COMMUNITY ADVOCACY & LEGAL CENTRE

BAFFLEGAB

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Annual Report

We had many new initiatives in 2015. An analysis of trends, updates on our projects, and highlights of our work will be described in our 2015 Annual Report, available at our Annual General Meeting on November 10 or on our website after November 1.

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Journeying towards justice: Future directions for 2016-2020

How should our community legal clinic serve our community over the next 5 years? What should our priorities be for helping people who are living on a low income or living in poverty? What do you think?

Clinic staff and Board have been hard at work over the last 8 months surveying clients, meeting with community partners, "not the usual suspects" and Legal Aid Ontario. We've also been meeting with other Eastern Region clinics to discuss future collaborations. We've been researching new approaches from other clinics and other countries. On November 10 we will be making recommendations for CALC's next strategic plan to guide our work for the years 2016 – 2020. We hope you can join us for a lively discussion and a special forum "Journeying Towards Justice." We will also be celebrating our 35th anniversary but we will not be looking back! Our focus will very much be on the FUTURE.

We intend to expand into new services like consumer law and to reach more people, like the growing number of seniors. New partnerships will become important: we will be working more closely with primary health care providers to prevent legal problems from impacting on patient health, for example. We will be experimenting with more legally empowering approaches to helping clients too. Enhancing legal literacy and building legal capability will be key themes. And we want to offer more holistic legal services by working more closely with other justice sector partners when legal needs are interrelated. We want to continue to provide local leadership on expanding the "paths to justice."

We have invited a very special guest to join us. Professor Mary Jane Mossman (Osgoode Hall Law School) has had a long association with CALC. Thirty-five years ago, as the Ontario Legal Aid Plan's Clinic Funding Manager, she provided the first funding grant to launch our clinic. She thinks very deeply about access to justice and what kind of help and rights awareness is needed. She will be helping us to reflect on our proposed future directions and whether what we intend to do meets social inclusion goals and will narrow the justice gap.

Please join us anytime after 3:30 pm on Tuesday, November 10, at the Core Centre at 223 Pinnacle Street in Belleville. Refreshments and a light supper will be followed by the forum from 4:00 – 6:30. Cake will be served at 6:15! We hope you can join us.

If you would like to come, please register in advance by either calling or emailing the clinic (see our contact information on the last page of this newsletter) or use this online registration link: https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/journeying-towards-justice-future-directions-for-calc-2016-2020-tickets-18864135136.

If you have special needs, please register by November 4. There is more information about the forum on page 4. If you won't know until the last minute whether you can come or not, please just come along even without registering! We'd love to have you join us even if you cannot let us know in advance.

Rural Justice & Health Partnerships: Improving health outcomes

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.

For example, if your apartment has inadequate heat in the winter, you may find you are sick more often. But did you know - inadequate heat is a legal issue that can be addressed?

Justice & Health Partnerships, also known as medical-legal partnerships, are collaborations between healthcare providers and legal professionals designed to intervene early and prevent legal problems from adversely impacting health.

These partnerships have demonstrated success in the United States and Australia by increasing access to justice, reducing health disparities, and improving health outcomes. We believe they may have added value in rural areas, where residents have the same range of legal needs as those in metropolitan communities, but often have lower awareness of legal rights and more difficulty accessing free legal help.

CALC is working closely with healthcare providers to implement a Rural Justice & Health pilot project in 6 or 7 locations, which will run from January - June 2016.

Lisa Turik, Clinic Lawyer

Libraries and Justice Partnerships: Legal information in the libraries

As people who work on the front lines in rural and remote communities, we are aware of the challenges faced by people in our communities who need legal information and services. Recent research has confirmed what our experience tells us: that we must build networks of people who care and that can help connect people who need help to the right resources. Lack of legal awareness and low legal literacy is becoming a significant barrier to social inclusion in a world that is "thick with law."

We are proud of the work we've done with local public library staff and the Quinte Consolidated Courthouse Library Manager over the last few years. We've worked together successfully to make access to credible legal information available to library patrons in Hastings, Prince Edward and Lennox & Addington counties. We've just completed a report about this project that you can find on our website's latest news page, (www.communitylegalcentre.ca/news/Latest_News.htm). We've discovered that other communities and other librarians also want to help build better access points in their communities.

In partnership with CLEO and the Law Society of Upper Canada's Action Group, we have organized a special provincial "justice innovation" forum in Toronto on October 29 with more than 60 library staff and justice partners for a stimulating information-sharing, brainstorming, and design day.

At the forum, we will be trying to answer the following questions: What role can public libraries, their staff and their volunteers, county law associations, and courthouse and law school librarians play in creating new pathways for people to "access justice"? How can community-based legal clinics work together with libraries most effectively in justice innovation partnerships?

Read more about this project at www.plelearningexchange.ca/ple-for-librarians/libraries-and-justice-partnerships/.

