



# BAFFLEGAB

Community Advocacy & Legal Centre Newsletter

## Building Community: Moving Beyond Band-Aid Approaches To The Need For Affordable Housing

Following six months of community action research, a special forum is being held June 16 in Belleville to discuss preliminary research findings, and brain-storm new "outside the box" approaches to preventing homelessness in Hastings County.

Researchers have met with or surveyed more than 700 people living on a low income throughout Hastings County. Researchers asked questions about what challenges are faced in finding and keeping safe, secure and affordable housing for their families. They've asked what the community can do to help. More than 60 agencies and organizations have also contributed their concerns and ideas.

An extensive demographic profile of five communities in Hastings County has also been prepared. The report highlights the different challenges and approaches needed in each community. Ideas for innovative approaches have

been gathered from communities across Ontario, Canada and the United States.

The preliminary report recommends that we form an "Action Network", to come up with pro-active "made in Hastings" approaches for the future.

If you are interested in learning more about this forum, sponsored by the interim "Housing Working Group" or the proposed network please call 968-8428 or email [ahac@bellnet.ca](mailto:ahac@bellnet.ca). This is only the first in a series of forums. The next will be held in September.

*Michele Leering, Executive Director*

## Ontario Government Budget Announcement

The Ontario Government budget released May 18, 2004 was a step in the right direction with its recognition of the inadequacy of the benefits paid to people who receive social assistance. The benefits paid to recipients of Ontario Works were slashed by 21.6 percent in 1995. The assistance under the Ontario Disability Support

Program has been frozen since 1993 while the cost of living has increased over 20 percent.

With the announced 3% increase, an individual receiving the maximum of \$520 a month Ontario Works assistance will now receive a monthly increase of \$15.60 for a total of \$536.60 to pay all living expenses. A single disabled person will receive an additional \$27.90 more a month for a total of \$957.90.

This increase does not begin to address the enormity of the financial problems facing our clients, who struggle daily to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table. The amount of assistance has created homelessness and desperation. We see more clients in crisis

### Inside This Issue you will find articles about:

- Legal Rights
- Law Reform & Systemic Advocacy News
- Community Development Activities: Working With Our Community
- Where Else Can You Go For Help?
- What's New at the Clinic?

every day. We encourage people who receive social assistance and others who are concerned to call their MPP's office to register their dissatisfaction that rates have not yet been increased to a level that enables them to live their lives with dignity.

The legal clinic met with two of our local MPPs, Ernie Parsons and Lou Rinaldi, in April to discuss the amount of the social assistance rates, as well as the issues of the claw-back of the federal Child Tax Benefit supplement, liens being placed on homes, and allowable deductions for employment income. We encourage the Ontario Government in its review of these issues to take a holistic view of the desperate situations faced by our clients.

*Mary M. McCormick, Clinic Lawyer*

### **Reimbursement of Travel Costs to go to Counselling Appointments**

The Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) changed its policy about 2 years ago and refused to pay the travel costs for recipients to go to programs that provide mental health therapy or counselling. This was causing a huge problem for many clients who could no longer afford to go to counselling programs.

The legal clinics advocated with the ODSP to change the policy.

A small group of people, including Mary McCormick for the clinic, met with the Director of ODSP in Toronto in January, 2004 to discuss changing the policy. In February 2004 the ODSP announced that they have now changed the policy as follows:

The cost of transportation to these programs is covered if:

- the recipient has been referred to the program by a doctor or psychiatrist or psychologist, and
- the doctor is monitoring the recipient's treatment and progress (which can include asking the recipient about it at appointments)

If you have submitted a request for travel costs that has been refused, you can call the clinic for legal advice.

*Mary M. McCormick, Clinic Lawyer*

### **No Claw-Back of the New Federal Child Disability Benefit (CDB) from Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program Recipients**

The new federal benefit for families with children with severe disabilities, announced in the spring 2003 federal budget, will be a supplement to the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB). Families who are already receiving both the National Child Benefit

Supplement (NCBS) and the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) will qualify for the full CDB benefit of \$1600/year. Monthly CDB payments will begin in March 2004 and could be granted retroactively to July 2003.

The really good news, however, is that both ongoing CDB payments and retroactive lump sum payments are to be excluded from income and assets for social assistance purposes.

