

SLSLS Press

Because every survivor deserves a lawyer by their side.

Dear Friends,

I am honored to welcome you to the inaugural edition of St. Louis Survivors Legal Support's newsletter: The SLSLS Press. This newsletter is our way of keeping you close to our mission – so that you can learn about ways to get involved, stay connected to the impact your support makes possible and, most importantly, refer survivors who need our help.

“I hope this newsletter serves as a window into our work and that together, we can continue both breaking the cycle of abuse and building a safer future for generations to come.” Michael D. Burton

SLSLS provides free legal services to survivors seeking protection from Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). In St. Louis County, less than 10% of survivors who seek legal protection from their abusers have representation. Shockingly (but not surprisingly), 80% of petitions for Orders of Protection in St. Louis County are dismissed. In many instances, this is because their abusers have intimidated or coerced them not to appear for their trials. SLSLS was founded to ensure that survivors of IPV will come to court – with a lawyer by their side.

In just two and a half years, our dedicated staff and volunteer attorneys have helped more than 400 survivors get the assistance they need. This includes representation at more than 300 hearings, obtaining life-saving Orders of Protection, and safeguarding more than 220 children in the process. We've

built partnerships with more than 30 community organizations to provide wraparound services that extend far beyond the courtroom. Together, we are changing what safety and justice look like in St. Louis.

We are excited about our third annual fundraiser on October 16th, which will honor the legacy of our dear friend and supporter, Jim Holloran. (See details on page 2.) This year's event will feature some of the courageous survivors that SLSLS has represented. We will also recognize several volunteers who have gone above and beyond in their service to our clients. (See details on page 4.)

I also invite you to take a deeper look at our progress by reading our [2025 Executive Summary](#), which provides an overview of our impact, partnerships, and future goals.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to our board, our staff, our community partners, and each of you who has donated, volunteered, or referred survivors to SLSLS. Your commitment sustains our mission and fuels our growth. I hope this newsletter serves as a window into our work and that together, we can continue both breaking the cycle of abuse and building a safer future for generations to come.

Thank you for standing with us at the start of this journey.

With gratitude,

Michael D. Burton

Michael D. Burton
Founder & Executive Director



The SLSLS staff. From left to right: Kylie Cain, Ema Remtula, Mike Burton, Tali Katz, and Aruna Tailor.

Upcoming Events

Join Us for Happy Hour at John D. McGurks

Every October, in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, SLSLS hosts a happy hour to celebrate community, connection, and the mission that drives our work. For the past two years, this gathering has brought together attorneys and other supporters who share our belief that no survivor of IPV should ever walk into a courtroom alone.

On **Thursday, October 16, 2025, from 5:00 - 7:00**, we are proud to host our **Third Annual Happy Hour at McGurk's Irish Pub** in Soulard. This year's event carries special significance as we officially rename it the **Jim Holloran Memorial Happy Hour**, honoring our beloved friend, attorney, and longtime supporter who passed away earlier this year.

In addition to being a champion for justice and survivors, Jim was also the owner of McGurk's. From the very beginning, his generosity and hospitality made this event possible. Today, his son, Patrick, carries on that legacy by continuing



James Holloran

McGurk's sponsorship of SLSLS' fundraiser. We are deeply grateful to the Holloran family for their enduring partnership and commitment to survivors.

The 2025 Happy Hour promises to be both moving and inspiring. Attendees will hear the personal stories of one of our former clients and the volunteer

attorneys who stood by her in court. Their voices will shine a light on the courage that it takes to seek safety and the life-changing impact that legal representation can provide. We will also recognize several extraordinary volunteers whose dedication has gone above and beyond in service of our mission.

In 2024, this event raised approximately \$80,000, which is funding the hiring of a staff attorney. This year, we have set a bold goal of \$150,000, which will build our capacity to represent more survivors, strengthen our infrastructure, and grow our impact across St. Louis.

[Click here](#) to register for this free event. If you're unable to join us but would like to show your support in reaching our goal, you can make a donation at slsls.org/donate.