Michele Leering, Executive Director/Clinic Lawyer

Get out and vote October 19!

If you are a Canadian citizen, you have the opportunity to choose who represents you in federal politics. YOUR vote will help choose Canada's next Prime Minister! Visit the Elections Canada website at www.elections.ca or call them toll-free at 1-800-463-6868 for information on how to register to vote, when, where and ways to vote, candidate information, accessibility information, and a list of accepted identification. **If you are homeless**, you can try to register to vote and use a shelter or place where you receive services as a home address. Contact your local Elections Canada office for more information. **If you are in jail**, you may be able to vote by special ballot. Request to speak to the liaison officer in your prison to assist you to register and vote.

Increases to Ontario's minimum wage and social assistance rates

Increases to Ontario's Minimum Wages

Increases to Ontario's minimum wages will take effect on **October 1, 2015**:

- General minimum wage increasing to $11.25 per hour (from $11.00).
- Student increasing to $10.55 per hour (from $10.30).
- Liquor Server increasing to $9.80 per hour (from $9.55).
- Homeworker increasing to $12.40 per hour (from $12.10).

You can find more information on the Ontario government website: www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/es/pubs/guide/minwage.php

Social Assistance Rate Increases

Some Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Ontario Works (OW) rates are increasing. Recipients will see these increases in the benefits that they receive at the end of **October 2015**. Some of the increases include:

- $12 per month increase to basic needs allowance for people with disabilities who receive ODSP (no increase for their non-disabled family members and no increase to maximum ODSP shelter amounts).
- $25 per month increase to basic needs allowance for single adult OW recipients without children.
- 1% increase for other adult OW recipients for basic needs and shelter maximums.

Other ODSP and OW amounts continue to be frozen, including ODSP for non-disabled family members, ODSP shelter maximums, and the Special Diet Allowance.

Adapted from an article by HALCO (HALCO newsletter Summer 2015 (Volume 19, No. 2)).

Landlord and Tenant Board now has limited e-filing

Tenants can now file certain Landlord & Tenant board applications electronically. You can fill out and file Maintenance and Repairs applications (T6 form), and Tenant Rights applications (T2 form) directly online. Supporting documents can be uploaded and attached to the claim. The process removes the need to file in person at a ServiceOntario location.

Fee waivers are still available for low-income tenants, but tenants who qualify, or tenants who are filing multiple applications at once, must still file paper applications. For more information visit www.sjto.gov.on.ca/ltb/.

Samantha Hayward, Clinic Lawyer

National Housing Day

The Affordable Housing Action Network will be hosting National Housing Day on November 18. Details are still being arranged. Visit www.hastingshousing.com/ahan/, for more information to be posted soon.

Pop-up legal advice clinics

We continue to hold legal advice clinics at local food banks and community meal locations.

If your low-income clients could use free legal advice, call us and we will provide a pop-up clinic at your agency or community event.

Help paying for pet care available

The Farley Foundation is a registered charity that assists low-income people with the cost of veterinary care for their pets.

Established by the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association (OVMA) in 2001, the Foundation subsidizes the cost of necessary (non-elective) veterinary care. Eligibility criteria apply for all funding recipient categories, such as seniors, disabled individuals and participants of OVMA's SafePet Program. Funding is limited to $1,000 per pet owner.

Visit their website at: www.farleyfoundation.org/pet_owners/eligibility_criteria.html to see if you are eligible. If you fall under one of the eligible categories, see your veterinarian as you cannot apply directly for funding. Applications are submitted by veterinary clinics/hospitals.

Save the Date!

Tuesday, November 10, 2015
3:30-6:30 pm

Journeying Towards Justice: Future Directions for CALC 2016-2020

PLEASE JOIN US as we celebrate our 35th anniversary, and come discuss with us the results of our recent legal needs study and research and our new strategies and directions for 2016-2020.

With Special Guest Speaker:

Mary Jane Mossman, BA, LLB, LLM, LLD
Professor, Osgoode Hall Law School
https://www.osgoode.yorku.ca/faculty-and-staff/mossman-mary-jane/

Thirty-five years ago, as the Ontario Legal Aid Plan's Clinic Funding Manager, Ms. Mossman provided the first funding grant to launch our clinic. Today she will be helping us to reflect on our proposed future directions and whether what we intend to do meets social inclusion goals and will narrow the justice gap. She will also discuss the challenges and opportunities of more holistic approaches to providing services.

Refreshments and a light supper will be provided from 3:30 – 4:00 pm.
The forum will be from 4:00 – 6:30, including our 35th anniversary cake at 6:15.
The Clinic's Annual General Meeting will follow the forum at 6:30 pm.

This event is free of charge.

