



Community Advocacy & Legal Centre

## 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

### Getting people more legal help and improving legal services

Our clinic's strategic direction has seen a shift in 2011. Not only do we continue to provide poverty law legal services in Hastings, Prince Edward, and Lennox & Addington counties but also we are working closely with new partners to explore how we can collectively provide better, seamless legal aid services across a five-county area. In March 2011 we

released *Paths to Justice: Navigating with the Wandering Lost*, a report that looked at the challenges faced by people across the five-county area. The focus was on those who live in rural and remote areas or who speak a language other than English or French. Since then we have been following up on the report's recommendations and launching a number of new

initiatives. You can read about these in this report and in our recent *Bafflegab* newsletter. We also continue to be involved in a large number of provincial projects aiming to increase the impact, efficiency and effectiveness of poverty law services offered by community legal clinics across Ontario.

*(Continued on page 2)*

#### Our Mission

The Community Advocacy & Legal Centre provides access to justice through quality legal services, advocacy and information for people living on a low income or in poverty.

#### Our Vision

We strive to achieve social justice with dignity by influencing change in our community, our institutions and the law.

#### Our Values

We believe:

- Justice is a right for individuals and communities
- In being client centered and accessible
- Every person is of infinite value
- In being responsive to, and collaborative with, our community
- In creative, innovative and effective services and work

*"Experience has taught me that justice is not a fixed destination that we reach, but an illusive and continuous journey that we undertake and embrace. Justice does not stand at the end of the legal rainbow waiting for us to arrive and discover it." David Hall, June 2007 (former Dean of Northeastern University School of Law)*

### Recovered more than \$3 million for clients!

We recovered more than \$3 million for clients last year. These conservative estimates in the box below are based on the awards that people received as a result of our advocacy in seven types of cases only, and not on the future value of the awards which is worth much more. These estimates are for monies recovered for our clients between October 2010 and September 2011.

Demand for individual legal services was steady in 2011. In the past year, we dealt with approximately 4,300 requests for information, advice, and brief services. Of these requests, the majority were

about housing, followed by social assistance, Ontario Disability denials, and employment matters. We also took on 512 new client cases, a slight decrease from last year. Overall, about 960 people per month benefited from our help, also a slight decrease from last year.

We worked on more than 110 projects. Project files are

opened for our outreach, legal education, community development, systemic advocacy and law reform initiatives, in addition to special internal projects that focus on quality improvements or innovations, staff training, or collaborative work with legal clinic colleagues and Legal Aid Ontario.

Ontario Disability Support Plan (ODSP) appeals .....	\$ 1,685,671
Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPP) appeals .....	109,572
Workers Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) appeals .....	171,648
Employment Law and Human Rights .....	236,643
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CICB) cases .....	572,050
Housing (files and Tenant Duty Counsel) .....	126,677
Social Assistance Overpayments .....	154,113

**Total: \$ 3,056,374**

## Helping people with disabilities get a stable income

We had another very busy year helping disabled clients appeal Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) denials to the Social Benefits Tribunal (SBT). We opened 348 files and closed 402 files. We attended 165 SBT hearings throughout our catchment area. Over 52% of our cases settle prior to a hearing (which is considerably higher than the provincial average). This means our clients get ODSP benefits more quickly. Our clients who were receiving Ontario Works (OW) benefits, prior to being deemed a person with a disability, will receive an estimated \$465 more per month to buy healthier food, pay their bills and improve their standard of living.

The Disability Adjudication Unit is reviewing clients who were granted

ODSP in the past. The medical review process requires the client's doctor to complete a whole new application for disability benefits, and to go through the entire disability assessment process all over again. We believed this was the wrong process to use and argued the issue at the SBT in May 2011. The Tribunal accepted our argument that the test on appeal of a medical review decision should be different.

**Significantly**, the Tribunal found that since our client had already been found to be a person with a disability, the test on a medical review is whether or not she **continued** to be a person with a disability. We have been completely successful in all of our medical review cases which means our disabled clients will continue to receive their benefits.

