Community Advocacy & Legal Centre

2015 Annual Report

Developments at CALC: The Board Chairperson's annual report, by Brad Smith

I am pleased to bring you this report from CALC's Board of Directors. This report and the other ones found in this Annual Report are a critical vehicle for communicating with our stakeholders the work carried out by the Board and staff over the past year.

2015 has been both challenging and productive as we have continued to carry out our mission to provide high quality legal services and advocacy for people living on a low income or in poverty. We had a fairly significant turnover of Board members this year and the resulting mix of new and old members has been enlivening. New members have provided very helpful connections in the communities we serve.

Last year's Board report highlighted three areas of work for 2015:

- "revisioning" the work of the clinic with preparations for a new five-year strategic plan,
- implementing recommendations for the restructuring of clinic operations and succession planning, and
- engaging in clinic system "transformation" activities with support from Legal Aid Ontario.

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Record-breaking recoveries: More than $3.3 million for our clients!

This conservative estimate is based on the awards received in 7 types of cases only, and does not include the future value of the awards, which is worth millions more. See inside for recoveries by area of law.

CALC at 35 years – Journeying towards justice: ED's report

We are celebrating our 35th anniversary this year by setting new strategic directions. This year's special forum with guest speaker Professor Mary Jane Mossman of Osgoode Hall Law School will provide an opportunity for our community and our membership to reflect on our next five years and the outcomes we hope to achieve. Staff and Board have participated in more than 50 consultations with community groups, justice system partners and "not the usual suspects". More than 150 surveys were completed by individuals to help us to understand better the unmet legal needs in our communities and how we could improve our services. Working with our Eastern clinic colleagues and clinic partners across the province we have gathered more data through key informant interviews, focus groups, and reviewing legal needs studies. So what happens next?

Beginning in 2016 we intend to make a difference in the lives of more people, explore new partnerships, develop

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Report from the Board Chair (continued from page 1)

In June, work began in earnest on the needs assessment phase of the new strategic plan with staff gathering information and conducting focus groups and key informant interviews, reporting to a Board & staff committee. The Restructuring and Compensation Review Committee completed a great deal of work on the structure of our organization and worked with the Personnel Committee and the Executive Director on compensation issues. New job descriptions for the Executive Director, Office Manager, and new positions of Co-Director of Legal Services, Executive Assistant, and Access to Justice Community Developer were created. Finally, I represented the Board on the East & Central Regional Transformation Project's Oversight Committee: clinic representatives worked with consultants to analyze regional needs and to develop the first ever regional planning framework for poverty law services. The first report was released in July. We are now developing a "menu" of options for "transforming" services across Eastern Ontario through coordination and collaboration. At least a dozen new initiatives are planned. The work plan for 2016 will be finalized by December 31, 2015. Stay tuned for more details!

CALC's Board and staff did far more than this, as well. Our Executive Director, Michele Leering, continued to foster collaboration across Canada and internationally. We were delighted to host James Farrell, Director of the Queensland (Australia) Association of Independent Legal Services in March. Michele attended the conference of the International Legal Aid Group in Edinburgh, Scotland, in June, having provided a paper on the state of Legal Aid in Canada. In September, Michele was named to the Access to Justice Committee of the Canadian Bar Association. She also provides assistance (as a volunteer) to the Open Society Foundation's (OSF) Justice Initiative to support community-based legal empowerment programs. By the time you read this report, she will have just returned from a three-day OSF legal empowerment charrette in Istanbul, Turkey, where she shared her expertise about how to develop a responsive, strategic and accountable community legal clinic system.

CALC staff have been very innovative in forming partnerships with other disciplines in order to facilitate access to justice. One such innovation is in the emerging field of Justice & Health Partnerships. (See our special report on page 8.) We are also proud of our Libraries & Justice Outreach project and the provincial meeting we organized on October 29, 2015 (see photos on the back page).

A group of former Board members (Rasa Baltutis, Joan Greenwood, Rick Helman, Cathy McCallum, Ken Palmer, and Ginny Pearsall) has established an Association of Friends of the Clinic, with Neil Burrell as their liaison to the Board. They have set terms of reference, developed a statement of values, sponsored a DocFest film on income inequality in memory of the late Tim Grew, a former Board chair, and co-sponsored the Bay of Quinte all-candidates debate on "bread and butter issues" for the 2015 federal election. They will continue to support the work of CALC.