To RSVP and/or if you need ASL interpretation or FM devices, please register online at https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/journeying-towards-justice-future-directions-for-calc-2016-2020-tickets-18864135136. You can also call Lynda Morgan at 613-966-8686, ext 25 (Toll-Free 1-877-966-8686, ext 25) or TTY 1-877-966-8714 or email morganl@lao.on.ca by November 4.

Location: The Core, 223 Pinnacle Street, Prince Edward Meeting Room, Belleville

Can your landlord legally take your belongings?

Has your landlord threatened to take or throw out your belongings? This article will help explain when it is legal for your landlord to take your things according to the *Residential Tenancies Act* (*RTA*). The *RTA* is the law that applies to most rental housing in Ontario. The *RTA* **may not apply** if you share a kitchen or bathroom with the owner or rent from another tenant.

It is illegal for your landlord to take your things because you did not pay rent or because you caused damage to your rental unit. Your landlord cannot stop you from taking your belongings with you when you move out.

However, your landlord may take or throw out your things if you leave them behind when you move out.

If you move out after giving notice to your landlord or agreeing to move out:

You have until the last day of your tenancy to move all your belongings. This is the last day you occupy the unit at the end of a lease or at the end of giving 60 days notice. If belongings are left behind after this day, the landlord may take or throw them out right away. If you want to prevent your landlord from throwing out your things, you should ask them to agree in writing. If you need more information on how to give notice, see the resources below.

If you move out without giving notice to your landlord:

Your landlord must give you written notice that they plan to get rid of your things if you have abandoned your rental unit. Your landlord has to wait **30 days** after giving you this notice to sell or take your belongings. Your landlord can leave this notice at your place – it is not mandatory to personally give it to you or call you. Your landlord must let you collect your belongings at a reasonable time if you contact them within this 30 day period. Your landlord does not have to leave your belongings in the rental unit during this 30 day period. Your landlord can ask you to pay the cost of moving and storing your belongings.

If you move out because you were evicted:

You have **72 hours** to collect your belongings when you are evicted by the Sheriff. Your landlord must keep your things safe during this time. Your landlord must let you get them between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. during this 72-hour period. Your landlord can either keep your things in your place or move them to a safe place nearby.

If your landlord has taken your things or has broken the law, you should get legal advice.

If you are living on a low income and have questions about this or other housing issues, you can get free legal advice by calling us at 613-966-8686 ext 0 or toll-free at 1-877-966-8686 ext 0.

Article adapted from Community Legal Education Ontario's May 2015 Issue of "On the Radar": http://us4.campaign-archive2.com/?u=acaece29df8d07c95ef84a763&id=956c3ca939.

Annual General Meeting

All are welcome to attend the clinic's Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, November 10.

It is being held in the Prince Edward Meeting Room at The Core, 223 Pinnacle Street in Belleville (Campbell Street entrance), from 6:30 – 7:00 p.m. , after our special forum (see previous page).

If you think you might be interested in becoming a Board member and want more information, please go to www.communitylegalcentre.ca/about/Board.htm, or call Lynda Morgan at ext. 25. If you are Deaf, contact us by TTY (1-877-966-8714) or calc@lao.on.ca.

We will need your membership and nomination forms by November 4.

If you need an ASL interpreter, please contact Lynda Morgan at ext. 25 (or via TTY/email as noted above) by November 4.

Legal Aid Ontario: More help for clients

A certificate from Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) provides financially-eligible clients with a voucher to retain a private bar lawyer of their choice to help them with specific kinds of legal problems where CALC does not provide legal help.

To improve access to justice, LAO's new services include:

Criminal law: Previously, you could only get a LAO certificate if you were facing jail time. Now LAO will help low-income people with no prior conviction avoid the life-changing consequences of acquiring a criminal record. They will also help those seeking bail, or those accused who may be facing significant "secondary consequences" other than the risk of going to jail, i.e. loss of job, risk of deportation, or immediate loss of public housing or social assistance.

Family law: Coverage is expanded for:

- complex family law matters,
- to assist third party caregivers (such as grandparents or other members of a child's community) in *Child and Family Service Act* matters,
- clients involved in negotiations with a child protection agency (e.g. CAS), and
- assistance for a family lawyer to prepare a separation agreement and document preparation help for uncontested divorce proceedings.

LEGAL AID ONTARIO
AIDE JURIDIQUE ONTARIO

Domestic violence: Certificates are now available for victims of domestic violence who have been charged with an offence related to the violent partner while attempting to defend themselves.

Refugee law: Certificates are available to clients facing removal from Canada who would be forced to leave close family who live in Canada, or who are facing deportation to places where they are in danger, to challenge their deportation or to help them apply to stay through a Humanitarian and Compassionate application.

Mental health law: Certificates to provide legal assistance to eligible clients in a mental health proceeding such as guardianship matters at the Consent and Capacity Board are now available.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit: More targeted services will be available to Aboriginal persons who are charged for the first time or who are involved in family law proceedings.