We have streamlined our ODSP work by developing a case management system. This has allowed us to reduce the average time spent on a client's file. We continue to share our case management system with other clinics. Several clinics are now using our system or have modified our system for their own use. We also continue to share our precedent materials with clinics and private bar lawyers. These actions all contribute to better and more efficient legal services and result in more access to justice work being possible for low-income people. We can handle more cases and do more community development and law reform work.

## Getting more people legal help (Continued from page 1)

Building on 30 years as a community-based not-for-profit organization we've hosted two forums locally on access to justice issues this year and more will be offered in 2012. As always, our attention is focussed on issues of social justice for marginalized and vulnerable communities. We are also working towards a larger vision - we want to

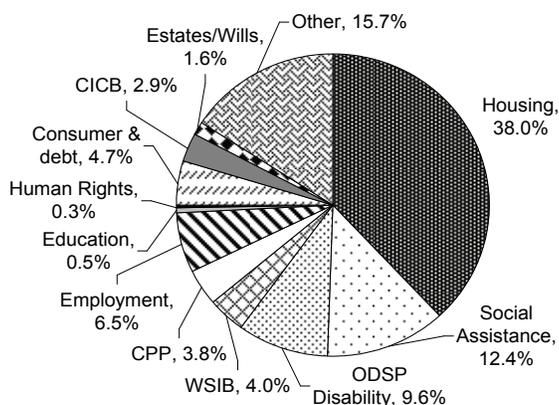
assure that the legal services we offer are collaborative, holistic and integrated.

What do we mean by these terms? Come to our public forums and find out. Join in our dialogue about what access to justice means. We believe it is more than just providing access to the courts. We believe that ensuring access to

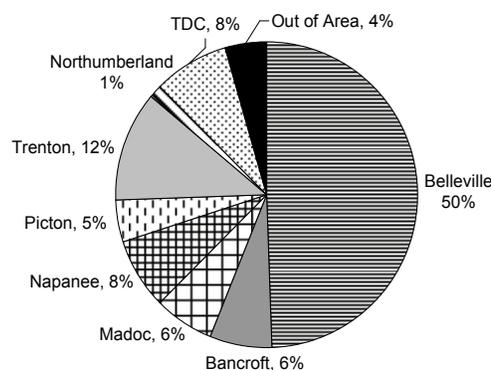
justice, including social justice outcomes, is as important as ensuring health services and education. Providing access to justice includes strategies that increase legal literacy, build healthy communities, encourage citizen engagement, and ensure full and equal participation and social inclusion.

### 2011 Individual client service statistics, by area of law and by geographic area:

Total Advice, Brief Services & Referrals (to Sep 30)



Service (Advice, Brief Service, Referrals) by Geographic Area (to Sep 30)



% Case Files Opened (to Sep 30)

ODSP Disability	67.5%
Housing	9.1%
Criminal Injuries	7.5%
Employment	7.5%
CPP Disability	3.6%
Social Assistance	2.1%
WSIB	1.3%
Human rights	0.8%
Education	0.3%
Other	0.3%

## Working to improve income security and respect

The main focus of our income security advocacy work was participating in the Review of Social Assistance that began in January 2011. The Review is looking at both Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Plan (ODSP) income support issues.

One of our clinic lawyers is on the Board of Directors of the Income Security Advocacy Centre (ISAC), a legal clinic that specializes in income programs and poverty reduction work. In its submission to the Review, ISAC argued that the inadequacy of social assistance rates must be addressed immediately and there must also be significant changes to the complex and confusing social assistance rules. They are intrusive and result in a high degree

of surveillance on the lives of poor people. It is time for a new vision for social assistance. We must move away from punitive and negative approaches and the unworkable and unproven workfare program to a model that uses opportunity planning to help people. In appropriate cases, help for sustainable work and long term income support is needed.

In August we partnered with the ODSP Action Coalition to consult with local people who were or have been receiving income support. We also partnered with the Community Health Centre in Napanee to host two consultations including one with service providers. With this feedback we prepared a submission to the Review recommending

changes beginning with increasing the dollar amount of income support and other benefits. Furthermore, OW and ODSP need to be delivered in a way that is more sensitive, respectful and empowering.

