



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: May 4, 2012

Improving Legal Services for the Deaf Community: New Initiative

The local non-profit legal clinic, Community Advocacy & Legal Centre (CALC), is working with the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) to improve legal services for Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in Hastings, Prince Edward, and Lennox & Addington Counties.

CALC has worked with CHS to develop new American Sign-Language (ASL) videos for its website (www.communitylegalcentre.ca). CALC has also partnered with CHS to increase legal interpretation services in ASL. Video Remote Interpreting services will now be available in addition to in-person interpreters. These service improvements, and others, will be highlighted at an upcoming open house at CALC on May 24, 2012.

On April 23, 2012 staff from the Community Advocacy & Legal Centre (CALC), along with other local lawyers and staff from community agencies, participated in a day-long training session on providing barrier-free legal services facilitated by Deaf advocate and former MPP Gary Malkowski.

Legal situations can be overwhelming for everyone. Michele Leering, Executive Director of CALC explains, "we know how frustrating it can be for a Deaf person to get the legal help they need. We are trying to change that."

On April 25, 2012 staff from CALC and from Legal Aid Ontario presented jointly to students at Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf, as well as to Deaf community members on how to access legal services. These events also marked the official launch of CALC's new ASL videos.

These service improvements were funded by grants from the Law Foundation of Ontario and Legal Aid Ontario.

The Community Advocacy & Legal Centre (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, and support staff. Services are provided 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, Bancroft and Madoc.

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

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