

Erin Heeke

August 12, 2025

1189 Anderson Dr.

Lapeer, MI 48446

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eheeke@lapeercounty.org

To Oakland County Bar Foundation,

My name is Erin Heeke, and I have known Attorney Elizabeth Hohausser for several years both personally and professionally. Liz is not only my cousin through marriage, but someone whom I would consider a close friend. It is due to Liz that I am a thriving survivor of domestic violence. She is also the reason I pursued a career in the field of law as a legal assistant and am continuing my education to pursue a law degree. I strongly feel that Liz and her non-profit organization Justice Speaks Legal Aid deserves a grant to help aid the under-served.

In September of 2021, I became the victim of domestic violence at the hands of my husband. It was just one month after welcoming our new baby girl into the world. I was punched, kicked, dragged, and suffocated to the point where I lost consciousness twice. My oldest two daughters were in bed sleeping at the time and awoke to see their stepfather beating me, and if it wasn't for them, I believe my husband would have killed me. That night my husband was arrested and was facing charges of 1) Assault to create great bodily harm less than murder or by strangulation 2) Domestic violence third offense and 3) Interfering with a communications device. I was left on my own to care for not only a newborn child, but two other daughters, one with special needs, and our entire farm.

Because I had just had a baby, I had no source of income other than my husband's monthly VA disability check. When Liz heard about the incident through family members, she immediately reached out to me to make sure I was okay and to see if she could be of any assistance. Liz was a great listener and offered me a lot of advice for when I had to meet with the Prosecutor. She also helped me work through the many emotions that come along with being a victim of domestic violence. Liz even contacted the Prosecutor and spoke with him on my behalf, so she could help me make sense of what was going on.

While I was still recovering from the beating physically, my husband continued to be abusive from jail, now enlisting his mother to help him. He provided his mother with a power of attorney and he instructed her to close our marital joint checking account, leaving me penniless. They also attempted to have my phone shut off. With absolutely no way to pay the mortgage, buy groceries, or feed our many animals, I decided to call Elizabeth to see what I should do. She immediately volunteered to help by representing me Pro Bono and advised me to file for divorce.

Liz worked all that night with me on the phone gathering the information she needed to file a Complaint for Divorce, as well as an Ex Parte Motion to Maintain the Status Quo in Lapeer

County. Because of the Complaint and the Motion to Maintain Status Quo, it was Ordered that the marital joint checking account be reopened and that I would have full access to monthly VA disability checks to continue to pay for the mortgage, cell phones, insurances, car notes, utilities, groceries, farm bills, and any other bill associated with a marital expense.

Because my husband had nothing to lose, he tried everything to continue his control over me from jail and Liz worked to put a stop to all of it. My husband and mother-in-law would not comply with the status quo order and Liz had to file several motions to get them to comply. Despite there being a no contact order in place, my husband sent me over a hundred letters from jail within a short amount of time causing me to be fearful and have extreme anxiety, Liz made sure to inform the Prosecutor in the criminal case to make sure there would be a stop to the letters. When my husband was allowed to go to a VA hospital for inpatient care, he started harassing me on Facebook, Liz put a stop to that as well. There was even a time where I was contacted by the local a Sheriff Deputy who informed me that my husband may have escaped from the hospital where he was being held. This made me extremely scared for my life. I called Liz to let her know what happened and she immediately offered me and my children a safe place to stay.

Liz fought very hard for me, and if it wasn't for her a lot of things would have been overlooked. Liz worked diligently, making the utmost effort to ensure I was safe, well taken care of, and got exactly what I deserved in my divorce. She went above and beyond as my attorney and did everything Pro Bono. I am extremely grateful for her, not only for fighting hard and representing me in this very difficult matter, but for also being there to support me emotionally. It is because of her that I am truly a thriving survivor of domestic violence.

Elizabeth Hohausser is truly a caring, dedicated, selfless, and hardworking attorney who is passionate about helping other people. It was that dedication to helping other people that made her leave her private practice and become the Director of Legal Services at The New Foster Care where she worked for over a year. Although she is back in private practice she has been working with two other directors from there to help launch her non-profit Justice Speaks Legal Aid. She has expressed to me numerous times how she wants to make a difference in people's lives, and I know that she will because she has certainly made a difference in mine. I strongly believe that for these reasons and many more that Attorney Elizabeth Hohausser and her non-profit Justice Speaks Legal Aid is deserving of a grant to ensure unnecessary foster care placements, and help under-served individuals.