We also worked with a diverse group of community activists to bring the documentary film *Poor No More* to Belleville in September 2011. This lively and engaging film focused on the need for stable and meaningful employment to fight poverty. We also worked with the Affordable Action Housing Network to raise the issue of poverty in the provincial election by organizing an All-Candidates Debate focusing on the theme of jobs, poverty, and affordable housing.

### Getting more legal help for the Deaf and improving access to justice

Our March 2011 *Paths to Justice* study revealed that people who are Deaf need help navigating the complex legal system and getting the help they need. We have partnered with the Canadian Hearing Society, who will be providing free legal interpretation services through our Belleville office using Video Relay technology. This new service, funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario, will begin in the Spring of 2012. We are also going to be embedding brief videos featuring legal tips interpreted in American Sign Language (ASL) on our website thanks to a special poverty law innovation grant by Legal Aid Ontario. And we will be making special outreach efforts to provide legal information sessions to people who are Deaf in 2012.

## We continue to make an impact with vulnerable workers

This year saw a lot of changes with our Worker's Rights practice and a renewed commitment to helping vulnerable workers. Although we continue to grow our employment law services, we have already achieved good successes for our clients. We increased the yearly amount awarded for our clients by 40% over 2010, recovering in the areas of wrongful dismissal, Employment Insurance, Human Rights, and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB). We've improved our Employment Standards Self-Help Kit to assist workers who have been terminated without cause and have received very positive feedback from users of this kit. We expect to develop more tip-sheets and self-help material in the coming year for the benefit of workers. We continue to collaborate with Northumberland Legal Clinic to

increase our shared services in wrongful dismissal and WSIB matters. This collaboration ensures that clients across our four counties have access to the legal services they need.

Our Temporary Foreign Workers project is rolling along. We organized two social events in 2011 in partnership with some dedicated community members to increase awareness of our services for migrant workers. It was a great opportunity to interact with the temporary foreign worker community and learn about their legal and other needs. We produced a Spanish-language information card which we will begin distributing at our Annual General Meeting. We will also be collaborating with other legal clinics and organizations to develop long-term strategies for assisting migrant workers.

Our goal in 2012 is to expand and improve our employment law work by knowledge-sharing with clinics across Ontario. In collaboration with two significant partners, we are spearheading the development of an employment law wiki for clinic practitioners. The wiki allows us to share our knowledge in employment law issues, with a focus on *Employment Standards Act* claims, and will include an intake manual, frequently asked questions, a precedent bank, significant case law and other useful resources. Clinics across the province will be able to access the wiki and share their own knowledge in this area of the law. We are also improving our employment law resources on our website by collaborating with Community Legal Education Ontario.

## Increasing legal literacy and reaching out to our community

This year we attended more than 40 events, meeting with service providers, community groups, parents of children with disabilities, students and community members. Our public legal education information sessions always generate many questions and are interactive, even with large groups. We continue to address common myths about the law, such as the myth that "I cannot be evicted in the winter." Places we have visited included the Canadian Mental Health Association, Community Development Council offices, Counselling Services of Belleville and District, Loyalist College, Gleaners Food Bank, Community Health Centres, Maggie's Resource Centre, Community

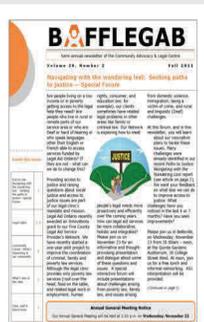
Services Fairs, Brown Bag lunches, and Ontario Works offices.

In addition to presentations, we also distributed 1200 clinic pamphlets, 900 fridge magnets and 374 coffee mugs. Also, we ordered 6,493 information pamphlets from CLEO (Community Legal Education Ontario) for distribution at outreach events, mailing to our clients and distributing through our office pamphlet rack. A major organizing effort this year were the two days of Legal Awareness Workshops (LAW) we organized in collaboration with Legal Aid Ontario, neighbouring legal clinics and CLEO on March 3 and 4 in Sharbot Lake, Kingston, Belleville and Cobourg.

These workshops coincided with the release of our *Paths to Justice* report that recommended a much more extensive outreach and legal literacy program to help meet the legal needs of rural and linguistic communities.

