



## From the Executive Director's Desk

BY DEBORAH FOWLER

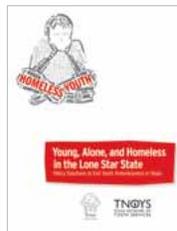
This has been a year of incredible stories, from the fight on the floor of the Texas legislature to Hurricane Harvey. Many of these stories broke our hearts. But as we head into a new year, it is the inspiring stories that we heard in 2017 that we are focusing on as we look toward a new year.

I'm thinking of Ariane's story. A Katrina survivor, Ariane had been living in Houston when Harvey hit. For the second time, she and her family lost everything. Before Harvey, Ariane found herself in a tough position. A relative had passed away and Ariane took in her children. Unable to afford the additional costs, Ariane borrowed money from an auto title lender. Within one month, she owed the full amount of the loan plus a 40% fee; the lender was ready to repossess her car. But with the help of Texas Appleseed, Ariane fought back and kept her car. She called herself a warrior, saying, "You have empowered me to do what I am doing."

I'm also thinking of Madison, whose mom kicked her out of the house when she was just 16 years old. After aging out of the foster care system just two years later, she found herself facing homelessness a second time. When we met her, she was actively working toward her dream of going to college to study vet medicine. Though Madison missed out on a lot that kids should be able to take for granted, I am inspired by her resilient spirit, and hard work toward a hopeful future. This year, Appleseed released a report on youth homelessness that identifies policy solutions aimed at preventing young people like Madison from ever encountering homelessness.

We are also inspired *every day* by our incredible pro bono partners, who make Texas Appleseed's work possible, and by luminaries like Harriet Miers who we recognized as this year's Good Apple for all she has done to make access to justice and opportunity a reality for Texans like Ariane and Madison. With justice as our compass, we are ready to stand with you to tackle the tough issues that hold Texans back so that we can ensure no person is left behind.

## Young, Alone, and Homeless in the Lone Star State



At nearly 200 pages, we are proud to release the most comprehensive study to date on the state of youth homelessness in Texas and the programs in place to address it. Our report partner is the Texas Network of Youth Services, and a number of central findings emerged as we worked on the report, including:

- There is a patchwork system of funding and programs creating an ineffective approach to helping these youth,
- There are conflicting definitions of "homelessness" that cause confusion and hamper access to services, and
- There is no clear central authority helping homeless young people in Texas.

Chapters on education, health, foster care, and more feature new data and findings, as well as policy recommendations. We also outline cross-system policy recommendations. We thank our generous pro bono partner, Vinson & Elkins LLP, whose team conducted key legal research with stakeholders for the report. The report, executive summary, and related materials are available on our Homeless Youth project page.

## CFPB Final Rule

The Consumer Bureau released the final payday and auto title lending rule, and its posting in the Federal Register has kick-started a 21-month implementation process. Texans have seen some of the most harmful impacts of these loans because of lax regulatory standards in our state. Our Nov. 20 blog post outlines the rule's protections, plus how you can take action to support it—and stop friends of predatory lending from pushing to overturn the rule before it goes into effect.



**Elizabeth Mack, Chair**  
Locke Lord LLP\*

**George Butts, Immediate Past Chair**  
George Butts Law\*

**Layne Kruse, Chair-Elect**  
Norton Rose Fulbright\*

**Hon. Marilyn Aboussie**

**Patrick H. Cantilo**  
Cantilo & Bennett, L.L.P.\*

**Kent Caperton**  
Kent Caperton, PC\*

**E. Leon Carter**  
Carter Scholer Arnett Hamada & Mockler, PLLC\*

**Ricardo G. Cedillo**  
Davis, Cedillo & Mendoza, Inc.\*

**Clinton Cross**

**Dennis P. Duffy**  
BakerHostetler\*

**Allene D. Evans**  
The University of Texas System\*

**N. Scott Fletcher**  
Jones Day\*

**R. James George, Jr.**  
George Brothers Kincaid & Horton LLP\*

**Sean Gorman**  
Bracewell\*

**Marcy Hogan Greer**  
Alexander Dubose Jefferson & Townsend LLP\*

**Gregory Huffman**  
Thompson & Knight LLP\*

**Tommy Jacks**  
Fish & Richardson P.C.\*

**Susan Karamanian**  
George Washington University Law School\*

**Charles Kelley**  
Mayer Brown LLP\*

**Peter M. Kelly**  
Kelly, Durham & Pittard, L.L.P.\*

**Thomas Leatherbury**  
Vinson & Elkins LLP\*

**Michael Lowenberg**  
Gardere Wynne Sewell LLP\*

**Keri McKenzie**  
Mintz Group\*

**Gina DeBottis Metts**  
Retired Executive Director, Special Prosecution Unit\*

**Hon. Thomas R. Phillips**  
Baker Botts LLP\*

**Michael Rodriguez**  
Atlas, Hall & Rodriguez LLP\*

**David Sharp**  
Law Offices of David E. Sharp P.L.L.C.\*

**Melissa B. Shultz**  
University of North Texas Dallas College of Law\*

**Allan Van Fleet**  
Van Fleet LP\*

**Pat Villareal**

**Mark Wawro**  
Susman Godfrey L.L.P.\*

**Phyllis Young**  
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP\*

**Angela C. Zambrano**  
Sidley Austin LLP\*

\*Affiliations listed for identification only

## Progress in Austin on Two Key Issues

### Juvenile Curfew



Students testify at City Hall

Austin's Juvenile Curfew Ordinance, in effect for over 20 years, created a Class C misdemeanor to punish youth who were not in school or who were out at night between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. Despite evidence that curfew laws harm youth and do not reduce juvenile crime, kids as young as 10 years old were subject to appear in adult criminal court without an attorney, could face fines of up to \$500, and could end up with a criminal record. After achieving an early victory in ending the daytime curfew, we helped lead a 29-member workgroup, convened by the Austin City Council, and teamed with city

officials to find more appropriate solutions for youth than ticketing. The City Council sided with youth and families and voted to let the ordinance expire.

