



DRC-NH STAFF

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF SERVICE TO PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES ACROSS NEW HAMPSHIRE

Disability Rights Center has a staff of 15 attorneys, advocates and support staff to serve more than 155,000 people with disabilities across the state.



Déodonné Dustin Bhattarai, Communications Specialist.

Déodonné began volunteering at the DRC in 2016, following the diagnosis of her son with Spinal Muscular Atrophy. She received her JD from Northeastern School of Law and her Master of Public Health from Tufts University School of Medicine. Déodonné is a graduate of the New Hampshire Leadership Series and Parent Information Center's Volunteer Advocate training. She currently serves on UNH's Institute on Disability's Consumer Advisory Committee and the Council for Youths with Chronic Conditions. In 2016, Déodonné was appointed to the New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities as a parent advocate. Déodonné has a long-term demonstrated commitment to civil rights and social justice advocacy.

Francesca Broderick, Intake Attorney

Francesca joined the DRC as an intake attorney in 2015. She graduated summa cum laude from Vermont Law School in 2013 and received honors in legal writing and research. She has been a member of the NH Bar since 2013. Francesca clerked at the New Hampshire Supreme Court from 2013-2015. She interned during law school at the New Hampshire Public Defender and at Vermont Legal Aid. Francesca also has experience working with at-risk youth as an educator and case manager.

Lynne Clay, Managing Attorney

Lynne Clay, Managing Attorney, graduated from Rhode Island College in 1982 with a B.A., Magna Cum Laude, in Communications and Psychology. She received her JD degree from Suffolk University Law School in 1989 cum laude. Lynne has been an attorney with the Disability Rights Center - NH since 1991. Her many years of experience have given her knowledge in many substantive areas of disability practice, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Juvenile Law, Social Security, Housing and Medicaid. Lynne's practice has included litigation in state and federal court including the US First Circuit Court of Appeals. Lynne is also DRC's Section 504/ADA compliance coordinator. Lynne was an adjunct faculty member at Middlesex Community College for over twenty years where she taught Constitutional Law, Criminal Evidence and Court Procedures and Criminal Law.



Sarah Cooley, Office Assistant

Sarah has been with DRC since 2005. She started as an intern, and when she finished her studies she joined DRC as a permanent employee. She provides office support including computer data entry, and outreach and public speaking on disability rights. Sarah is a published book author, with several volumes of poetry and essays to her name. She has a strong interest in music and songwriting.



Michele Fleming, Fiscal Director

In 2016, Michele joined the DRC as Fiscal Director. She is responsible for monitoring the financial affairs of DRC; this includes managing federal and other grants along with the budget for DRC. Additionally, she is responsible for human resources. Michele has worked as an accountant since 1992, both at a large nonprofit agency and in private practice. Michele graduated cum laude in 1991 from Franklin Pierce University. She has been an active volunteer in her community, especially Boy and Girl Scouts.

Beth Kelley, Executive Assistant

Beth joined DRC's staff in 2004, bringing significant experience in lobbying, public policy work and office management. She is responsible for assisting DRC's executive director, coordinating DRC's federal reporting, supervising DRC's support staff, assisting callers who request help from DRC and ensuring the office runs smoothly and efficiently.

Courtney Lockwood, Intake Attorney

Courtney Lockwood joined DRC as an intake attorney in 2005. Courtney was formerly a Legal Aid Attorney at Pine Tree Legal Assistance in rural Maine. In that position, she practiced in the areas of Medicaid and other public benefits, housing, domestic violence, consumer law, and guardian ad litem work. She is a 2002 graduate of Vermont Law School and holds an undergraduate degree from Cornell University.

Andrew Milne, Staff Attorney

Andrew joined the DRC as a staff attorney in 2016. He graduated from New York University School of Law in 2012, where he was an advocate in the Criminal Appellate Defense Clinic and taught in the High School Law Institute. He received a B.A. from Columbia University in 2006, after which he coordinated development efforts for a social services non-profit organization in Upper Manhattan. Upon graduating from law school, Andrew became a staff attorney at Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, where he focused on domestic violence, public defense, and youth rights. He then accepted a clinical teaching fellowship at South Texas College of Law, where he supervised law students representing low-income clients in the Civil Practice Clinics. Andrew was admitted to the NH Bar in 2016 and is a member of the Texas Bar.