*Reprinted with permission of Peterborough Community Legal Centre*

### **Not Another Social Assistance Overpayment?**

Our clinic has seen an increased number of overpayment cases since 2002 when the Ontario government adopted a new computer system for all Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) offices. The new system allows the Ontario government to collect old overpayments of Family Benefits, General Welfare, OW, or ODSP benefits from current OW or ODSP benefits no matter when they were created, or from what office. We have seen clients faced with attempts to recover overpayments from as far back as 1978. Often they do not remember having an overpayment - if they even knew about it at the time!

*Community Advocacy & Legal Centre*

When we help clients challenge or fight overpayments, often there is not enough proper paper work to justify the overpayment, or the overpayment was entered into the computer in error, or the actual overpayment is much less than what is claimed on the notice of overpayment or on the client's Statement of Assistance. We have had a number of cases where the overpayment is dropped completely when an internal review is filed. In many other cases, we have been successful in getting the Social Benefits Tribunal to reduce the amount of the overpayment, or to stop further collection of the overpayment.

The large numbers of errors in these overpayments is very troubling. The Provincial Auditor pointed out glaring problems in 2002, but the government has done nothing. It is therefore very important that you review all overpayments carefully to make sure they are correct.

Even if you don't want to fight the overpayment, there is something else you can do if you can't afford the amount taken off each month's cheque. You can ask OW/ODSP to lower this amount.

If there is any concern about the overpayment, or the amount

taken off your cheque, call our clinic for legal advice immediately. Requests for internal review and appeals to the Social Benefits Tribunal, need to be filed within the time limits in the law, or you may lose any further right to appeal.

*John McKean, Clinic Lawyer*

### **Children in Care of the Children's Aid Society**

What happens to social assistance benefits if children are taken into the care of the Children's Aid Society (CAS)? In recent months we've received a growing number of calls from parents and concerned others about this issue.

If your children are in the temporary care of the CAS, you should continue to receive at least some benefits to cover expenses for the children. To qualify, the length of stay must normally be short-term and the plan of care is for your children to return home. However, if your children have become permanent wards of the CAS, you will not be eligible.

A number of people who receive Ontario Disability Support Program benefits have told us that their children were removed from their "benefit unit" entirely when their children were taken temporarily by the CAS. This drastic cut in their benefits has made it difficult for them to continue to

keep their homes and has created financial hardship making it even more difficult for them to cope and get their children back. Some people have ended up with large overpayments. These decisions can be challenged.

If this has happened to you, please call the clinic for legal advice about your situation.

*Michele Leering, Executive Director and Clinic Lawyer*

### **Criminal Pardons**

Contrary to what most people believe, criminal records are not automatically sealed or destroyed. To make sure that a criminal record is completely sealed, you must apply to have your record pardoned. This means that it will be sealed and removed from the main RCMP records, and from the police station and courthouse. Under the *Criminal Records Act (CRA)*, the National Parole Board (NPB) may issue, grant, deny, or revoke pardons for convictions under federal acts or regulations of Canada.

To be eligible for a pardon, you must wait 3 years if you had a summary conviction or 5 years if you were convicted of an indictable offence. This waiting period is calculated from the date that you completed your sentence. For example, if you were fined, the waiting period begins on the date you paid all of the fine; if you were

sentenced to a term of imprisonment or probation, the waiting period is calculated from the date you completed the entire sentence, including any part you may have served in the community.

It may take 12 - 18 months to obtain your pardon depending on the type of offence and the documentation that is required.

A pardon does not *erase* a conviction. It does not allow a person to say that they do not have a criminal record. They have been convicted of a criminal offence for which they have received a pardon.

Be aware that a pardon might not be recognized by foreign governments. A pardon will not guarantee entry or visa privileges to another country. If you are prohibited under the *Criminal Code of Canada* from driving a vehicle or possessing a firearm for a specific period of time, a pardon will not return those privileges. A pardon automatically ceases to have effect if you are later convicted of an indictable offence.

There has been an inundation of brochures lately for an agency called Pardons Canada. They advertise help in removing criminal records, and refer to themselves as a Federal non-profit organization. While they may be a non-profit, they do charge fees for pardons related to services. Their fee is \$340 plus GST plus \$55 for fingerprints for a Pardon application.

By contrast, the National Parole Board maintains a website at [www.npb-cnlc.gc.ca/pardons/servic\\_e.htm](http://www.npb-cnlc.gc.ca/pardons/servic_e.htm) which contains a link to a Pardon Application Guide which includes the Application Instructions and an individually numbered Pardon Application Form. There are also links to an excellent Pardons Fact Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions. The application fee to complete it and send it in is \$50. Fingerprints and records from local police and/or courts are also required but that can be done for much less than \$340. Most people can easily understand the instructions and do it themselves.