I want to thank the Board of Directors for their efforts this year and wish to say farewell to Michelle Rosebush, who is leaving us after six years, and Johanna Webb and Matt Garrett, who have each served one year. I myself say goodbye as I take up a new position in Peterborough.

We also owe a great deal of thanks to the staff, who are so passionate about their work. Notably, in 2015, our Executive Director, Michele Leering, marked 30 years of service to CALC, and our Office Manager, Lynda Morgan, celebrated her 25th anniversary. This fall, Michele has embarked on a Law PhD program at Queen's University. In January she will be on leave until September 2016. We are grateful that Deirdre McDade will once again step into the position of Acting Executive Director to capably lead us in Michele's absence.

As you can see, the Board and staff at CALC have been very busy this past year and have been doing some very exciting things. As always, our goal is to provide the highest quality of service to our clients, whether we are providing it ourselves or equipping community partners to do so. Thank you for your support.

Brad Smith, Board Chair

Securing stable income for people with disabilities

We had another busy year, like last year, helping disabled clients appeal Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) denials to the Social Benefits Tribunal, attending 41 more hearings than last year.

Files Opened	**434 (72% of all files opened)**
Files Closed	**474**
Success Rate	**> 85%**
Hearings Attended	**232**
Average Retroactive Award	**$6,687**
Total Retroactive Recoveries	**$2.3 million**

Our clients who were receiving Ontario Works (OW) benefits, prior to being deemed a person with a disability, will receive an estimated $442 more per month to buy healthier food, pay their bills, secure better housing, and improve their standard of living.

It appears that we will have another busy year next year. We are already scheduled with 300 hearings from October 2015 through to July 2016.

We are always looking for ways to improve our services particularly in high volume areas of law such as ODSP. This year we streamlined our internal process for ODSP case file work, to make the work flow more administratively efficient and reduce the time spent on cases. We have two support staff more involved at the early and later stages of the case to assist with the heavy workload and to free up the time that was being spent by legal workers.

We have been researching other ways to improve our effectiveness. We will be visiting other legal clinics to observe their Self-Guided Appeal process in 2016. We will begin a pilot action research project to evaluate whether a Self-Guided Appeal process would work for our clients. We hope to see a reduction in hours spent on ODSP cases, freeing our time to work in other areas of law. We also hope clients will feel more legally empowered and knowledgeable.

We are seeing more "medical review" files from people who are receiving ODSP benefits. Medical reviews means people are having their cases reviewed by the Disability Adjudication Unit to see if they are still disabled and restricted in their ability to function in a workplace. We have developed a special process to help people who are undergoing a medical review make sure their health care providers have all the information they need when completing a medical review application. This helps to ensure people continue to receive ODSP without losing their benefits (and possibly their housing, for example due to significantly decreased income), and having to go through a stressful and time consuming appeal process.

Demand for Legal Services Steadily Rising

Demand for individual legal services increased in 2015. We dealt with over 5,110 requests for information, advice, and brief services. Advice and brief service each increased by 10% and we project it will continue to increase by 10% in 2016. Of these requests, the majority were about housing, followed by social assistance, Ontario Disability denials, and employment matters. We took on approximately 600 new client cases. Overall, about 1,000 people per month benefited from our help. Legal education materials provided to callers is up by 66%. Project files are opened for our outreach, legal education, community development, systemic advocacy and law reform initiatives, in addition to special internal projects that focus on quality improvements or innovations, staff training, or collaborative work with legal clinic colleagues and Legal Aid Ontario. We worked on more than 115 projects.

CALC at 35 years: Journeying towards justice (cont'd from p.1)

new legal expertise to meet unmet legal needs, take new approaches to providing services, and undertake more research to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of our services. Our November 10 forum will outline our plans more specifically and we will move into 2016 ready to make new commitments. We'll issue a short report about our new directions and our new mission, vision and values statement early in 2016, after discussing it with our members. Our plans are ambitious and we will need to pace ourselves, but we are confident that we will be able to make a bigger difference over the next five years. For example, consumer and debtor law services will expand this month and legal help for seniors will increase in 2016. We know this help is desperately needed.