Sincerely,



Erin Heeke

Suzanne Hollyer
1646 Lakeview Drive
Wolverine Lake, MI 48390
248-343-5514

August 12, 2025

Oakland County Bar Foundation
1760 S. Telegraph Road, Ste. 100
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302

RE: Justice Speaks Legal Aid Grant Application

I am writing in support of the grant application for Justice Speaks Legal Aid. Every year, thousands of children are unnecessarily placed in foster care when a parent is temporarily unable to care for a child due to poverty, a medical crisis, homelessness or incarceration.

Justice Speaks Legal Aid is a 501c3 nonprofit legal organization dedicated to preventing unnecessary foster care placements by empowering low-income families with legal tools to safely arrange temporary caregiving.

With legal assistance such as a power of attorney, these parents can keep their children out of foster care and instead seek the help of a trusted friend or relative while they navigate a short-term crisis.

Foster care should be a last resort and not the inevitable result of living in poverty. Justice Speaks provides accessible legal tools to families and therefore helps protect children from unnecessary trauma.

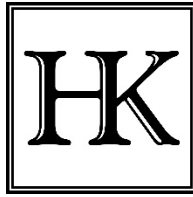
Your support will help Justice Speaks Legal Aid fund branding and web development needed to reach out to families in need of these important legal services.

Thank you for your consideration,


Suzanne Hollyer

SARAH E. KUCHON
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MICHAEL S. HOHAUSER
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TROY, MICHIGAN 48084

August 15, 2025

RE: Letter of Support for Justice Speaks Legal Aid

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Sarah Kuchon. I have been a practicing lawyer in the State of Michigan for nearly twenty-five years. I own a private practice in Troy, Michigan, where I focus my practice in the area of civil litigation. I am a former Commissioner for the State Bar of Michigan. I also serve on the Character & Fitness Committee for the State Bar as well as the Commission on Well-Being in the Law. I serve on the Executive Board for the Oakland County Bar Association as President and am a past member of the State Bar of Michigan's Representative Assembly. I have also served as a trustee for the Oakland County Bar Foundation.

It is with pleasure that I write this letter of support for Justice Speaks Legal Aid. Justice Speaks Legal Aid was founded by Elizabeth Hohausser. I have known Ms. Hohausser for over thirty years. I have known her both personally and professionally. Ms. Hohausser created Justice Speaks Legal Aid because she recognized a gap in the legal system and saw firsthand the impact this gap has on families.

Justice Speak's mission is to prevent unnecessary foster care placements by providing free legal documents to low-income families. Their work is both vital and profoundly impactful. Each year, countless children are placed into foster care not because they have been abused or neglected, but because their parents are temporarily unable to provide care due to circumstances like illness, incarceration, or economic hardship. In many of these cases, the only thing preventing a child from staying with a loving relative or trusted friend is the lack of a legal document authorizing that care. This is the gap I discussed above. Justice Speaks fills this critical gap by drafting and delivering temporary powers of attorney and other legal tools that allow families to remain intact through periods of crisis. Their work directly reduces the need for child welfare intervention, protects the rights of parents, and offers children the stability of familiar, loving care. Their legal expertise, combined with a deep understanding of the barriers faced by marginalized families, allows Justice Speak to serve a population that is often overlooked and underserved.

In addition to their direct legal support, Justice Speaks is a vital resource for community partners, service providers, and advocates. Their outreach and education efforts equip organizations with tools and knowledge to better support families and prevent unnecessary trauma.

Grant funding will enable Justice Speaks to expand their services, reach more families, and continue this essential work that keeps children out of the foster care system and in the care of people who love them. I cannot overstate the importance of what they do. It is my pleasure to support Justice Speaks' application for funding.

Very truly,

HOHAUSER KUCHON

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah E. Kuchon". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Sarah E. Kuchon



September 11, 2025

Elizabeth Hohausner
Justice Speaks Legal Aid
363 W. Big Beaver
Suite 250
Troy, MI 48084

Dear Elizabeth,

Thank you for your recent grant application to the Oakland County Bar Foundation. The Trustees greatly appreciate the meaningful impact you aim to make in Oakland County through your new initiative, *Justice Speaks Legal Aid*.

The OCBF would be proud to support your organization at this foundational stage. However, we are unable to fund 77% of the total project budget. With the full support of our Board, the Foundation is pleased to offer a conditional pledge of up to **\$12,500**.

To receive this funding, we ask that your organization secure the remaining funds required for the project within the next **six months**. Once the additional funding has been confirmed, please submit appropriate documentation to the OCBF. Upon receipt and verification, the pledged funds will be released.

We commend your commitment to advancing access to justice and look forward to the potential of partnering with you in this important work.

Best regards,

Katie Tillinger, Deputy Director
Oakland County Bar Foundation