The Application Guide includes the statement, "You do not need a lawyer or representative to apply for a pardon." Contact them at 1-800-874-2652 for assistance.

*Reprinted with permission of Rachael Howes, Simcoe Community Legal Clinic*

### **Raise the Taxes to Raise OW/ODSP Rates!**

Before the election, the Ontario Liberal Party promised that they would not raise taxes. This promise was made to the Taxpayers Federation. After the election, the government has said that they cannot make a number of social service reforms because of the size of the deficit and because they cannot raise taxes.

A group of people have joined together to form THE OTHER TAXPAYERS FEDERATION, asking for a 5% increase in Ontario personal and corporate tax rates. The result would be that the median taxpayer would pay about \$2.50 extra a week in taxes and a taxpayer with an average income would pay less than \$7 a week extra. With this extra money, the operating deficit in 2004-5 would be eliminated and money would be available for better services in future years.

If you are interested in joining THE OTHER TAXPAYERS FEDERATION, contact them at P.O. Box 261, Station B, Toronto, ON M5T 2W1 or at [info@othertaxpayers.net](mailto:info@othertaxpayers.net). If you support a tax increase, you can also write to your local paper and call your MPP.

*Mary M. McCormick, Clinic Lawyer*

### **Meeting With Minister of Labour**

In April, one of our clinic lawyers, David Little, met with the Honourable Chris Bentley, the Minister of Labour, to discuss the government's review of the workers' compensation system. He was part of a delegation that included other advocates from the clinic system who represent injured workers.

The focus was the unfairness of the outright ban from compensation for those who leave work because of mental stress. For example, a person who is sexually harassed by her boss at work and develops depression cannot turn to the compensation system--she must make do with employment insurance or welfare. Often these systems are either unavailable or inadequate. Excluding those who are most vulnerable from receiving fair compensation cannot be justified, and so we asked the Minister of Labour to repeal the law that bans these chronic mental stress cases.

We pointed out to the Minister that a recent Supreme Court of Canada case struck down a Nova Scotia workers' compensation law that excluded certain types of injuries from full coverage. We believe that a court challenge to the Ontario law banning chronic mental stress claims would also be successful. We are working with other community legal clinic partners to bring such a case to court if the government doesn't act quickly to repeal the ban.

If you are aware of anyone who is off work because of stress caused by harassment in the workplace, please suggest that they call the clinic.

*David Little, Clinic Lawyer*

### **Update on the "Adult Living with a Parent" Court Case**

Under the "adult living with a parent rule", if you are receiving Ontario Works (welfare) and you reside with a parent, you can only receive very reduced social assistance payments - no money if you are considered "financially dependent" and \$250 per month if you are considered "financially independent". The clinic had a client who wanted to challenge this law. He was in his late 40's and unable to continue to work because of illness. He had applied for Ontario Disability and Canada Pension Plan Disability pensions and was waiting to have his disability cases heard. He was residing with his elderly mother in her 80's who was in poor health. She was in receipt of Old Age Security and living below the poverty line and no longer able to live alone.

Our clinic joined with two other clinics to bring a Court challenge. We brought an application in the Superior Court in Toronto to declare that the "adult living with a parent rule" violates Sections 7 and 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We argued that the reduced amount of assistance our clients receive threatens their life, liberty and security of a person and discriminates against them on the basis of family status and receipt of social assistance.

To support the lawsuit our client filed an Affidavit where he tells how the law affects him. He says he cannot afford to buy food so he must rely on the food bank but under their rules he can only go twice per month so he runs out of food and on many days he eats nothing. He says how this makes him sick because his doctor and dietician have recommended that he be on a low-fat, low-cholesterol diet because he has a heart condition. He tells how he cannot get this type of food at the food bank. He is unable to purchase the medication that he needs. Although he gets a drug card from Ontario Works he takes 6 different medicines and cannot afford the \$2.00 deductible per medication that the pharmacy charges. He talks about the strain this puts on his relationship with his mother because he can't pay his fair share and she too runs out of food every month. He talks about how he feels humiliated and embarrassed to be in his late 40's and forced to have his mom support him.

This Court case will be heard in September 2004.

Unfortunately our client will not be attending that hearing because he died in November of 2003 of a heart attack while he was waiting for his Canada Pension Plan and Ontario Disability hearings. He was found to be disabled and granted both CPP and Ontario

Disability benefits retroactively after he died.