This report is full of details about our accomplishments this year. You won't be surprised to learn that the demand for our individual client service is steadily increasing, as set out on page 3. We expect to continue to see increases in the range of 10% to our advice and brief service work in 2016. This will be partly because of our Justice & Health Partnership work and our move to "Guided Assistance" pilot projects to handle the increased demand, while also taking more of a "legal empowerment" approach to help people in difficulty.

Also worthy of note has been the new provincial Rural & Remote Access to Justice Boldness project. Our involvement gives us the reflective space and some resources to explore how better to serve rural and remote communities. On November 10, we co-sponsored a major "justice innovation event" in Toronto for librarians and other justice system partners. More than 70 participants met for a full day to share information and to develop innovative approaches to getting legal information and free legal help to people who are isolated by geography and distance (see photos on back page). Another initiative identifies "centres of excellence": clinics that are willing to share specialized legal expertise across geographic boundaries. With our colleagues, we are also exploring the feasibility of technology like cell phone "apps" to help people. We've also investigated approaches from other provinces and countries. Special "design" workshops will help us make our services more client-centred. We also want to work with Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) and other clinics to create standards for equal access to legal help for rural and remote communities. We'd also like to see more law students placed in these communities, especially in legal clinics. Encouraging law schools to develop special courses or workshops for students interested in rural and remote legal practice is a priority too.

Our strategic plan consultations affirmed our belief that we need to provide more holistic legal services. We know that events like job loss and family breakdown are triggers for clusters of other legal problems. But our services are not designed to meet these needs in an integrated way. LAO has different systems for helping with criminal, family and poverty law problems. We are renewing our resolve to find a new way forward. We try to work closely with our LAO colleagues through our Five County service coordination network. But this year, we have also started informal "community of practice" gatherings with local LAO staff lawyers to see if we can develop an integrated approach. Using hypothetical case studies, we want to find new ways to identify all of a client's legal issues sooner, hopefully intervening earlier and preventing new problems.

The support of our Board of Directors and the newly formed Friends of the Clinic has been crucial this year. Ensuring that we are responsive to the needs of our community is not a small task for our Board. We will miss the wisdom and perspective of Board Chairperson Brad Smith as he takes up his new responsibilities in Peterborough. Our services now cover 9,000 square kilometres and we serve a population of 200,000 people. Depending on where people live—13 to 30% live below the poverty line in three different counties. A large proportion lives outside urban centres and are hard to reach. Helping us to set priorities between different legal needs and balancing our legal work for individuals with the imperative to work on systemic issues, community development, and law reform, is an important part of our Board's role. We are grateful for their oversight. We also greatly appreciate the volunteer hours spent by former Board members Cathy McCallum and Ken Palmer on our new Justice & Health

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CALC at 35 years: Journeying towards justice (Cont'd from p.4)

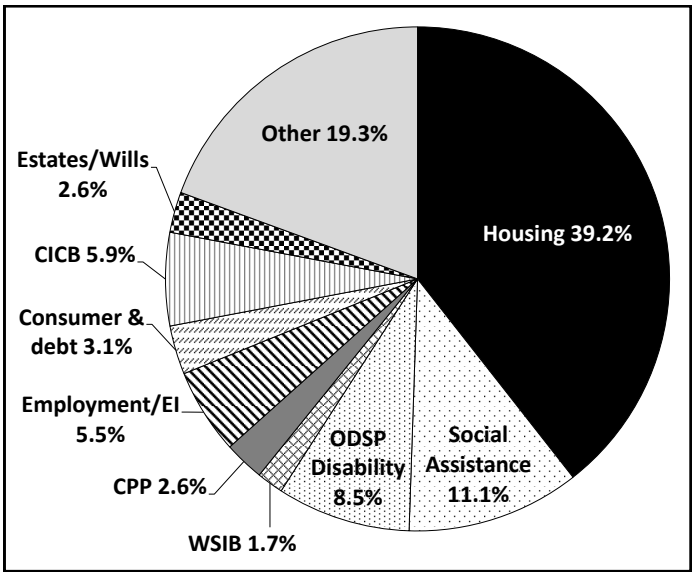
Partnership project. Their enthusiasm, insight, connections and commitment have helped us to rapidly begin to prototype a new, specifically rural approach to reaching the hard-to-serve, people who might otherwise never come to us for help. This approach will transform our services to rural communities.