We have ambitious plans for 2012 and will be introducing LEARN LAW lunches for service providers and legal information columns in local papers, amongst other new initiatives. We are excited to announce our new **partnership with local public libraries** to improve access to legal information through our libraries. Joint learning sessions begin in November!

### Newsletter distribution



Our newsletter, produced in-house, was once again sent out in the spring and fall and posted to our website.

This year we distributed more than 3,490 copies, of which 18% were sent by email.

We also received 537 hits to our 2011 newsletters on our website as of Oct 31.

### Improving legal literacy and increasing access to justice

Our website continues to get more hits. Individual visits (unique visitors) for the first 10 months of 2011 were over 19,690, a 21% increase from visits in 2010 during the same time frame. Page hits (full page downloads) went up 19% to almost 232,800 pages viewed.

### Volunteers: A great asset

Our volunteer program continues to thrive and we cannot do without our volunteers! This year 32 people donated their time to the clinic, which amounted to 2,200 hours of community service. Volunteer Board Members contributed 800 hours. Our volunteer base includes community members, retired people, college students/graduates, law students and placement students. Our volunteers help with a range of activities including Tenant Duty Counsel support, legal research, file work assistance, client interviewing and contact, outreach, administrative and clerical help, and special projects. We are always looking for ways to improve our program and also to recruit more volunteers.

## Reaching further with social media

We have 163 followers on Twitter, doubling our audience in the last year. Forty percent of our followers are local people or companies, 30% are in the legal field and 15% are from other community service providers. Some of our followers include local newspapers and other community legal clinics. Since September 30, 2010 we have sent out 348 tweets to our followers.

We have also recently joined Facebook. So far we have 30 followers.

Follow us on Facebook or Twitter to get the latest legal news, education, and information as well as information about related events in our community.



## Housing services: Staying the course and increasing legal literacy

Housing calls continued to make up a high percentage of the work we do. Although demand has decreased somewhat from 2010, housing inquiries still make up almost 40% of our summary advice. Tenant Duty Counsel (TDC) saw a reduced demand for service over the same period last year, which we partially attribute to reduced problematic applications filed by one local landlord. Duty Counsel is back to 2009 service levels. We continue to stop or delay eviction in more than 50% of cases.

Our involvement with a number of housing repair cases demonstrated to us that even when the best facts exist, tenants still have difficulty getting repairs done in their rental units. This highlights the need for tenants to be aware of a landlord's maintenance obligation early in a tenancy, to complain often and to persist to get the repairs done. It also highlights the continued

need to encourage better enforcement of local property standards by-laws.

We still see that our clients continue to struggle, not only to pay the rent, but to pay ever increasing utility costs. Changes by the Ontario Energy Board to the rules about electricity bill deposits and paying arrears (October 2011) may help to avoid electricity shut-offs in the future. A new tip sheet and a Bafflegab article helped to keep the community informed about these important changes.

Thanks to special funding from Hastings County for eviction prevention, all tenants who contact us receive a package of information about tenants' rights and obligations. Sixty-seven percent of clients surveyed about our housing mail-out said it was very useful. We will continue to increase tenant awareness of housing rights through a

modified, more cost effective version of this mail-out.

We provided legal education sessions to service providers and client groups. For example, Gleaner's staff received housing law training for the first time this year, and we continue to provide legal information for their clients. In 2012 we look forward to enhancing legal literacy through continued development of a case study approach to learning and by offering more opportunities for training through the use of recently purchased web conferencing software.

This year we were asked to collaborate with the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario to provide presentations to other legal clinics on our "promising practices." At workshops in North Bay and Toronto we shared how we organize TDC services and how we use volunteers to aid in providing effective TDC services.

### Working with and for our Aboriginal Community

We held a focus group with the Aboriginal Community on access to justice issues and hosted a legal information booth at the Tyendinaga Pow Wow in August. We also worked with Legal Aid Ontario's lead counsel on the Aboriginal Justice Strategy to present a training session for legal clinic colleagues on Aboriginal law issues. We also employed an Aboriginal law student for the summer with funding received from Kagita Makim to explore local Aboriginal issues.