This case demonstrates the devastating impact that unfair social assistance laws have on people. I believe the reduced assistance our client was getting under the "adult living with a parent rule" led him to being unable to eat properly or take his medication, contributed to his poor health and ultimately to his death.

*Deirdre McDade, Clinic Lawyer*

### **Seeking Justice and Fairness at Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal**

In June of 2002, the Association of Tenants Ontario (ACTO) filed a complaint with the Ombudsman Ontario concerning fairness issues at the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal and concerns about the eviction process. In November 2003, the Ombudsman wrote a letter to The Honourable John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs, outlining some of the concerns:

- Tenants are automatically evicted if they do not dispute a landlord application
- Tenants have an extraordinary brief time period of five days to file a dispute
- The Tribunal lacks scope for the exercise of discretion to avoid eviction

- Wrongfully evicted tenants are required to pay sheriff enforcement fees to restore a tenancy

The Ombudsman criticizes the current legislation and wrote to the Minister that "eviction should not be allowed to become a mechanical exercise devoid of human consideration". He emphasizes the impact on vulnerable tenants, including seniors, single parents with small children, the disabled and those for whom English is a second language.

Hopefully, the Ombudsman's expressed concern will result in real changes at the Tribunal.

*Diane French, Legal Secretary/Intake Worker*

### **Women Abuse**

A report entitled "**Walking on Eggshells: Abused Women's Experiences of Ontario's Welfare System**" was recently released calling on the Ontario government to make substantial changes to Ontario's welfare system to better serve abused women. The report concludes that abused women often have profoundly negative experiences with the welfare system and that Ontario's current system needs substantial reform if it is to offer meaningful support to women fleeing abuse. The report makes more than 30 specific

recommendations including the following:

- Raise welfare rates to meet true costs of living
- Stop the clawback of the National Child Benefit Supplement
- Provide accurate and complete information about the welfare system
- Change policies which force abused women to pursue child and spousal support from their abuser
- Change the definitions of spouse to reflect actual support obligations
- Change fraud policies and practices including shutting down the "snitch line"

Janet Mosher, one of the authors of this report, states "what is disturbing in the report is the many parallels that women draw between being on welfare and being in an abusive relationship. The expression "walking on eggshells" is an expression that some of the women we interviewed used - having to tread carefully and always being a little apprehensive because you are going to be cut off or you are going to be hit".

The full report is posted online at [http://www.yorku.ca/yorkweb/spacial/Welfare\\_Report\\_walking\\_on\\_eggshells\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.yorku.ca/yorkweb/spacial/Welfare_Report_walking_on_eggshells_final_report.pdf)

*Deirdre McDade, Clinic Lawyer*

## **Challenging Cash Advance Companies that Prey on the Poor**

Recently the Belleville area has seen an increase of cash advance companies. These businesses charge very high interest rates disguised as service charges for short-term cash loans. One of our legal clinic partners, the Community Legal Clinic - Simcoe, Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes, is investigating whether to bring a class action law suit to recover the interest payments that have been paid by clients. This lawsuit would argue that any interest charged over 60% is a criminal rate and makes the transaction illegal. Therefore the interest or service fees should be repaid. We are assisting the Simcoe clinic in finding clients to participate in the legal challenge. For more information about this matter please call the clinic and speak to Diane French (ext. 31).

*Deirdre McDade, Clinic Lawyer*

### **Housing Issues:**

## **Working to Change the Tenant Protection Act**

During the last provincial election, the Ontario Liberals promised to make changes to the *Tenant Protection Act*, the law governing residential tenancies in Ontario. They are

now holding public consultations to determine how the law should be changed. It is very important that tenants and community groups participate in this process and press the government to make significant and meaningful changes to the law as it is currently very harsh on tenants. The clinic will attend an open house making representations during the formal consultation on June 3, 2004 at Ban Righ Hall, 10 Queens Crescent, Queens University, Kingston. The government's consultation process runs till June 15, 2004. If you are unable to attend the consultation sessions, you can still participate by filling out the online questionnaire at [www.rentreform.ontario.ca](http://www.rentreform.ontario.ca) or you can call 1-866-751-8082 to obtain a copy of the questionnaire. Opportunities to make a fundamental shift in the law come around very rarely, so we encourage everyone to participate in this process as much as possible.

*Richard Ferriss, Clinic Lawyer*

## **Legal Rights in Emergency Housing Situations - Training For Front Line Service Providers**

The clinic will be holding a free training session for front line service providers on June 23, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. at 158 George Street (refreshments and materials will be provided).