For more information visit Legal Aid's website and view their backgrounder sheets on each area of law at www.legalaid.on.ca/en/info/legaleligibility.asp.

For information on help with uncontested divorce cases, see www.legalaid.on.ca/en/news/newsarchive/1508-28_simple-divorce.asp. If you need help in any of these areas, call them at 1-800-668-8258. You can also check out their new smartphone app to see if you are eligible or to check the current wait times on their phone lines.

Deirdre McDade, Co-Director of Legal Services

Legal clinics receive new software: Service delays possible

In late November 2015, all legal clinics will be using new software to help us serve you better and improve our efficiency.

We will be a pilot clinic, getting the software earlier in order to test it. Our staff will receive training prior to receiving the software and we will be reporting any problems back to Legal Aid so they may fix them before the rest of the clinic system starts using it.

During this time there may be delays in our service as we familiarize ourselves with the software and work out any bugs.

Over time, we hope this software will make it easier and quicker for us to manage our legal work and to improve our services to you.

During this transition period we appreciate your patience and understanding.

Carolyn Hamilton, Executive Assistant

Where can you get emergency financial help?

Do you need funds to help pay rent or utility arrears, or to pay for groceries or other emergency housing expenses?

There are programs available to help low-income people keep their housing. These programs are run by municipal governments.

Hastings County has a Housing and Homelessness Fund (HHF) and Prince Edward and Lennox & Addington Counties have a Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI).

These programs can provide emergency assistance to help low-income people pay emergency housing expenses, such as rent and heating bills.

To apply to the HHF in Hastings County, call 1-866-414-0300. If you receive social assistance, you can contact your Ontario Works or Ontario Disability caseworker.

To apply for CHPI in Prince Edward or Lennox & Addington Counties, call 1-866-716-7991.

When you apply for benefits, ask for a decision letter. Call us if you are denied.

If you are denied emergency housing assistance, you can also call your local MPP to protest the provincial government cuts to homelessness prevention benefits.

Legal Health Checklist—Call us for help!

www.communitylegalcentre.ca/legal_information/Legal-Health-Checklist.htm

New consumer law services coming soon!

We know that legal information about consumer law and debt matters is desperately needed.

As a result, CALC will begin offering legal help with consumer law issues in November 2015.

We will be providing information, and in some cases advice, about the following consumer issues:

- cell phone contracts,
- shoplifting demand letters,
- Payday loan contracts,
- telephone and internet scams, and
- door-to-door sales.

Stay tuned for more information and get ready to start calling!

Trisha Simpson, Clinic Lawyer

Were you a victim of abuse at an Ontario School for the Deaf?

A class action proceeding has been started in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in August 2015 on behalf of students who attended schools for the Deaf in Ottawa, London, Belleville and Milton.

If you or someone you know was abused sexually, physically or emotionally while you were a student, you should get legal advice.

To get legal advice and further information about the class action suit, contact the law firm Koskie Minsky LLP at http://www.kmlaw.ca/Case-Central/Overview/?rid=197 or you can call their office toll free at 1-877-309-9111 (if through Bell Relay dial 711 first).

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CALC
Community Advocacy & Legal Centre

Your community legal clinic

The Community Advocacy & Legal Centre is a non-profit community legal clinic, funded by Legal Aid Ontario, and a registered charity. We provide free legal services to low-income residents of Hastings, Prince Edward and southern Lennox & Addington counties.

We provide legal services in the areas of:

Housing	Income Security
Rights at Work	Consumer Problems
Human Rights and Education	Compensation for Crime Victims

Show your support for our work and become a clinic member!

If you would like to support us by becoming a member, please contact Lynda, ext. 25, or visit our website at www.communitylegalcentre.ca/about/Membership.htm to learn more and download a membership form. Memberships are free if you are living on a low income.

Staffing announcements

We have been hard at work reorganizing our internal operations over the past year to become more efficient. You can read about this work in our Annual Report (available at our Annual General Meeting and on our website).

There have been some staffing changes. Deirdre McDade and Gina Cockburn are now Co-Directors of Legal Services and Carolyn Hamilton is an Executive Assistant with special responsibility for IT and communications.

Our Executive Director/ Lawyer Michele Leering will be on an unpaid study leave from January to August 2016, during which time Deirdre McDade will be Acting Executive Director.

We will also soon be adding a Community Developer, on a trial basis, who will be coordinating our outreach programs and going out into the community and giving presentations on our services.

Donate Now through CanadaHelps.org

Charitable Reg. No: 12464 4121 RR0001
Donations are greatly appreciated!

The information in this newsletter is not legal advice. If you have a legal problem in any of the areas of law mentioned in this newsletter, please contact the community legal clinic in your area. Go to www.legalaid.on.ca to find a clinic serving you.