I will finish on a note of gratitude for our dedicated staff. Much effort goes into making our legal clinic function efficiently and it can be underappreciated. Our clinic management and intake & triage staff are key players who ensure we respond effectively and efficiently to our clients. This year we've spent a lot of time reviewing how we help clients, manage the paper work, and organize the offices. We've made significant changes and this can be challenging for an already busy staff. For example, in the next few weeks we will be implementing new software to make us even more efficient. We've worked with LAO and clinic colleagues for many years to get this software designed. Without our devoted staff implementing changes like these our plans for new and improved services would not be possible. Thank you for everything you bring to our important shared work!

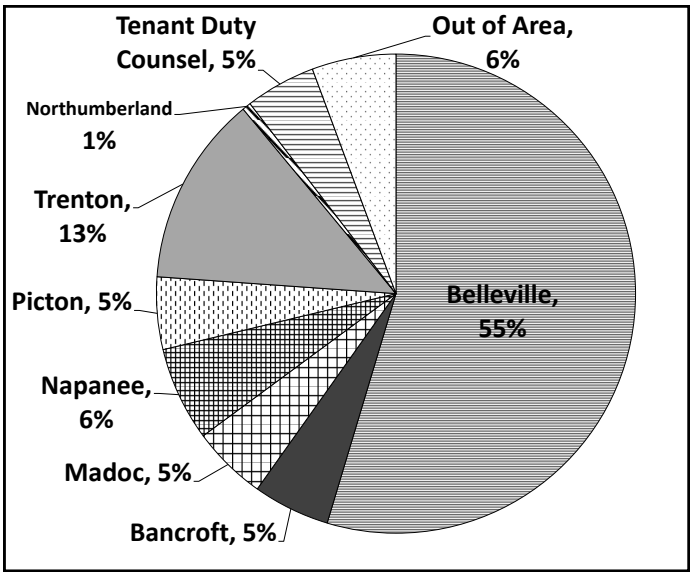
Michele Leering, Executive Director/Lawyer

2015 Individual Client Service Statistics, By Area of Law and Geographic Area

Total Advice, Brief Service & Referrals (to Sep 30)



Service (Advice, Brief Service, Referrals) by Geographic Area (to Sep 30)



% Case Files Opened (to Sep 30)

ODSP Disability	69.6	Housing	2.0
Criminal Injuries	17.2	Employment	1.6
Social Assistance	5.1	CPP Disability	1.1
Workplace Safety & Insurance Board	2.5	Human Rights	0.7

Advocating to end poverty

We continue to advocate to reduce poverty at both a provincial and local level. CALC is a founding member of the Hastings and Prince Edward Poverty Roundtable, which works towards the goal of eliminating the causes of poverty. We do this by building the capacity of our community to work together to plan for and implement strategic, long-term solutions that result in fair and equitable opportunities for all. We continue to actively participate at our local Poverty Roundtable and on its Steering Committee.

In May 2015, over 120 people participated in a workshop organized by the Roundtable to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and strengths of people living in poverty. The event helped us to understand what we as a community could do or do differently to address the causes of poverty.

The Poverty Roundtable, CALC, and Community Development Council organized a "Bread and Butter" debate for the federal election, Bay of Quinte riding in October 2015 . The debate was well attended and provided an opportunity to hear what the candidates had to say about income security, food and health security, affordable housing and child care.

We have been involved in provincial advocacy work on the Steering Committee on Social Assistance, a provincial clinic network that provides a voice to government on social assistance issues. Our focus this past year has been to improve the ODSP disability adjudication process and to enhance access to justice at the Social Benefits Tribunal (SBT). We are participating in tripartite meetings with ODSP and the SBT to work on an early resolution process for medical reviews for people who had been receiving ODSP and had their benefits terminated following a medical review.

We are also a member of the Social Benefits Tribunal Practice Advisory Committee and have been meeting regularly regarding the SBT's new proposed rules. We provided written submissions raising our concerns that the proposed rules create administrative hurdles and complex forms that could threaten access to justice for vulnerable people. We continue to meet with them about our concerns.

We supported a campaign led by the ODSP Action Coalition to ask the provincial government to save the Work-Related Benefit which provides an additional $100 per month to people who are working and receiving ODSP. The Ministry planned to eliminate this benefit in November 2015 but recently announced this plan was on hold. This is a very important victory for low-income people with disabilities.