## Taking a systemic approach to affordable housing issues

We continued to be actively involved with affordable housing groups in Hastings, Prince Edward and Lennox & Addington Counties. In December 2010 the Prince Edward County Affordable Housing Working Group (PECAHWG) saw the release of their report *Strategic Action Plan for Affordable Housing in Prince Edward County*. The report's recommendations have been embraced by the Prince Edward-Lennox & Addington Social Services Committee and used to develop an Affordable Housing Delivery Plan. Clinic staff co-chair the PECAHWG.

Housing Action in Lennox & Addington (HALA) successfully obtained funding to continue the Community Facilitator position and organized its first National Housing Day for November 22, 2011. We actively participate in this group. HALA and the PECAHWG will both provide representation to the Housing Advisory Committee, which will advise the Prince Edward-Lennox & Addington Social Services committee on the new Affordable Housing Delivery Plan.

The Affordable Housing Action Network (AHAN) in Hastings County

had an active year, which started with a public meeting in January to review and revise the Belleville Community Plan. With both a federal and a provincial election in 2011, AHAN was busy with raising awareness about local affordable housing issues, which included working on the Poor No More Task Force and an all-candidates meeting in September that focused on poverty reduction and social justice issues. Clinic staff chair the AHAN steering committee and participates in both its working committees.

## Report from the Chair of the Board of Directors

The Annual General Meeting is a time to celebrate and a time to reflect on the achievements and contribution that the clinic makes to our community. Those achievements include the delivery of services to a wide geographic area and to a diverse clientele and the many accomplishments you have read about in this annual report. The staff, volunteers, and board members have worked hard to create a clinic that is recognized as a successful model for the effective and efficient delivery of legal services. Having a strong operational infrastructure and ensuring good governance are critical to our success and our innovative approaches.

We would like to thank our strong base of volunteers this year. They have all contributed to the success of the clinic.

This was an exciting year as the clinic added two new lawyers, Daniel McCabe

and Jordana Laporte, and an articling student funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario, Pamela Vlastic. We've also continued to build our relationship with Queen's University by creating a new legal externship program with the Law School, and with Loyalist College by accepting more paralegal placements than ever before. We are extremely pleased with the ground-breaking work being undertaken by the Legal Aid Service Providers Five County Network, with the funding this year from both the Law Foundation and Legal Aid Ontario's Poverty Law Innovation Fund. And we are delighted that the clinic is now a registered charity and we are raising funds for ongoing Access to Justice internships for law students.

I would like to give a special thanks to our outgoing board members, Rasa Baltutis, Tim Grew, and Ken Palmer who served 8, 7, and 8 years

respectively. Their passion and dedication to the clinic will be missed.

Along with our outgoing board members, I would also like to thank and congratulate several staff members who have reached milestones. Lawyer Gina Cockburn will be celebrating 10 years with the clinic in December, Legal Secretary/Intake Worker Diane French celebrated 15 years in November and Community Legal Worker Marieanne Langer will celebrate 15 years in February, 2012. Their contribution over these years has helped make the clinic a success and is greatly appreciated.

I would also like to congratulate Lawyer/Executive Director Michele Leering, on her appointment to the Ukrainian Legal Aid Foundations' International Advisory Board.

## Seeking justice for victims of violent crime

Helping victims of crime is an important part of our work. We represent people who have been abused as children or in domestic relationships, or in other special circumstances. We also give advice and information to other victims of crime. This year we recovered a total of \$572,050 for our clients which is a 64% increase over last year partly because the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CICB) is getting caught up on an old backlog and processing new cases more quickly.

Our clients continue to report a strong sense of closure after receiving an award. CICB is holding more oral hearings in Belleville, almost monthly, compared to quarterly or less in previous years, and decisions are being processed faster on average (under four months). We expect this trend to continue and we support CICB's goal of reducing the time it takes to process a claim to one year.

As a result of settling our first Divisional Court Appeal where a client's claim had been denied, our client received a significant award after a new hearing.