The training will focus on helping service providers understand how to assist tenants in emergency housing situations (e.g. illegal lockout, utilities cut off). If you wish to attend please call the clinic and speak to Denise Bird (ext. 0). Space is limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis. We will be holding additional sessions in the fall.

*Richard Ferriss, Clinic Lawyer*

## **Disrepair Project Still Seeking Rental Units Needing Repair**

Please continue sending us the addresses of rental units that are in need of repair. We are still sending information packages to tenants living in those units advising them of their legal rights and telling them how they can legally and effectively get repairs done to their homes.

*Richard Ferriss, Clinic Lawyer*

## **Where Would the Clinic Be Without Our Dedicated Board Members?**

I have been a member of the Board of Directors at the Community Advocacy & Legal Centre for almost four years. I joined the Board wanting to give back to the community because I have received much support: as a single mom who had been on welfare, as a social

## Who Else Can Help?

activist and now as a professional in the violence against women field.

The Board has been an intense growing experience for me as I began to change my thinking from an individual focus to the overall view of the clinic. I was challenged to think long term and strategically. That is part of our work as a Board. At first, I didn't even really know what that meant.

During my second year, we held a strategic planning day with staff and board. We agreed on our vision: *A community in which individuals have their basic needs met, can live freely and are empowered to participate in meaningful ways.* I really liked that vision and could see how that fit in with the community that I wanted to live in.

But, really, what was our purpose for doing this? How does saying that vision help make decisions in guiding the day-to-day work of a staff already committed to this principle? And, as a Board member, how does that help me to do my job better? It helps me because I keep those words in my head whenever we have to make a decision, and everything stems out of that vision.

Since that day almost two years ago, we have all worked together to consistently maintain and put into practice

this vision to guide our work as a Board as we support the Executive Director to continue to guide the staff to provide quality legal and advocacy services. We hope that each client experiences this as they walk in the office and work with the staff.

*Susan H Young, Board Member*

### Who Else Can Help?

#### Things Your MPP Can Help You With

If you are having trouble dealing with an Ontario government office or obtaining information or a document from a government office, you can call your Member of Provincial Parliament's (MPP's) office for help. Some of the areas they help with are:

- Family Responsibility Office
- Birth certificates
- Ontario Student Assistance Program
- Seniors' Drug Program
- Trillium Drug Program
- OHIP cards
- Ontario Disability Support Program and Ontario Works (denial of discretionary benefits, delay in obtaining cheques, travel benefits)
- Copies of legislation, information about Ontario government programs
- Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (enquiries only - cannot provide advice on appeals or representation)

The MPPs for our area are:

- Leona Dombrowsky (Stirling, Centre and North Hastings, Lennox and Addington) - 354-6630 or 1-877-536-6248
- Ernie Parsons (South Hastings, Prince Edward County) – 962-1144
- Lou Rinaldi (Quinte West and Northumberland) – 392-3038

*Mary M. McCormick, Clinic Lawyer*

#### Home Repair Programs For Low Income Home Owners

Low income home-owners can apply for funding from CMHC if repairs are needed to make their homes safe to live in:

- *Emergency Repair Program (ERP)*
  - for people living in rural areas (with populations under 2,500)
  - up to \$6,000 for heating systems, chimneys, windows, plumbing, electrical, foundations, etc.
  - all or part of this can be a forgivable loan (all or part of it does not need to be paid back)
- *Residential Rehabilitation Program (RRAP)*
  - where major repair is needed in structural, electrical, plumbing, heating, or fire safety
  - maximum loan of \$16,000
  - all or part of this can be a forgivable loan

## Who Else Can Help?

### ➤ Residential Rehabilitation Program (RRAP) For Persons with Disabilities

- for both homeowners and landlords (whose tenant is a disabled person and the tenant is a low income person – landlords must agree that when the current tenant leaves, the new tenant's income is below a certain level)
- to pay the cost necessary to accommodate needs of a disabled person, such as install ramps, chair or bathtub lifts, handrails, wheel-in shower etc.
- maximum loan for homeowners - \$16,000
- maximum loan for landlords - \$24,000
- all or part of this can be a forgivable loan

### ➤ Home Adaptations for Seniors' Independence (HASI)

- to help seniors live in their own homes independently
- to pay for minor home adaptations such as bathtub grab bars and seats, easy-to-reach work and storage areas in the kitchen
- available to homeowners and landlords
- forgivable loans up to \$3,500

These programs are sponsored by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Conditions and restrictions apply.

