

PURSuing POSSIBLE

Your Support Is Needed to Help Project HEAL Expand Critical Services

Kennedy Krieger Institute offers a variety of community services in addition to clinical care and educational services. One of those services is Project HEAL (Health, Education, Advocacy, and Law), Maryland's only comprehensive medical-legal partnership and a community-based program of the Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities at Kennedy Krieger.

Project HEAL provides comprehensive advocacy and civil legal services for children—and their families—who are patients at Kennedy Krieger and have intellectual and developmental disabilities. For many families of children with disabilities, securing an appropriate educational program and placement for their child can be a monumental task. Despite the guarantee of a free appropriate public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), schools can fail to provide appropriate placements and accommodations for children with disabilities. Although the parent of a child with disabilities may recognize that their child's educational needs are not being fulfilled, advocacy alone may not be enough. A special education attorney may be required. That's where we can help.

Founded in 2005, Project HEAL serves more than 400 patients and their families each year through a broad range of services, including legal representation, limited representation (e.g., brief advice, document review, referrals, information and resources), pro bono referrals, professional and community-based training, and case consultations with Kennedy Krieger faculty members, staff members and trainees. Our attorneys review all cases to determine if a civil legal issue exists that requires the intervention of an attorney. If representation is appropriate, our clients pay a sliding-scale fee based on the size of their household and gross annual income. All of our fees are well below market rate for legal services. Children with disabilities are at a greater risk of falling behind in school. Project HEAL is focused on helping students and families that need additional support.



"I was very happy with (Project HEAL attorney) Mallory. I felt like she really cared. Every time I see her, she always takes the time to sit down and talk to us and see how my grandson is doing. That's something that so many people need. They need to feel like someone cares."
– Baltimore City grandmother

Our attorneys have received awards and recognition in the community for our zealous advocacy on behalf of Kennedy Krieger's patients and families.

Financial support will allow Project HEAL to increase the number of Maryland families it serves, and to continue providing services to those who need them the most.



Kennedy Krieger Institute



At Project HEAL, we are continually expanding our reach and enhancing our offerings. We are fortunate to be able to collaborate with local law firms; however, our two staff attorneys, supported by our director, complete the vast majority of our work.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have increased demand for legal advocacy services across Maryland, but our resources available to serve all of the families seeking legal services remain limited. To reduce wait times for children and families to obtain representation, and to increase our ability to better serve the families at Kennedy Krieger, we aim to expand our capacity by hiring additional attorneys. This will increase the number of patients and families we can help and allow us to address issues in a timely manner, for the benefit of the children we serve—and their education.



The pandemic has disproportionately impacted children with disabilities and their families, many of which have suffered economic hardship due to job cutbacks or the loss of a family member. Even though our civil legal services are offered on a sliding scale, the families most in need often cannot afford any legal fees and are at risk of forgoing quality legal services. We are committed to serving all families across the income spectrum, regardless of a family's ability to pay. To do this, we need steady financial support specifically earmarked for families in need.

Your philanthropic support will allow us to increase the number of families we serve across Maryland, and to continue helping those who need our services the most. Please help us achieve our vision of growth and equity for all by supporting our important work.



For more information, please contact Theresa Macheski at **Macheski@KennedyKrieger.org** or call **443-923-7301**.



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Connect with us!     