We continue to collaborate with other legal colleagues to improve our collective and systemic services for victims of crime. We continue to share our legal and file precedents and case management system and hosted a knowledge-sharing visit with the Barbara Schlifer Clinic. We presented a training session on current CICB issues at a clinic training conference last spring. We are organizing our first web-conference call on emerging CICB issues in December.

We continue to oppose the CICB practice of notifying offenders on any claim where there has not been a conviction. This is a significant change from past practice where the CICB had discretion not to do this in special

circumstances, which included assessing the risk to the victim. The student clinic at the University of Ottawa filed a court case arguing that notifying offenders violates women's right to life, liberty and security of the person and breaches their rights under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. We are requesting the CICB put our clients' claims on hold pending the result of this court case. We are also encouraging community members and agencies who are concerned about this issue to write to the Ministry of the Attorney General.

The CICB has invited us to help them design a stakeholder consultation process. We recently attended a meeting with the CICB and other colleagues to discuss this and their current operations, including the hearings process, accommodation of clients and other issues. We also continue to be involved in work for domestic violence victims in our area.

## How our work impacts our clients' lives — One client's story

I was physically abused by my partner and didn't know what to do. I feared for my life and called the police. At the time of the abuse, I didn't know where to go or who to turn to. I bore the guilt of the abuse and tried to hide.

As I sat in a local doughnut shop very late at night and sobbing uncontrollably, I was approached by an off-duty lady police officer who told me about the local shelter. I called the number and after speaking with a worker, went to stay there for a short time. The caseworker at the shelter insisted I be seen by a physician as I wasn't eating or sleeping. I had constant pain in my head that led to a diagnosis that my hearing had been impacted and that I was in the process of losing my hearing. The scars of being thrown down a flight of stairs left me with permanent hearing loss, not to mention the fear associated with it being repeated if my partner was to find me. He was charged with assault, given only 15 months probation and ordered to undergo anger management counseling.

My hearing impairment was the primary cause of my job loss with a major social agency. The only recourse was for me to apply to Ontario Works (OW) who directed me to obtain a letter from my doctor indicating that my hearing loss was severe and profound and I was required to apply for Ontario Disability (ODSP).

I was denied ODSP because they considered my hearing loss not to be a disability as I could still hear about 5% of the sounds in front of me and 0% from the side or behind me! I was still able to understand and carry on a conversation, as long as the person I was speaking to was directly in front of me. I learned how to read lips but have not pursued taking ASL courses as the cost is prohibitive. I have an allergic reaction to latex and the hearing aids irritated my inner ear. As well, my hearing aids kept shorting out and my worker was annoyed that they had to cover the cost of repairs or replacements.

Because ODSP maintained that my hearing impairment wasn't really a

disability, I did the mandatory job search required by OW. My hearing impairment was used as a reason why prospective employers would not hire me. My abuser during this time kept coming after me and would follow me around, even coming to a work placement organized by OW. The police could do nothing to change the situation. Then I heard about the Community Advocacy & Legal Centre (CALC)!

I met with a representative who took my case and helped me in the long process of obtaining my rights. Numerous tribunal hearings finally culminated with CALC being able to demonstrate the errors of ODSP's ways. CALC was also instrumental in helping me obtain some monetary assistance for being a victim of crime from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

I have lost my hearing permanently, but I have slowly regained my self-confidence and self-worth. I thank CALC for being there and in helping me to realize that I was not alone. Help is out there!

### Improving access to justice in rural and remote areas

The Law Foundation has funded an articling student position to help us better reach people who live in our outlying satellite office communities. Our report *Paths to Justice: Navigating with the Wandering Lost* (found online at <http://www.communitylegalcentre.ca/connectingregions/docs/PathsToJusticeFinalReport2011.pdf>) documented the serious challenges getting legal help that is faced by people who live outside urban centres. Our articling student is able to work more closely with our rural and remote clients which provides the comfort of continuity, familiarity and the development of trust. Our articling student attends our satellites in Madoc and Bancroft weekly on a rotating schedule, and works with one of our lawyers to staff a drop-in legal advice clinic in Bancroft on a trial basis on the second Tuesday of every month.

