



Since 1969.

A voice for children who face barriers to educational and life opportunities.

With your support, MAC brightens futures for students by advocating for individual children and improving systemic policy. Your gift changes lives.

Meet Jasmine.

Jasmine* was a kind and hardworking student who loved being with her friends, watching movies, and baking. Like her classmates, she was eager to finish high school and start earning her own money.

Jasmine also has a diagnosis of ADHD and a genetic condition which causes learning and social challenges. Jasmine's mother was worried about her future and the obstacles Jasmine may face. She was also concerned that Jasmine was not receiving adequate transition services to learn to how to navigate the adult world. She wanted to know how she could advocate for Jasmine so she could earn her diploma and continue to excel beyond school.



Seeking answers, Jasmine's mother turned to MAC. She called our Helpline and spoke to trained staff who informed her about Jasmine's right to transition services, which MAC's tireless legislative advocacy has helped to protect. The Helpline staff gave Jasmine's mother advice about how to obtain an evaluation for transition services so she could get the support she needed to successfully transition into adulthood. But Jasmine's story wasn't over yet.

"Jasmine was in a dark place and I was worried about her future. MAC helped me understand our rights so we could get the supports she needed. Now, I feel more empowered and Jasmine is a high school graduate with more confidence than ever before!"

- *Jasmine's mom*

In October of 2015, Jasmine's mother experienced one of her worst nightmares: After a series of threats on social media, Jasmine was physically beaten by a fellow student while a crowd of her peers stood by and watched and videotaped the incident. Jasmine was scared to return to school, and her mother was concerned about her safety and furious that her spirited, loving daughter had been the victim of such a horrific attack.

Fortunately, Jasmine's mother knew where to turn. She contacted MAC, and we filed an emergency complaint and negotiated to have Jasmine transferred out of her high school so she could continue her education through an inclusive concurrent enrollment (MAICEI) program at Roxbury Community College (RCC) – a program MAC's advocacy

helped make possible. MAC's attorneys also helped Jasmine obtain an internship at RCC and enroll in an Easter Seals program where she met regularly with a transition specialist and learned to navigate her health care, manage money, apply for jobs, and manage complicated adult relationships.

Because of you, today, Jasmine is thriving. Your support removed barriers on Jasmine's path to becoming an educated and independent adult. Through the one-on-one support MAC's skilled attorneys provided Jasmine and her mother, and the laws MAC's advocacy has put in place, Jasmine has come a long way since the bullying incident. Since her internship at RCC, Jasmine has sought and secured employment on her own, working in her areas of interest. **Jasmine's mother is proud of how far her daughter has come, and grateful to you for making her success possible.**

*Name changed to protect privacy

2017 Impact[±]



1,129 Calls

Our Helpline staff & volunteers empowered families to advocate for their children.



33 Cases

MAC represented low income children in 2017 to help them get access to services they needed to achieve.



6 Priorities

We advanced equal education policy for children at the statehouse and in Boston Public Schools in six priority areas.

[±]12 mos. ending 11/27/17

Highlights of our 2017 Annual Accomplishments.

- Led advocacy efforts with our partners for the state Office of Medicaid to fully implement coverage of ABA services, benefiting over 2,000 low-income children with autism.
- Monitored with our coalition partners the implementation of the school discipline law (Chapter 222) and worked with the state education department (DESE) to stop school districts from circumventing the law through early dismissals/therapeutic removals.
- Joined with partner organizations to lead efforts that ensure Puerto Rican students with disabilities displaced by Hurricane Maria are welcomed to their new school districts in Massachusetts with the services and supports they need to succeed.
- Launched a new Latino and Special Education Coalition, comprised of attorneys and advocates focused on language access, special education, and rights of undocumented students and families who have children with autism and other disabilities.
- Led a new statewide advocacy campaign focused on legislation to establish standards for interpreters working in school settings, to ensure language access for immigrant families.
- Worked with the Code of Conduct Advisory Council (COCAC) to advocate with the Boston Public Schools to implement the state school discipline law by improving school culture and prioritizing social-emotional learning.
- Led with DESE the state's Safe and Supportive Schools Commission to provide tools for schools to adopt organizational change practices to become safe and supportive by integrating and aligning progressive discipline, social emotional learning, and trauma sensitivity.
- Completed the second year of research on TLPI's inquiry-based process with five demonstration schools to become trauma-sensitive. As the positive outcomes have become known, DESE leadership visited the schools to see the outcomes generated by their work.
- Advocated to address transition needs of older students through the state's Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative, highlighted by the state's first inclusive resident life initiative successfully launched at Bridgewater State University which fully included two students with autism in dormitory living.
- Secured an agreement by the Lawrence Public Schools to implement an inclusion initiative by moving the first 12 children with autism from its segregated special education school to regular education elementary and middle schools.
- Continued to monitor with civil rights partners the admissions of black and Latino students to Boston's exam schools, especially Boston Latin School (BLS), including joint release of the report, "A Broken Mirror," revealing lack of progress and continuing under-enrollment.
- Partnered with stakeholders in the B-SET for Career Network to implement new initiatives, including expanding inclusion in Boston afterschool programs, training youth service staff on hidden disabilities, and providing career exploration for 25 BPS students (Boston ICAN).
- Successfully led advocacy campaign resulting in the state's overdue launch of new Medicaid coverage for non-dedicated AAC devices and software, including tablets such as iPads.
- Advocated successfully with the state Board of Education to expand availability of the new Autism Endorsement to general education teachers.

Brighten a child's future: www.massadvocates.org/donate

All donations are tax deductible.



Massachusetts Advocates for Children
25 Kingston Street, 2nd Floor
Boston, MA 02111
617-357-8431

