



**PRO BONO CORNER**



*Jeffrey A. Barrack, a partner at Barrack, Rodos & Bacine and a member of the board of directors of the Support Center for Child Advocates, recalls a particularly memorable volunteering experience.*



**Barrack, Rodos & Bacine** is a nationally recognized law firm known for its prosecution of securities class actions on behalf of institutional investors as well as its prosecution of antitrust class actions on behalf of victims of price-fixing conspiracies.

**Pro Bono Corner:**

## *Child Advocacy Is an Effective Way to Pursue Justice*

[Support Center for Child Advocates](#) volunteer attorneys often remark that they get more from serving than they give because they work justice for the children they represent.

My work with Myrna is demonstrative. Victimized by her father in high school, Myrna became dependent on Philadelphia's children and youth agency. She has since graduated high school with honors, begun college, and, through therapeutic programs for herself and anger management work for her father, found forgiveness for her abuser. This case, like many others, was court assigned to Child Advocates; I was designated to represent Myrna, whose dependency case arose from child abuse.

We child advocates argue for the best interests of the child in cases with multiple parties, including child service agencies and biological parents, and involving evidence from numerous sources, including psychologists, counselors, foster-care providers, teachers and other witnesses. Child Advocates teams me with a social worker to determine the course of action to recommend to the court. Much of this work occurs on the telephone or during home meetings with the child, or in the comforting offices and conference rooms at Child Advocates, located at 19th & Cherry, steps away from Family Court.

Upon examining agency personnel, service providers, parents and the child in court, I can work justice by eliciting evidence that provides bases for the court to ensure that the interests of government agencies are aligned with the child's, protect the child from abusive parents and require the child to reside in an adequately supported and safe place.

Myrna's success story, like many who have come through the Support Center for Child Advocates, is one that started with tragedy. This bright youngster rose above the trauma towards success and prosperity, with a little help from her advocate. Such justice rewards volunteer child advocates, making them the wealthiest lawyers I know.