

CTLN Opinion+

**Martha Stone, Founder and Executive Director of
Center for Children's Advocacy on providing resources for children,
a voice often overlooked**

Sevanny Campos, March 26, 2021

"One-stop shop" is how Martha Stone intended the Center for Children's Advocacy to run. Stone, a civil rights attorney and CCA executive director, started the organization with the intent of providing legal resources for children, a voice that is either overlooked or politicized. Her organization provides advocacy in education, health, immigration among other things.

CCA combines three advocacy strategies: individual legal representation; legal rights training for youth, parents, and professionals; and advocacy for system reforms. Organizations like CCA provide services where the systems in place fail.

During the pandemic, CCA saw the biggest disparity in education to communities of lower-income. Since in-person classes ceased in March of last year, kids have struggled with connectivity issues and issues with the technology provided. CCA's mission regarding education is to represent children and youth in Connecticut's low-income communities and address factors that interfere with their ability to succeed in school.

In order to reach these communities during the pandemic, Stone and CCA attorneys have met with children and guardians in open spaces.

The Center for Children's advocacy has many programs to address a variety of issues.

CCA provides advocacy for undocumented immigrant children, a group that has little legal protection. As of 2018, Connecticut had an immigrant population of over 500,000 people and nearly 28,000 immigrant children. Many children arrive in the country alone, leaving dangerous living conditions and economic and political conflicts. Parents make the sacrifice of sending a child to the United States in the hope of protection and opportunity.

What they face in the United States is an environment reluctant to help them and often politicized. The Center for Children's Advocacy helps at-risk children avoid deportation, provides connections to mental health resources for those who are traumatized, and support needed to succeed in school and learn English. CCA attorneys help children who qualify apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.

For more information about CCA please go to cca-ct.org.