



MEDIA RELEASE

Libraries and legal minds work together

Belleville/April 29, 2013 - An effective pilot project has brought legal professionals together with public libraries locally. As a result, people in the community are getting help to find reliable legal information.

The project was initiated by the Community Advocacy & Legal Centre (CALC) which is based in Belleville. CALC serves Hastings and Prince Edward counties along with Lennox and Addington County.

"This project is one part of a larger plan involving a five-county network," says Michele Leering, executive director of CALC. "The goal is to increase access to justice for all."

Active partners in the library project along with CALC are: Community Legal Education Ontario or "CLEO"; the public libraries in Deseronto, Tweed, Quinte West and Belleville and the Hastings County Law Association Library.

Part of the work of the project has been to offer workshops and on-site visits to area libraries. The workshops gave libraries the chance to explain the types of legal problems for which their patrons were seeking help. Using that information, CALC and CLEO assist libraries by providing printed and on-line resources that anyone can easily use. Libraries also have information about agencies that may help the public with their problems.

"Libraries work with limited budgets and limited staff time," says Trevor Pross, chief executive officer of the Belleville Public Library. "It's difficult to keep print copies of legal materials up-to-date. Besides, they are often written in language that's difficult to understand. This project addresses those problems."

In rural communities, where privacy can be more of an issue than in urban areas, the project serves needs well. "A public library is a community hub. The combination of materials people can take home and online resources is especially helpful to people who want confidentiality when dealing with a legal issue," says Cathy Anderson, chief executive officer at the Tweed Public Library.

Rita Turtle, chief executive officer with the Quinte West Library, agrees with her colleagues. "As librarians we always want to provide the correct information to our patrons or point them to the correct agency to assist them. Working with CALC and CLEO gives us confidence that we are doing that."

Those thoughts are echoed by Frances Smith, chief executive officer of Deseronto Public Library. "We encourage people to visit their public library for help finding information about legal questions."

For more information call CALC at [613-966-8686](tel:613-966-8686). Toll free phone: [1-877-966-8686](tel:1-877-966-8686).
TTY call: [613-966-8714](tel:613-966-8714) or visit www.communitylegalcentre.ca

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For more information call:

Michele Leering, Executive Director, CALC at [613-966-8686 ext. 27](tel:613-966-8686) or toll free at [1-877-966-8686 ext. 27](tel:1-877-966-8686)

The Community Advocacy & Legal Centre (CALC) is a non-profit community legal clinic principally funded by Legal Aid Ontario. The clinic was founded in 1980 and provides poverty law services to low income residents of Hastings, Prince Edward and Lennox and Addington counties. The clinic's main office is in Belleville, with satellite locations in Trenton, Picton, Napanee, Amherstview, Bancroft and Madoc. For more information, visit CALC's website at www.communitylegalcentre.ca.