We are also beginning a series of legal information events for service providers in all our satellite communities (which adds Picton, Napanee, & Trenton) that will be launched more formally in early 2012 with the LEARN LAW lunch series. We will also be publishing regular legal information columns in the local papers, and we will be doing outreach through rural libraries beginning in December by working more closely with public library staff! As well, we are planning a series of outreach visits and learning opportunities with constituency office staff for our new Members of Provincial Parliament with whom we hope to continue to work closely. Our articling student staffed a booth about our clinic at Maynooth Madness and met lots of people; we hope to have more booths at fall fairs and other important events over the course of the next year.

## Community Advocacy & Legal Centre

158 George Street, Level 1  
Belleville, ON K8N 3H2

Phone: 613-966-8686  
Toll Free Phone: 1-877-966-8686  
TTY (for the Deaf): 613-966-8714  
Toll Free TTY: 1-877-966-8714  
Fax: 613-966-6251

Email (for the deaf): [calc@lao.on.ca](mailto:calc@lao.on.ca) \*NEW\*

*Your community legal clinic*

### Client services rated highly!

Client satisfaction is tracked through an evaluation form sent to each client as his/her case is closed. The clinic's performance continues to rank highly.

Of the people returning the surveys, 100% were satisfied with the results of their case; 95% would refer us to others, and 90% said our help made a difference in their lives.

## 2011 – 2012 Board of Directors

<b>Chair</b>	Matt Gemmell
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Virginia Pearsall
<b>Treasurer</b>	Rick Helman
<b>Secretary</b>	Ruth James Morrow
<b>Members</b>	Rasa Baltutis, Neil Burrell, Tim Grew, Ken Palmer, Michelle Rosebush, Barbara Watson

## Thanks to our Volunteers!

Norma Barrett	Meredith Magee
Leighann Bishop	Lyne Maisonneuve
Chris Black	Gord Mitchell
Stephanie Bosma	Amy McDonald
Jane Boyle	Kymerlee Nicholls
Elizabeth Cairn	Drew Payette
Wanda Campbell	Jerri Phillips
Tammy Carson	Joanne Poppenk
Andrew Dinkel	Alyssa Reynolds
Lisa Dwyer	Danielle Rode
Samantha Foster	Brenda Scruby
Annita Gray	Andrea Steiner
Michael Green	Anne Sweet
Linda Janveaux	Corinna Traill
Krystal Johnson	Dorothy Watts
Melissa MacRae	Gary Wells

## Staff (Current full-time, part-time and special project staff)

Denise Bird	Marieanne Langer	Lynda Morgan
Gina Cockburn	Jordana Laporte	Sharon Powell
Diane French	Maureen Lightfoot	Anne Sweet
Carolyn Hamilton	Daniel McCabe	Pamela Vlasic
Samantha Hayward	Deirdre McDade	Ingrid Wood
Peter Kerr	Carrie McGeown	Susan Young

**Michele Leering, Executive Director**

## Our work this year would not have been possible without support from the following funders:



Individual Private Donations

### From our clients:

“You guys are great!”  
 “Keep doing this, this service is better than Legal Aid!”  
 “I was completely shocked by the skill and readiness of [staff]. I wouldn't consider changing a thing.”  
 “The job you did was very good, this type of service is important.”  
 “Your staff did an excellent job.”  
 “It's hard to improve on excellence.”

### From our volunteers:

“It was a really terrific time for me as a law student. The experiential learning was wonderful, and the mentoring I received from the staff lawyers there was always helpful, whether directly related to case work, or simply the intangible water-cooler moments. I've certainly mentioned my experience there to my peers with an interest in social justice issues. The work environment really made me look forward to coming in each day and I wanted to do a good job.”

### From agencies:

“I would also like to say that this appeal was successful, in my view, entirely because of the excellent work your office had done in preparing the appeal and obtaining the necessary and appropriate medical information.”  
 From the Law Commission of Ontario: “Thank you once again for your incredible work in coordinating the consultation meetings yesterday. I know it takes time and effort to arrange these meetings and without your willingness and ability to draw upon local contacts, we wouldn't be able to get the thoughtful input and perspectives from the different regions of the province.”