

**For Immediate Release**

**LAWYERS FOR CHILDREN RECOGNIZED BY NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION  
FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO CITY'S MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN**

**-Receives Levine Award for Excellence and 2009 Award  
for Quality Representation-**

New York City, June 19, 2009 – Lawyers For Children (LFC), a non-profit law office dedicated to providing legal services to children in foster care, receives two prestigious awards from the New York State Bar Association's Committee on Children and the Law.

LFC's Executive Director, Karen J. Freedman, was awarded the 2009 Howard A. Levine Award for Excellence in Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare. The Levine award, created in 1986, recognizes individuals for their outstanding efforts to improve New York's child welfare system. In addition, the Bar Association honored LFC with its 2009 Award for Outstanding Achievements in Promoting Standards of Excellence in Quality Mandated Representation, a bi-annual award which honors recipients who best exemplify "consistent adherence to the highest professional standards in providing mandated representation" or who have "engaged in innovative efforts to improve the overall quality of mandated representation."

John Shapiro, Chairman of the Board of Directors of LFC said, "Karen is an extraordinary and visionary leader who has truly been a pioneer in the field of children's rights. We are so pleased that her and LFC's tireless work on behalf of New York City's foster children has been recognized by the State Bar."

"We are deeply honored by these awards and would like to thank the New York State Bar Association for their recognition. We share these awards with our young clients--whose resilience, perseverance and optimism inspire us each day—and with our extraordinary staff of advocates, committed supporters, Board of Directors and local community," said LFC Executive Director Karen Freedman.

Ms. Freedman, who founded LFC in 1984, is credited with leading the 10-year fight for mandatory court appointed representation for every child in foster care. In 1994, her efforts were rewarded by a new statute guaranteeing a court appointed attorney for every child in New York State's foster care system. Since then, Ms. Freedman and Lawyers For Children have won similar victories for children in foster care, including the landmark civil rights case *Marisol v. Giuliani* brought by Lawyers For Children and Children's Rights, Inc., on behalf of children in the custody of the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS). The *Marisol* case set a new national standard in child welfare reform litigation and created an independent panel of nationally recognized experts in the field of child welfare that monitored, reviewed and evaluated the performance of New York City's child welfare system. More recently, LFC successfully represented the plaintiff-children as co-counsel with the Legal Aid Society, in *Nicholson v. Williams*, a class action lawsuit in Federal District Court involving children exposed to domestic violence. In this case, LFC obtained a settlement that balanced a child's need for

safety with the need for family integrity when determining whether removal is necessary to protect the child.

### **About Lawyers for Children**

Lawyers For Children, founded in 1984, was the first law office dedicated to providing legal services to children voluntarily placed in foster care. For twenty-five years, LFC has maintained its commitment to providing the highest quality services by pairing every client with both a lawyer and a social worker to advocate on their behalf. This strategy has resulted in a widely recognized and successful child advocacy model, ensuring that every child's rights are protected, and that their voices are heard. To improve services to all children in foster care in New York, and to implement standards that mitigate the trauma that children suffer when removed from their homes, LFC has pursued an extraordinarily successful campaign of impact litigation, educational outreach and empowerment initiatives.

In addition to providing every client with an advocacy team, LFC's unique set of special projects provide expert advocacy for clients with specific needs, including immigrant youth; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning clients; survivors of sexual abuse or domestic violence; clients who are aging out of foster care; and clients with mental health needs. The organization has represented over 40,000 children in foster care and high conflict custody cases since its founding.

More information about LFC is available at [www.lawyersforchildren.org](http://www.lawyersforchildren.org)

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