For information about eligibility call the Canadian Housing Information Centre, at 1-800-668-2642 or visit their

website at [www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca). To get application forms, call 1-800-704-6488.

*Mary M. McCormick, Clinic Lawyer*

### Helpful Websites

We are in the process of building our clinic website. We thought we would share some of the web sites we use to find information. \_

[www.hastingshousing.com](http://www.hastingshousing.com)

A Housing Resource Centre for Hastings County with contacts in Belleville, Quinte West, Madoc & Bancroft, helping singles, families, youth & seniors.

[www.viq.ca](http://www.viq.ca) and [www.info.kingston.on.ca](http://www.info.kingston.on.ca)

Information on community organizations, institutions, resources and services in Hastings and Prince Edward Counties through the Community Key online.

[www.orht.gov.on.ca](http://www.orht.gov.on.ca)

The Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal provides information on the tribunal process, how to start or defend an application, the status of an application once you receive a file number, and office locations.

[www.e-laws.gov.on.ca](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca)

The Provincial Laws of Ontario are available online. There is a FAQ (Frequently Asked

Questions) section and a glossary.

[www.cfcs.gov.on.ca](http://www.cfcs.gov.on.ca)

The Ministry of Community and Social Services provides information on Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program. Important policy directives the government uses to interpret the law are available.

[www.cleo.on.ca](http://www.cleo.on.ca)

Community Legal Education Ontario is a community legal clinic that produces clear language material for people with low incomes. Main topics include social assistance, landlord and tenant law, refugee and immigration law, workers' compensation, women's issues, family law, employment insurance and human rights. All of the information is free to download or order.

[www.wsib.on.ca](http://www.wsib.on.ca)

The Workplace Safety & Insurance Board oversees Ontario's workplace safety. WSIB offers forms for workers, employers and health professionals. There is also a tips section for workers on how to make a claim and a list of office locations.

*Jessica Michael, Articling Student*



## Changes at the Clinic!

Our new name "Community Advocacy & Legal Centre" became official in January of this year.

We are in the process of changing our listing of the clinic publicly from Hastings and Prince Edward Legal Services to the Community Advocacy & Legal Centre. There will be a transition period where we will "carry on business" in both names. We hope everyone agrees that our new clinic name helps to clarify what we do at the clinic.

We will also be opening a new satellite office in Quinte West June 4, 2004. The clinic will be renting an office located at 80 Division Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (Victorian Order of Nurses). John McKean, clinic lawyer, will staff the fully accessible office one day a week.

We are moving our Madoc office on June 1, 2004. We have served Centre Hastings residents for the past 13 years from our office at 68 Durham Street South. Our new location will be the Community Resource Centre at 108 Russell Street, Suite 203.

For information, advice or assistance, please call the Belleville clinic to set up an appointment.

*Lynda Morgan, Office Manager*

## Information for Local Lawyers: Pro Bono Project – Three Counties

Pro bono means lawyers offering legal advice and help free of charge.

The clinic, working with Pro Bono Law Ontario, is launching a Pro Bono project in Hastings, Prince Edward and Lennox & Addington Counties.

Lawyers participating in the Pro Bono project will be able to offer service to low income clients in areas of law that are not covered by Legal Aid, and for which these clients are unable to pay.

We are forming an Advisory Committee made up of members of the local legal communities, including representatives from the Law Associations, Legal Aid Ontario and the community.

We want to recognize past and present pro bono work done in the legal community. We will also offer free local training for local lawyers in two specific areas of law in 2004:

1. Education Law
2. Law for non-profit and charitable agencies

The Law Society will recognize the training as Continuing Legal

Education. The Lawyers' Professional Indemnity Company extends coverage to

lawyers providing pro bono service through our project.

Local lawyers interested in learning more should call the clinic and speak to Gina Cockburn (ext. 34).

Our Fall newsletter will explain how people can access legal help in Education Law and how the advice service for non-profit organizations will work. Stay tuned!

*Gina Cockburn, Clinic Lawyer*

### **BAFFLEGAB**

is published by:

### **COMMUNITY ADVOCACY & LEGAL CENTRE**

158 George Street  
Belleville, ON K8N 3H2  
**966-8686 or 1-877-966-8686**  
TTY: 966-8714 or 1-877-966-8714

If you would like to support the clinic by becoming a member or if you would like additional copies of *Bafflegab*, please contact the clinic.

The information in this newsletter is not meant to be taken as legal advice. If you have a legal problem in any of the areas of law mentioned in the newsletter, you should contact the legal clinic in your area.