



Community Advocacy & Legal Centre

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Community Advocacy & Legal Centre To Host Ukrainian Study Tour

Beginning next week, the Community Advocacy & Legal Centre (CALC) will host a group of Ukrainian community law centre managers who are working to empower the poor in their country. "We are pleased to be hosting this international delegation of non-governmental organizations from across Ukraine," said CALC Executive Director, Michele Leering. "The group wants to learn how we help people with their legal problems – how we provide legal services and advocacy for the poor." Ukraine has undergone a complicated economic transformation since becoming an independent state and now experiences significant socioeconomic transformation. For the last 3 years the Open Society Institute's Justice Initiative (OSI) has been working with the International Renaissance Foundation (IRF) to promote legal aid reforms. A new legal aid law is in the works and the Ukrainians hope to create a system for provision of basic legal information and advice for the poor.

Since 2009, the IRF and OSI have supported this initiative aimed at the development of a network of 8 new community legal aid centres in 4 regions of Ukraine (mainly rural areas). The centres will provide local residents with legal information and support, including a range of legal services using a mixed model of lawyers, paralegals, law students, and trained community volunteers. Similar to Ontario's clinics, these centres will also be engaging their communities to create solutions to their own problems by increasing their knowledge of rights, and undertaking systemic advocacy and law reform projects.

Participants will be in the Belleville area from June 23 until June 28 visiting CALC and neighboring community legal clinics in Kingston, Sharbot Lake and Cobourg. "We were delighted that the Open Society Institute asked us to organize this tour for them. Their access to justice work is groundbreaking in many countries and we are glad to be able to help in any way we can," says Michele Leering.

CALC is a non-profit community legal clinic funded by Legal Aid Ontario. The clinic was founded in 1980 and is currently staffed by lawyers, community legal workers, law clerks and other support staff. CALC serves low income residents of Hastings, Prince Edward and Lennox & Addington counties. The main office is in Belleville, with satellite locations in Trenton, Picton, Napanee, Bancroft and Madoc.

For more information on the work of the clinic, please see CALC's recent newsletter at http://www.communitylegalcentre.ca/news/docs/CALC-Volume_19_Number_1_Jun_2010.pdf

For further information about the contents of this press release, please call Michele Leering at 613-966-8686, ext 27 or Toll Free at 1-877-966-8686.

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