We provided free legal advice at "pop-up clinics" at community lunches, service agencies and food banks. This gave us an opportunity to meet with new clients who were not aware of our services. It also gave us an opportunity to make sure staff and volunteers know about our services. We held pop-up clinics at the Eastminister United Church community lunch, Gleaners Food Bank, Salvation Army Food Bank and Hastings Housing Resource Centre in Trenton.

Volunteers—A great asset

Our volunteer program continues to thrive and we cannot do without our volunteers! Twenty-five people donated their time to the clinic this year, which amounted to 2,100 hours of community service (an increase of 17% from 2014). In addition, volunteer Board Members contributed 800 hours. Our volunteers include retired people, community members, college students, law students, graduates and placement students. Our volunteers help with a range of activities including Tenant Duty Counsel support, legal research, client interviewing and contact, file work assistance, outreach, administrative and clerical help, and special projects. Two local lawyers continue to volunteer their time preparing Wills and Powers of Attorney or providing legal education sessions.

Ensuring safe, secure affordable housing

Our local communities will see the benefit of provincial Investment in Affordable Housing ("IAH") funds over the next five years. Both Hastings and Prince Edward/ Lennox & Addington counties have committed IAH funds to the building of new affordable housing, as well as valuable programs such as rent supplements and subsidies. Low-income renters continue to be provided with supports that range from a small monthly subsidy, to help pay housing expenses while they wait for geared -to-income placement, to a supplement to pay rent where they already live. New builds will modestly increase available affordable housing stock. This is good news for our clients whose struggles with affordability are year-after-year reflected in our statistics. As in past years, housing queries consistently make up the highest volume of contacts with our office at about 39% of the clinic's summary advice. Our tenant hotline continues to operate, providing immediate information to clients and service providers and a "next business day" service model for in-depth legal advice. This year we provided service almost 2000 times in housing matters. Although more than half of the almost 300 tenants we saw as Duty Counsel at the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) were there because of rent problems which can lead to eviction, the good news is that the number of sittings of the LTB was decreased this year, and we saw fewer tenants in danger of eviction (in 2013 we saw 396 and in 2014 we saw 373 tenants at the LTB).

The LTB has increased access to Board proceedings by initiating e-filing for some landlord and tenant applications. This has had limited benefit for our clients, because they need fee waivers. Unfortunately, it is not possible to request a fee waiver when filing electronically. However, the availability of fee waivers has allowed us to continue a model of providing guided assistance to tenants for maintenance and repair applications. This means we assist in preparing the legal documentation and the tenants are able to file the document at no cost. This model encourages tenants to become more legally empowered by pursuing their legal rights, and at the same time allows the clinic to devote resources to cases that raise complex legal issues. We provided guided assistance in filing applications to over 30 tenants. In 2016, we will evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy to ensure that tenants are being successful with their applications.

Success Rate (Full Representation)	**80%**
Average Award/Recovery	**$1,200**
Total Reduced Rent Arrears/Other Awards by Tenant Duty Counsel	**$84,500**

We continue to provide legal education sessions to service providers and client groups throughout our services areas, primarily by way of "Tenant School," which was launched in 2013. *Seven Steps to Solving Tenancy Problems* continues to be a popular resource and a further printing was completed in the spring.

We've overhauled our internal housing law resources this year to make them more electronically user friendly for our staff. Having these resources allows us to offer our hotline services. Part of this project has been to pilot a website version of our internal "housing manual" to allow Duty Counsel to access it on an iPad while they are at the LTB. We will continue improvements with a view to sharing these resources with other clinics in the very near future.

In Prince Edward/Lennox & Addington, we are still involved with the grass roots Housing Working Group. We are a member of the Housing Advisory Committee, which is regularly updated by County staff about affordable housing initiatives under the 10-year housing and homelessness plan, and provides an opportunity for community input into decision-making. Hastings County initiatives were highlighted at a public meeting in June. We continue to provide support to projects under their 10-year plan, such as input into an Eviction Prevention Protocol. We also continue to participate actively in the Poverty Roundtable (PRT) Housing Constellation and the Affordable Housing Action Network (AHAN) steering committee. AHAN updated its 2014 version of "Poverty Factoids" for Hastings County for use as an information tool in the 2015 federal election. AHAN, PRT, CALC and others collaborated to organize a federal all-candidates "Bread & Butter" debate, focusing on poverty issues. More than 150 people attended the event.