### Debtors' Prisons

The Austin City Council took an important step towards ending debtors' prisons in Austin, passing an ordinance intended to ensure people who are unable to pay fines for violations like traffic tickets have options aside from jail time. Among other things, the new ordinance outlines factors that indicate a person is indigent, like household income or receiving certain government benefits, which should make it easier for judges to identify people who will be unable to pay and should be eligible for alternative sentences like community service. The ordinance also outlines circumstances that could make it difficult for a person to complete community service, such as having a physical or mental disability, and who therefore should be considered for a waiver or reduction of what they owe under Texas law. We have advocated at the state and city level to end debtors' prisons in Texas and view Austin's leadership as a model for other cities.

**The Plan is to Have a PLAN** Developed from a 100-page guide issued by National Appleseed, we created a shorter manual in English and Spanish on how families can protect themselves in the event of deportation. The manual provides a checklist of considerations for families, from how to manage assets to child custody planning to the types of important documents someone should have readily available. Find the resource on our Immigrant Children & Families project page.

### THE LATEST

■ We extend heartfelt appreciation to current Board Chair, **Elizabeth Mack**, for her incredible leadership. With her term expiring, we are excited to welcome longtime board member **Layne Kruse** as incoming Board Chair.

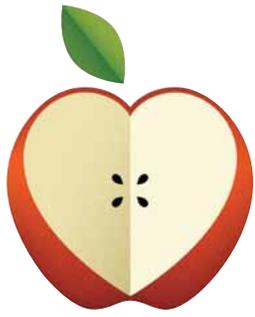
■ We are deeply saddened by the loss of board member **Edmundo O. Ramirez**, a great attorney and generous man. It was an honor to work with him, and we will miss his friendship.

■ We will deeply miss the presence and guidance of four longtime board members who are cycling off. We generously thank

**Neel Lane, Tom Leatherbury, Melissa Shultz** and **Courtney Stewart** for their dedication and service to the Board.

■ We are excited to welcome nine new board members to Texas Appleseed: **Doug Bland** (Vinson & Elkins LLP\*), **Carlos Cardenas** (Law Office of Carlos Eduardo Cardenas, P.C.\*), **Judge Amber Givens-Davis** (Dallas), **Dawn Estes** (Estes Thorne & Carr PLLC\*), **Susan Hartman** (BVA Group\*), **Ann Marie Painter** (Perkins Coie\*), **Ann Hebert Stephens** (Shell\*), **Eric Taube** (Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis, LLP\*) and **Leslie Thorne** (Haynes & Boone, LLP\*).

\* Affiliations listed for identification only



# GOOD TO THE CORE

Texas Appleseed was pleased to recognize a number of remarkable honorees at our Good Apple Dinner. **Harriet Miers** was named this year's Good Apple—a phenomenal legal mind, trailblazer, and leader who has worked to ensure justice is accessible to all. Our Pro Bono Leadership Awards went to three outstanding law firms and two prestigious design firms: **Dykema Cox Smith** for their work on our civil asset forfeiture toolkit, **Vinson & Elkins** for research and stakeholder interviews as part of our Homeless Youth Policy report, **Kirkland & Ellis LLP** for school discipline, criminal justice and immigration-focused research, and **Lewis Carnegie** and **Page/Dyal Branding & Graphics**, the design teams behind our I Heart Justice poster exhibition.





## Disaster Recovery in Texas

People in our state have been incredibly resilient during the tough times we've experienced. As people continue to rebound and rebuild after Hurricane Harvey, we plan to be there. In October, we organized a **Town Hall in Beaumont** with local partners United Way and Catholic Charities. A panel of speakers addressed how to apply for FEMA aid, what to do if you're denied aid, and explained legal rights involving landlords and mortgages. We plan to continue to meet with people across Texas to ensure they know their rights and that there is a just and equitable recovery process so that no Texan is left behind.

We also produced a **number of resources**, which are available on our Disaster Recovery & Fair Housing project page. They include how to support students coping with trauma, fact sheets

on insurance claims and the educational rights of students, and how lenders can ease the financial burden on Texans affected.

While disasters don't discriminate, sometimes recovery can. Texas Appleseed and **Bell Nunnally & Martin LLP** are representing the Cameron County Housing Authority (CCHA), which **has filed suit** against the City of Port Isabel, the Port Isabel City Commission and the Port Isabel Planning and Zoning Commission (Defendants). The Complaint asserts that the Defendants violated federal fair housing and civil rights laws by blocking efforts to rebuild multi-family affordable housing after Hurricane Dolly struck. CCHA alleges these actions were motivated by concerns with the national origin and familial status of tenants, as their tenants are primarily Latino and families with children. Our website has more about the lawsuit.

**INSIDE:** Executive Director's Letter / Good Apple Dinner Photos / Youth Homelessness Report / Wins in Austin / CFPB Final Rule / Have a PLAN Manual