



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Community Advocacy & Legal Centre Statement on National Aboriginal Day: Local Legal Clinic will be Closed to Celebrate and Honour the First Peoples of Canada

"We have described for you a mountain. We have shown you the path to the top. We call upon you to do the climbing." – Senator Murray Sinclair, TRC Chief Commissioner

The Community Advocacy & Legal Clinic (CALC) is closing on June 21, 2017 to celebrate National Aboriginal Day. Co-Director of Legal Services Deirdre McDade recently noted, "our legal clinic will be closed in a spirit of Indigenous solidarity, to recognize the First Peoples of Canada and celebrate their cultures".

CALC is guided by the words of Senator Sinclair, and recognizes that reconciliation is "not an Aboriginal problem, it is a Canadian problem. It involves all of us". The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) final report, based on input from over 6,750 residential school survivors, outlined 94 *Calls to Action*. Ms. McDade stated that "many of the *Calls* speak directly to the work that we do as lawyers, advocates and employers. CALC recognizes that the TRC Final Report is a gift from survivors, and we will be using this time to engage all staff in cultural competency and reconciliation activities."

The *Calls to Action* call upon Canadians to adopt the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the legal framework for reconciliation. Ms. McDade spoke about the injustice of land theft and cultural genocide, and the ongoing legacy of residential schools and systemic racism. CALC is committed to developing deeper meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples, based on an ethic of transparency and consultation.

Clinic Executive Director Michele Leering also noted, "National Aboriginal Day, and every day, we want to acknowledge the land on which we work and live is traditional Mohawk and Chippewa territory. We recognize the enduring presence of Indigenous Peoples on this land. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, and on this territory."

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 & 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.

For further information about the contents of this press release, please call Deirdre McDade, Co-Director of Legal Services, at 613-966-8686, ext 26 or Toll Free at 1-877-966-8686, ext 26.

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