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Dear Friend of the Tennessee Justice Center:

“Learn to count funny!” So advised a dear friend decades ago when explaining the secret of her staying power as an effective advocate for social justice. That advice informs this assessment of TJC’s work during the past year.

Susan wasn’t promoting the sort of accounting sleight-of-hand that the powerful have used to plunge our economy into crisis. Quite the opposite. What she meant was that, in assessing work for justice, we have to go beyond the standard ways that the world measures worth. At TJC, we know all too well the truth of the humanitarian, Dr. Paul Farmer’s, observation that **“The idea that some lives count less is the root of all that is wrong with the world.”** Our clients’ lives are too often devalued by the powerful, yet they constantly remind us by their courage and generosity of spirit that *every* life is precious, that *every* child’s dreams matter.

We therefore know that it is not enough to measure TJC’s work by simple calculations of cost-effectiveness. One of the things TJC provides – hope – will never be captured on a balance sheet, and yet it is among our most important products.

Providing hope is Jane Beasley’s specialty. I and other lawyers at TJC refer to Jane, our senior paralegal who trained as a librarian, as “the best lawyer we know” because she is endlessly knowledgeable and resourceful in solving problems that stymie everyone else. Typical of the letters TJC receives from former clients is the following from a father who was referred to TJC after weeks of frantic efforts to maintain nursing care for his gravely ill child:

Jane and TJC came to our rescue. They treated us like real people not just a name and number. They did something no one else could do, they made it possible for my son to get to keep his nursing. Without TJC, I don’t think my son would be alive today!!

Another client described Jane’s gift for making others feel valued:

When met with this type of catastrophic health problem, *people feel lonely*. We are among the ‘working poor’ who make a modest income ... Jane made us feel *at ease immediately*. Her personal, caring nature was exactly what my nerves needed...”

Jane’s compassion is matched by her determination. She recently obtained surgery for a client with an aggressive cancer. With surgery, her doctors said she

had an excellent prognosis. Without surgery, she would die within a few months. Jane's client was a small business owner who had bought insurance through CoverTN, a state-sponsored program. CoverTN refused to cover the surgery, and the hospital refused to proceed without an impossibly large deposit. The family had been told repeatedly that nothing could be done. Jane's intervention resulted in CoverTN's payment for the surgery, and the patient credits Jane with saving her life.

One cannot measure the value of health restored or of hopes redeemed. TJC touches thousands of lives annually by bringing to large issues of public policy the same technical expertise and persistence that enable Jane to solve seemingly intractable problems for individual clients. In just one of our current cases, TJC has been able to maintain health services for 150,000 Tennesseans with disabilities. TJC's modest resources produce big dividends for people whose lives are very, very hard.

TJC's expertise in health policy is nationally recognized and generates requests for assistance by public officials and other advocates across the country. For example, TJC produces instructional materials used by states and service agencies nationwide to help elderly and disabled Social Security pensioners qualify for Medicaid under an obscure federal law that affects hundreds of thousands of people.

Last year TJC's reputation for excellence enabled it to attract donations of \$2.4 million in *pro bono* legal services from two of the nation's premier law firms. Our *pro bono* colleagues have joined us as co-counsel in the *John B.* case, where they have made an incalculable difference. They enable us to face the enormous resources of the state and its HMO contractors.

TJC has worked for over a decade in *John B.* to enforce federal quality of care standards on behalf of the 650,000 Tennessee children enrolled in TennCare. This lawsuit shows that if working for justice requires us to "count funny," it also demands plain doggedness. Earlier this year, a federal court of appeals opinion decried TennCare officials' "continual noncompliance and acrimonious litigation practice" that have unfortunately obstructed the provision of care to children, "with the costs borne by the judicial system and the citizens of Tennessee." We continue to make progress in *John B.*, inspired by the knowledge that TJC's work is changing thousands of young lives.

TJC's steadfast advocacy is needed now more than ever. The poorest and most vulnerable of our neighbors have special reason to fear the financial uncertainty that we all face. The voiceless suffer the most in times of crisis. Just a few weeks ago, as Congress hastened to put together a package of tax breaks and corporate subsidies to stem the slide in the markets, TJC distributed to the state's media a briefing paper on the child tax credit. In response, editorial pages reminded our elected officials that defects in the tax code deprive 180,000 of Tennessee's poorest children in working families of the full credit. **Because of your generosity, TJC continues to insist that *all* Tennesseans count.**

Thank you so much for being part of TJC's work for justice!

Sincerely yours,



Gordon Bonnyman
Executive Director