

For Immediate Release

Tuesday, November 8, 2005 (Belleville, Ontario)

"Legal clinic launches website to celebrate 25 years of service to the community"

December 1, 1980 Hastings and Prince Edward Legal Services opened a small storefront office on 194 Front St. in Belleville and began to provide legal services to clients living on a low income or in poverty. Twenty-five years later the legal clinic's Executive Director, Michele Leering reflects on how much the clinic has changed since then. "We now offer services in three counties, including Lennox & Addington. We have six offices, including satellites in Napanee, Quinte West, Madoc, Bancroft and Picton. From four staff we have grown to fourteen. In addition to offering traditional legal services such as advice and representation in poverty law areas, we also have both a healthy community development, legal education and outreach program and a law reform program." Last year the clinic's name was changed to the Community Advocacy & Legal Centre to both keep pace with its growth and its broader mandate.

Cathy McCallum, Chairperson of the non-profit community legal clinic's Board of Directors added that "the clinic staff and Board are pleased to launch the new clinic website as a way of celebrating their involvement with the community over the past 25 years. The website will outline the work the clinic has been involved in, how and what services are now offered, provide information and resources for clients and organizations, and have links to many other community resources." The clinic's site will also host special subsites for the Affordable Housing Action Network and the clinic's ProBono project with the private bar. Phase I of the clinic's website goes live on December 1 at www.communitylegalcentre.ca. Phase II of the website, which will include significant enhancements will begin in 2006 with monthly releases of new information, resources, and links. It's an exciting new initiative.

"The community is invited to the launch of the website at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 1 at St. Thomas Anglican Church at 201 Church Street in Belleville", notes Michele Leering. "The Annual General Meeting for the clinic will follow at 7:30 p.m. Anyone interested in running for the clinic's Board of Directors should contact the clinic at 966-8686 or toll free at 1-877-966-8686 as soon as possible," advises Cathy McCallum.

The clinic has been helping people living on a low income since 1980 with their legal problems in the areas of housing law (tenants' rights), income assistance, criminal injuries compensation, employment law including worker's compensation, and human rights. Funded mainly by Legal Aid Ontario, the clinic has also received funding this past year to provide Tenant Duty Counsel services at the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal, and from the Provincial Homelessness Initiative for eviction prevention, and ProBono Law Ontario.

For further information about the contents of the press release, please call Michele Leering or Lynda Morgan at the Community Advocacy & Legal Centre at 966-8686, ext. 27 or ext. 25, respectively, or toll free at 1-877-966-8686.

158 George Street - Belleville, Ontario K8N 3H2