Rural Justice & Health Partnerships

It is widely accepted that health begins where we live, work, learn and play. However, what often goes unrecognized is how the social determinants of health connect to unresolved legal issues. The relationship between poverty and poor health are affected by many factors, like poor housing conditions, job and food insecurity, and lack of educational opportunities.

With this in mind, we are currently working closely with healthcare providers to launch an exciting new Rural Justice & Health Partnership pilot project. Justice & Health Partnerships ("JHPs"), also known as medical-legal partnerships, are collaborations between healthcare providers and legal professionals. JHPs work to prevent legal problems from adversely impacting health.

Our goal of the JHP project is to improve health outcomes among low-income, vulnerable and marginalized patients while simultaneously increasing their access to justice. We recognize that it can be difficult to treat patients' health concerns without addressing the underlying social conditions that give rise to poor health, including unresolved legal issues. We anticipate the health of patients will improve and health care costs will decrease as a result of the JHP. At the same time, the JHP is expected to prevent the escalation of legal problems and promote early intervention, resulting in the improved legal and medical well-being of patients.

We believe that JHPs are particularly valuable to rural areas, where residents have similar legal needs to those in metropolitan communities, but often have fewer legal resources and less awareness of legal rights. We hope to work with healthcare providers to address the social determinants of health that impact the legal and medical health of rural residents.

To achieve our goals, we plan to provide training to healthcare providers on how to identify patients' legal issues, refer patients to legal services, and provide legal information. This will result in connecting patients with legal services they might otherwise not access. We hope it will also lead to increased contact and awareness of our services among other service providers. Additional training will be offered in the completion of ODSP applications, which we expect will result in a higher number of initial grant rates, and therefore fewer ODSP appeals. We have been working in collaboration with local healthcare providers to develop the project plan. We received an extremely positive reaction from the healthcare community to the proposed partnership, which resulted in the first Rural JHP Project Meeting on October 15, 2015. The meeting was a great success and a great opportunity to have interactive discussions with healthcare providers on their patients' legal needs, and how we can collaborate to meet those needs. The healthcare providers in attendance at the meeting included representatives from Belleville Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic, Belleville Queen's Family Health Team, Belleville & Quinte West Community Health Centre, Gateway Community Health Centre, Napanee Area Community Health Centre, and Prince Edward Family Health Team.

We have also collaborated with Queen's University Faculty of Law and Faculty of Nursing to develop research and education materials for the JHP. The nursing students on placement with us have already conducted a legal literacy survey with healthcare providers that will assist them in developing legal awareness training for healthcare providers. We anticipate taking on two additional nursing students for the winter semester to build on this work. The nursing students offer a valuable medical perspective to the project.

The JHP pilot is expected to run from January to June 2016, and we hope to extend the project to December 2016, pending funding. Extending the partnerships will allow us to connect with more individuals in the community and support early intervention in legal problems, thereby improving health outcomes.

Justice for victims of violent crime

We continue to be involved in advocacy to end violence against women and children at both a provincial and local level. We are actively involved with the Quinte Coordinating Committee Against Violence—a group that promotes education, training and awareness surrounding sexual and domestic violence. Over the past 15 years staff have sat on the Boards of Alternatives for Women and Three Oaks Shelter & Services; two local agencies that provide shelter and counselling services to abused women and their children.

Our collaborative efforts with other legal clinics to share Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CICB) precedents and strategies keeps getting stronger and more effective. The virtual "study group" for clinics, which we started and chair, received funding from Legal Aid Ontario for another year. We had the opportunity to present written and oral submissions to the Provincial Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment in Kingston in May 2015, on behalf of this group. We requested a review of the CICB legislation in regards to the practice of offender notification and a removal of the two-year time limitation period for victims of abuse. The final report of the select committee will be released in December 2015. We met with the acting Chair of the CICB and senior management in April 2015 to discuss various concerns. We took the opportunity to celebrate the things that were working well including our good relationship with CICB staff and the fact that most claims are now completed in approximately 12 months.

Helping victims of violent crime is an important part of our work. We assist victims of crime to make applications to the CICB and this year we recovered a total of $716,800 for our clients. Although this is less than our record $1 million amount last year, there is a reason for this! This year, instead of providing full representation to all clients—which is no longer possible due to the number of applications—we provided guided assistance to 22 clients. We do not count the amount of money awarded to those clients as part of our total recoveries. In 2016 we will evaluate the effectiveness of this new strategy.