Stephanie Patrick, Executive Director

Stephanie Patrick joined DRC as Executive Director in 2017. Stephanie was formerly the Director of Policy and Planning at the Advocacy Center, DRC's sister agency in Louisiana, where she worked on legislative advocacy, coalition building and programmatic compliance. She graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2003 with a Master's of Social Work and also holds an undergraduate degree in social work from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. Stephanie has been committed to disability issues throughout her career. Growing up as the child of a person with mental illness taught her about the struggles, challenges and



Cindy Robertson, Senior Staff Attorney

Cindy joined the Disability Rights Center – NH in 2004 as a senior staff attorney after many years in private litigation practice, including as a partner in the litigation department of Devine, Millimet & Branch. Cindy is a 1984 graduate of Franklin Pierce Law Center and is admitted in New Hampshire, Maryland, the Federal District Court for the State of New Hampshire, and the First Circuit Court of Appeals. She serves on the Mental and Physical Disabilities Committee of the NH Bar Association and represents the DRC on the Medical Care Advisory Committee, the Elder Rights Coalition, and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Advisory Committee. In 1992, Cindy received the President's Award for Distinguished Service to the Legal Profession. Her many community activities include serving as the vice-chair of the Town of Hooksett Conservation Commission.



Karen Rosenberg, Senior Staff Attorney

Karen Rosenberg joined the staff of DRC in 2005 as a staff attorney. She is a 1988 graduate of Northeastern University School of Law. Earlier she received a BS in Psychology from Tufts University. Karen is admitted to the bars of New Hampshire and Massachusetts (retired), and to the US District Courts for New Hampshire and Massachusetts (retired). Karen comes to us after many years as a staff attorney and project director at New Hampshire Legal Assistance (NHLA), where she specialized in Health, Housing and Consumer laws. She was counsel for plaintiffs in *Hawkins v. Commissioner*, a federal class action to improve access to dental care for children enrolled in the state's Medicaid program. Karen has been active in her community of Manchester. Over the nearly twenty years she has resided in Manchester, Karen has volunteered in the Manchester Schools and with various community organizations.

Michael K. Skibbie, Policy Director

Michael Skibbie joined DRC in 2004 and works with staff, constituents and other organizations on policy issues of importance to people with disabilities. Mike is a 1984 graduate of Franklin Pierce Law Center, J.D., and holds a B.A. degree from the University of Vermont. Previously, Mike was Research Associate Professor of Political Science and Co-Coordinator of the Justice, Law & Society Project at Justiceworks, University of New Hampshire. For many years, Mike handled criminal cases in a variety of roles for the NH Public Defender's office, culminating as head of the statewide program from 1992 to 2001. He has worked extensively with court-involved youth and adults with disabilities, and has been involved in a number of legislative and interagency efforts to improve the justice system.

Ellen Van Gelder, Institutional Rights Monitor.

Ellen has her BS in Psychology from Granite State College and is working on her MS in Forensic Psychology. She comes to DRC with a career in the human services, working with individuals with developmental disabilities, at risk youth, individuals with dual diagnosis or complex medical issues. She looks to create environments where individuals can make meaningful change occur. She has been a lifelong advocate assisting those that need to learn the skills to be empowered to help themselves.



James Ziegra, Staff Attorney

James began his career at Disability Rights Center - NH in 2012 as a UNH Legal Fellow. As a Fellow, he represented individuals at Civil Commitment hearings at New Hampshire Hospital, and worked on the Phenix Hall case. He worked as an attorney on the intake team before assuming the position of Staff Attorney. James received his J.D. degree from the UNH School of Law in 2011 and holds a B.A in Political Science from UNH. At UNH, he practiced at the Criminal Practice Clinic and the Consumer and Commercial Clinic. Prior to joining the DRC, he worked at Community Legal Services, Inc., a non-profit corporation which offers "unbundled" legal services to low-income residents. He is admitted to the Bar in New Hampshire and the NH Federal District Court.



OUR MISSION:

Disability Rights Center - NH is dedicated to eliminating barriers existing in New Hampshire to the full and equal enjoyment of civil and other legal rights by people with disabilities.