SLSLS Impact

DID YOU KNOW?

Thanks to your support, SLSLS has provided free legal representation in 350 Order of Protection cases.

Our clients prevail at 3x the rate of unrepresented petitioners, and nearly half secure full protection lasting longer than the standard one-year duration.



Jan's Story

“SLSLS helped me find the confidence to file for divorce, and even represented me in extending the OP so it wouldn't expire. SLSLS changed my life, and I'm forever grateful. After I retire, I plan to give back by volunteering with them.” Jan, Survivor

The last six years of my 36-year marriage were toxic. The man I once loved changed my life into a daily nightmare. Every day was unpredictable and filled with relentless verbal abuse. My three adult children urged me to leave, but with little money and no clear plan, I felt trapped. I retreated to the second floor of our home, the only place I felt a bit of peace.

One night, I heard a gunshot downstairs. I froze, terrified he might shoot me if I went to help. The next morning, I learned it was just a scare tactic. I started staying late at work to avoid going home. Then one day, he sent me three suicidal text messages. I called the police, who told me I needed an Order of Protection (OP) because situations like this can escalate into murder-suicides.

Two weeks later, I faced him in court alone while he had a lawyer. A court advocate suggested I contact SLSLS. **I didn't think anyone would understand the mental abuse I'd endured since I had no visible bruises.** But from that day forward, everything changed. SLSLS gave me a lawyer who understood my situation, supported me, and helped me prepare for court. Their staff answered my every question and made me feel less alone.

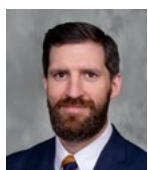
The OP was granted, and I could finally sleep without fear. SLSLS helped me find the confidence to file for divorce, and even represented me in extending the OP so it wouldn't expire. SLSLS changed my life, and I'm forever grateful. After I retire, I plan to give back by volunteering with them.



Thank You

At this year's Jim Holloran Memorial Happy Hour, SLSLS will proudly honor three remarkable individuals whose dedication has strengthened our mission and expanded our reach.

We are thrilled to present the inaugural Jim Holloran Legacy of Advocacy Awards to three extraordinary volunteers: **Wil Halaz, Brittney Mollman, and Annabelle Yu**. These awards will be given each year to volunteers who go above and beyond for survivors.



Wil Halaz, a litigation partner at Cordell & Cordell, has signed up to volunteer with SLSLS 25 times – more than any other attorney. His compassionate advocacy and courtroom skills have brought safety and justice to many survivors. One of his clients noted that, “Wil’s sincerity while handling my case gave me a great sense of relief and the courage to overcome the anxiety and fear of facing my abuser.” Beyond his direct representation, Wil is a trusted mentor for shadowing attorneys, generously sharing his expertise and modeling the highest standards of advocacy. When SLSLS is in a pinch and a survivor urgently needs representation, Wil is one of the first to step up.



Brittney Mollman, counsel at Thompson Coburn, has been equally tireless in her service. She has represented numerous survivors – first, as a shadowing attorney and now, as a veteran volunteer who mentors newer volunteers. In addition, Brittney serves as a dedicated board member and Chair of our Law Firm Advisory Committee, where she works to build partnerships with firms like hers, which covers two dockets every month. Her leadership has created lasting infrastructure that ensures that more survivors have access to skilled legal counsel.



Annabelle Yu, a marketing specialist at the Washington University Information Technology organization, has made invaluable contributions behind the scenes. Annabelle volunteers her time to manage SLSLS’ digital presence, from maintaining our website to supporting our social media outreach. Her expertise ensures that survivors can find us quickly and that our message reaches a wider audience.

Each of these honorees represents a vital piece of our mission: courtroom advocacy, organizational leadership, and community visibility. Together, they embody the power of service, compassion, and commitment – and we are deeply grateful for their partnership.



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www.slsls.org • 314-NOW-STOP (314-669-7867)



Some of the survivors that SLSLS has represented.