Total Awards	**$716,800**
Average Award	**$9,800**

We have a large number of requests for CICB applications. To alleviate the growing waiting list of clients who needed help, we began to offer guided assistance instead of full representation for cases that have a single incident or have a Criminal Code conviction. This allows us to focus on more legally complicated CICB cases. "Guided assistance" means we meet with clients and take the information necessary to complete a claim and provide them with referrals to counselling resources. We submit the completed and signed application to the CICB. Then the client represents themselves at their informal tribunal hearing with coaching and tips from us. We hope clients feel empowered in being able to advocate for themselves at their CICB hearing. Next year we hope to work more closely with social workers to help them prepare CICB applications with their clients.

From our clients:

"I think that your office does an excellent job for the community."

"Your staff was very kind and understanding."

"Everything was handled for me and I knew I was in good hands."

"You helped save my life!"

"You guys did everything to help me and kept in touch with me to let me know every step of the way."

"What I experienced was beyond my expectations."

"CALC handled my case very well. It made such a difference in my life."

Helping vulnerable workers in our community

Our Workers' Rights team helps workers to understand their rights and remedies when they have lost their job, experienced a workplace injury or have a human rights complaint. We provide advice and representation. Information is always available through our website tip sheets and the LEARN LAW newspaper column published in local newspapers.

In 2015, we helped workers obtain almost $30,000 through the resolution of Employment Standards and Human Rights claims. Our level of service remained consistent with 2014 levels, with a slight increase in the number of workers contacting us about Employment Insurance issues. Significant changes were made to the *Employment Standards Act* in 2015 which now gives more time for a worker to make a claim (two years up from six months) and removal of the $25,000 financial ceiling. The extended time to make a claim is good news for our clients, alleviating some of the pressures to make immediate decisions in a stressful time.

We provided advice and representation in Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) matters consistent with our 2014 levels of service. The WSIB's implementation of stricter policies has resulted in a lack of grants at the Board level. We used to see some grants at the WSIB level, but have not had any this year. As a result we have a number of appeals sitting at the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal (WSIAT), which are stalled due to a two to three year backlog. Matters are moving very slowly for WSIB clients.

Involvement in the Eastern Region Workers Compensation Clinic Advocacy Group continues, which provides opportunities to discuss complicated WSIB issues and to keep up to date on new cases and policies affecting our WSIB practice. This year we also participated in the Provincial Worker's Compensation Network, which focuses on advocacy at a provincial level. We were involved in lobbying the Ministry of Labour to address the systemic problems affecting injured workers across the province, and developed pamphlets and a presentation for doctors on WSIB issues.

We have working relationships with the local Workers Help Centre and Quinte Employment Network (QEN). Our participation in a province-wide research project called "Closing the Enforcement Gap" ("Gap") continued. In April the QEN, at our request, hosted our York University "Gap" partners at a meeting to hear about the project. The researchers are seeking local workers to interview. We have widely circulated information about the "Gap" project through the clinic newsletter, social media, posters and client mailings, in order to encourage workers to participate by telling their stories about challenges and successes with the current *Employment Standards Act* process.

A new project this year is the collaboration with Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) on their "shared steps" project for employment law. This project provides step-by-step online guidance for clients seeking information on a multitude of employment issues. We reviewed content and provided suggestions on how it could be better organized and laid out. It will be available soon on Your Legal Rights (http://yourlegalrights.on.ca).

As well, we continue to develop and update a workers' rights wiki, in partnership with other legal clinics, including Parkdale Community Legal Services in Toronto. Case precedents and legal research are being added to the wiki to create an effective legal rights resource for lawyers and community legal workers in the Ontario clinic system.

This year we've expanded our collaborative approach to employment law practice. For a number of years we have collaborated with Northumberland Community Legal Centre on employment law and WSIB. This year the collaboration extended to Northern and Southwestern Ontario as part of a "Shared Expertise" initiative. Our clinic is providing employment expertise to two other clinics. This was part of our commitment to increase legal services to Eastern Ontario. We will be helping our colleagues in other clinics offer employment law services.

