	Dollaya Chaibongsai	Mary Ann Fake	Sandy & Pat Hayashi	Daniel Kim & Charmaine Wong
Gordon Baranco	Roger Chan	Firedoll Foundation	Paula Heckler	Kirkland & Ellis Foundation
Evelyn Ringel Barnett	Charities Aid Foundation America	Stuart Flashman & Jacqueline Richter	Jane Heckman	Andreas Koeberl
Alicia Barr	Joe Chen	John Ford & Abigail Williams	Richard and Evelyn Heckman	Korpita Family Foundation
Chris Barry	Yenju Chen & Glen Screechfield	Will & Alex Frazier	Tom Heckman & Kristin Mateer	Paul Kotapish & Shivaun McDonald
Beneficial State Bank Foundation	Ying Chen	James & Diane Freeman	Elena Hernandez	David Krashna
Benevity Community Impact Fund	Simona & Florin Chitu	Tim Gearhart & Mercedes Nateghian	Katherine Hockett	Raquel Lacayo-Valle
Kate Berado	Loi & John Clark	Delbert Gee	Enru Hong & Kiok Min Tan	Julia Lakes
Bernard E. & Alba Witkin Charitable Foundation	Diana Cline	Margo George & Catherine Karrass	Claire Huebler	Art & Jane Lande
Bigglesworth Family Foundation	Sue Cody	Alexander Germanacos	Yanie Hung	Stephanie & Rich Lapachet
Warren & Karen Bird	Susie Cohen	Bill & Jackie Gibbs	Deborah Hurst Senter & Steve Senter	Scott Larsen & Shelly Sheppard
Kellie Blumin	William Cole	Alba Gonzalez	Huu Huyen	Phil Layzer & Georgie Price
Wendy Bomberg	Katherine Congleton & Camron Hassanzadeh	Inbal Graham	In-N-Out Burger Foundation	Heather Leal
Kristen Boney & Doug McBride	Patrick & Nancy Connolly	Lana Granlund	Jamie Isbester	Reichi Lee & Daniel Newbold
Al & Tracy Brandi	Chip & Becky Conradi	Sue Granzella	Bruce & Karen Jackson	Melinda Leong Capozzi
Lily Brewer	Marty Craddock	Daniel Green	Alyssa Jenkins*	Ruth Levin
Alys Briggs	Terrie & Jay Cummins	Jodi & John Griffin	Beth Johnson & Michelle Murphy	Andrew & Nancy Lewis
Bob & Carol Brooks	Jaime Dadej	Jaclyn Gross	Dan Jung	Lincoln Financial Advisors
Joanne Brown & Paul Rockett	Judy Davison	Carrie Guthrie & Kathy Passmore	Kyoji & Addie Kanae	Willie Lott
	Sarah DeLong	Tom Hahn & Robin Phipps	Chuck Kapelke & Cindy Miner	Gus & Kathy Lotti
		Marty Hales & Jim McKerrow		



Denai Lovrien	Mark & Christi Osborne	Alex Schoenfeldt	Stacey Weiss	Timothy Denbo
Monica Lyons & Jeff Strobel*	Terry Parks	Daniel Senter	Vicky Wilkins	Gregg Dulik
William MacMorran	Parkside Advisors	Seventh & Fig, LLC	William G. Gilmore Foundation	Paula Heckler
David Madson	Geof Pawlicki	Seyfarth Shaw Charitable Foundation	Christopher Wilms	Jane Heckman
Lynne Maggioncalda*	Sharon Perkins	Share the Spirit	Joseph Winograd	Nikayla Johnson
Maria Mann-Gagne	Kaiser Permanente	Rob & Viv Shaw	John & Carrie Wolfsohn	Junia Kim
Seth & Jyothi Marbin	Judith & Carl Peterson	Madeline Sheron	YEI Engineers, Inc.	Cheryl Knutti
Marian, Inc.	Larry & Denise Picetti	Jan Sherwood	Younger Family Fund	Mariel Kusano
Kevin & Meredith Mateer	Donna Pinkney	Bob Shuken	Siavash Zand	Laurel Leichter
John & Janine McDougal*	Spencer & Margot Platt	Neil & Kathy Siegel	Melissa Zappala	Gus & Kathy Lotti
Anne McElhinney	Vicki & Paul Porell	Sky Ranch Foundation	Kathy & Chuck Zehner	Zulien Morales
Daniel McElhinney	Cristina Quinonez	Timothy & Lucy Smallsreed	Zellerbach Family Foundation	Dao Nguyen
James McElhinney	Elena Quinonez	Roberta Stewart	Emily Zia*	Oakland Athletics
Catherine McGee*	CJ & Carol Ralph	Peggy Stone	Rory Zia	Oakland Literacy Coalition
Mark McGoldrick	Mike Rawson	Maria & Adam Struve	IN-KIND DONATIONS	One Legal
McNabb Foundation	Related Companies	Todd Sulzinger	Jenny Abrami	Christi Osborne
Jess Meeks	Julie & Chris Rhody	Tom Surh	Alameda Quilters Guild	Laura Paul
Erika Meinhardt & John Parks	Kristin Riccio	David & Robin Sweet	Courtney Alsbury	Victoria Porell
Lorene Miller*	Richard A. Zappala Family Foundation	The Barrios Trust	Bay East Realtors Association	Jane Schmitz
Raymond & Reiko Mitsuda	Ginni Ring	The Greg Smith Charitable Fund	Patrick Edward Burns	Sheri Schoenberg
Leigh-Ann Miyasato	Bowen & Sylvia Roberts	The Morris Stulsaft Foundation	Rose Comrie	Ticket to Dream
Marie Moore	Greg Roberts	Ticket to Dream Foundation	Jeffrey DeLong	Maureen Torretto
Jason & Lory Morrow*	Tammy Roberts	Leo Treggiari		Toys for Tots
Jennifer Mullin	Emily Rodgers	Tri-Universal, Inc.		Trucker Huss
Carol Murota & Neil Zelin	Maria Rodriguez & Victoria Bullock	Trucker Huss		Gerry Wallace
Ann Naffziger	Kate Rome	John True		Emily Walters
Tara Narayanan	Jennifer & Steve Roop	Mary Tunnell		Shireen Wetmore
Ryan Ng*	Patti Russo	Kathleen Umrein		
Virginia Nunez	Cathy Sakimura	United Parents OAC		
Tony & Sarah Olaes	Gregory Sam	Venable Foundation		
Shana Olson	Nancy & Frank Sansot*	Marlene Vogelsang		
Brendon O'Neill	Jay Sarfan	Deborah Wald		
Kathryn Orfirer	Jane & Jeremy Schmitz	Gerald Wallace		
Elizabeth Orozco	Sheri Schoenberg & Richard Soroko	Susan Walsh		
Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe		Emily Walters		
		Zev Weinberg		



* In Memory of Gus Lotti



Scan here to
make a donation



EAST BAY
CHILDREN'S
LAW OFFICES®

The mission of East Bay Children's Law Offices is to protect and defend the rights of children and youth through holistic, vigorous and compassionate legal advocacy. EBCLO strives to provide a voice for children in and out of the courtroom and to promote positive outcomes for our clients.

www.ebclo.org