Increasing legal literacy & reaching out to our community

Over the past year we hosted and presented at more than 45 events that included Loyalist College students, health care providers, adult learning centres, Children's Aid Societies, addictions and mental health services, prison advocacy groups and credit counselling agencies. We continue to stock Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) materials in our office, distribute these at events and mail them out to clients.

Materials Distributed

Pamphlets	1,100
Legal Health Checklists	500
Paths to Justice Family Law Resource Guides	250

For the fourth year staff attended at the City of Belleville Senior's Showcase and Information Fair. Attendance was very high with approximately 700 people visiting, and many people stopping by our CALC booth to ask questions about our services. We also attended Community Services Fairs in Bancroft and Madoc to connect with other service providers as well as individual community members. We were proud to host a CALC booth again this year at Pride in the Park.

We continue to work with local libraries to ensure credible legal resources are made available to patrons. We also continue to maintain strong co–operative relationships with other service providers and community organizations by participating in several interagency groups and regularly attend these group meetings in Madoc, Bancroft and Picton.

Our evaluations reveal that our attendance at events are very successful in terms of connecting with other service providers, community organizations and community members, who were excited to learn more about the work we do. These events provide us with great opportunities to provide information about the services we offer. Attendees at the events learn about their legal rights such as where to get help if a school is not accommodating a student with special needs, or if your landlord will not do necessary repairs.

We are also continuing to publish LEARN LAW columns, which are distributed bi-monthly through several local newspapers: Community Press, Bancroft This Week and the Bancroft Times and are also available on our website at: www.communitylegalcentre.ca/news/LEARNLAW.htm.

Our Newsletter

Our newsletter, produced in-house, was once again sent out in the spring and fall and posted to our website.

This year we distributed more than 3,100 copies, of which 22% were sent by email.

Improving legal literacy & increasing access to justice

Our website hits remain high. Individual visits (unique visitors) for the period of October 2014 to September 2015 were over 21,049 (up 8% from last year). The number of pages viewed also went up, 6%, to 53,825 pages viewed.

Reaching further with social media

As of September 30, we had 519 followers on Twitter, up 20%. Some of our followers include local newspapers and other community legal clinics. We sent a total of 414 tweets to our followers so far this year.

Our Facebook page has increased its number of "likes" to 276, up 42%. Follow us on Facebook or Twitter to get the latest legal news and information as well as details about related events in our community.

Community Advocacy & Legal Centre

Community Advocacy & Legal Centre

158 George Street, Level 1
Belleville, Ontario K8N 3H2

www.communitylegalcentre.ca

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Toll-Free TTY: 1-877-966-8714
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2014-2015
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Vice Chair	Neil Burrell
Treasurer	Alison VanEykeren
Secretary	Johanna Webb
Members	Marguerite Constable Matt Garrett Kathy Kennedy Peter Kerr Brenda Rallison Michelle Rosebush

Client services rated highly!

Client satisfaction is tracked through an evaluation form sent to each client as their case is closed. The clinic's performance continues to rank highly.

Of the people returning the surveys, 95% would refer us to others and 88% said our help made a difference in their lives.

Thanks to all our Volunteers!

Komel Ahmed
Rasa Baltutis
Bianca Boyington
Moe Bsat
Preston Cole
Donna Craig
William Detlor
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Jillian Egerton
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Ginny Pearsall
Brenda Scruby
Susan Simmons
Cody Stapley
Megan Unrau

Staff (2015 full time, part-time and special project staff)

Denise Bird
Bianca Boyington
Moe Bsat
Theresa Cesareo
Justin Chong
Gina Cockburn
Kerry Cromarty
Diane French
Carolyn Hamilton
Samantha Hayward
Danielle Holbrough
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Sierra Bilyk
Kirk Maijala
Jonathan Nehmetallah
Nick Palmer

Queen's Externs (Nursing):

Christine Helferty
Taavita Hemraj

Our work this year would not have been possible without support from the following funders:

Legal Aid Ontario / Aide juridique Ontario
Service Canada – Canada Summer Jobs Program
The Law Foundation of Ontario – Building a better foundation for justice in Ontario
Individual Private Donations
ACTO TDCP
Hastings County

CALC staff & partners attending the "Justice Innovation" forum in Toronto, co-organized by CALC. Learn more about this project by visiting www.plelearningexchange.ca/ple-for-librarians/libraries-and-justice-partnerships/.