

Community Advocacy & Legal Centre

## 2023 Annual Report



### Board Chair's Report

This November we recognize – somewhat belatedly – the 40th anniversary of the Community Advocacy & Legal Centre. Anniversaries are an opportunity to look back with gratitude at what has been accomplished and look forward with resolve to continue the good work that has been entrusted to us. In true CALC style, we recognize this auspicious milestone with a modest Open House, sharing CALC's work over these four decades, recognizing the contributions of past and present staff, introducing new staff, and orienting community members and colleagues to our newer areas of work.

Reliable and adequate funding is a significant enabling factor for organizational stability and sustainability as we begin the next 40 years. Earlier this year, CALC joined legal clinics across Ontario in advocating to Legal Aid Ontario – our primary funder – for a fair and equitable funding model that will enable us to continue providing access to justice for individuals living on a low income in our communities. LAO has indicated that CALC's funding will be renewed after the current funding period ends, though the future funding model remains unknown. While we have become accustomed to such uncertainty, it does not support effective planning or promote organizational stability. The Board will continue advocating alongside our clinic colleagues for a fair and adequate funding model that enables us to continue fulfilling our mission.

(Continued on page 2)

### Executive Director's Report

It is with mixed emotions that I complete my final annual report to you as CALC's Executive Director. It has been a privilege to find such meaningful work as a community lawyer on issues of social justice and access to justice. Since March 1985, I have been lucky to work with such dedicated members of CALC's Board and Staff, with staff at many local community and government organizations, and with clinic system and Legal Aid Ontario colleagues. I am delighted to pass the torch and to welcome Lisa Turik, Co-Director of Legal Services, to her new role as Executive Director effective December 23, 2023.

We hope you are able to join us for our Open House on November 30 to celebrate 40+ years of service to the communities of Hastings, Prince Edward, and Lennox & Addington counties, and the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. We found ourselves energized by our work with nursing students on placement from Loyalist College and Queen's University and others who helped to create very visual displays of posters that highlighted some of CALC's history of advocacy and innovation over these past decades. Some of these are captured in this year's [Year in Review slideshow](#).

I am also pleased to share with you this comprehensive annual report, co-authored by CALC's legal leads for housing, income security, employment, consumer & debt, seniors, gender-based violence, and justice & health. It

(Continued on page 3)

### Demand for legal services and over \$1.5 million recovered for our clients

The number of people contacting us for help this past year was up 5% from last year, receiving approximately 4,400 requests for information, advice, and brief services. We formally represented over 400 clients (double from last year), and attended as Tenant Duty Counsel in 177 hearing blocks (up 16%). Our online intake numbers increased by 10% to almost 430. Most people needed help with housing, income security, wills/powers of attorney, problems at work or with consumer and debt. We recovered over \$1.5 million, conservatively estimated (an increase of 41% over last year!). We also worked on more than 90 different special initiatives including outreach, legal education, community development, systemic advocacy and law reform, justice sector collaborative work and administrative improvements.

## Board Chair's report (continued from page 1)

As 2023 comes to a close, we say a heartfelt thank you and farewell to two more long-term colleagues: Michele Leering and Gina Cockburn. Michele has made extraordinary contributions to CALC over the past 38 years. CALC's Board of Directors has relied on Michele's knowledge and leadership over these years in growing the clinic and providing high quality legal services and advocacy for our clients in Hastings, Prince Edward, and Lennox & Addington counties, and the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. Michele's leadership and collaborative approach have made CALC a recognized leader within the clinic system in Ontario, as well as internationally. Michele will retire as Executive Director (ED) in December 2023, taking on the mantle of Executive Director Emeritus as she completes several projects on behalf of the Board and clinic in the first few months of 2024. The Board of Directors expresses its respect, admiration, and sincere gratitude to Michele for her leadership and service to CALC and our community.

Director of Legal Services Gina Cockburn has made stellar contributions since joining us more than 22 years ago. Her leadership and resolve on housing law and justice and anti-poverty initiatives has been noteworthy. Her work has included the [Spinning in the Cycle of Homelessness Report](#) (2013), and participating in Hastings' Affordable Housing Action Network, Housing First Working Group, and affordable housing committees and projects in Prince Edward County. She has worked

tirelessly on many other initiatives like the Community Development Council and Rural Boldness project. The Board similarly expresses its sincere thanks to Gina for her service to CALC and our community.

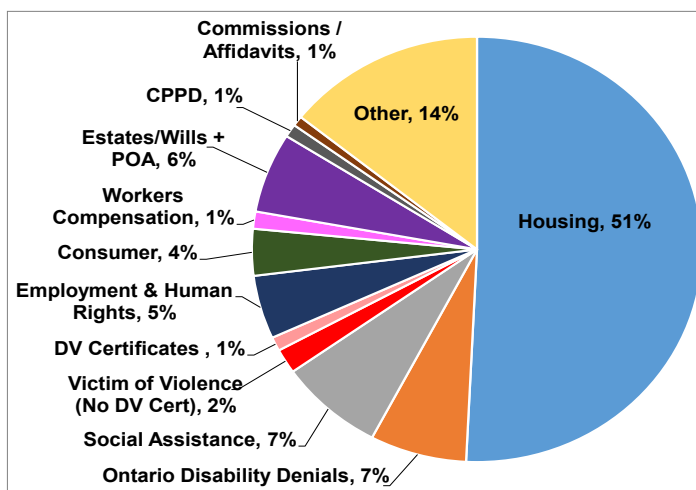
It is also my privilege to announce and welcome Lisa Turik, effective December 23, 2023, as CALC's next ED. Lisa brings 10 years of experience with CALC beginning as an articling student, then clinic lawyer, and now Co-Director of Legal Services (CDLS). Her passion for poverty law and advocacy, dedication to serving clients individually and through systemic reforms, demonstrated leadership abilities, and collaborative approach will enable her to lead CALC's dynamic staff team. The Board is delighted that Lisa will be taking on this new role and looks forward to working with her to fulfil CALC's vision of achieving social justice with dignity, influencing change.

The Board is mindful that significant transitions bring both challenges and opportunities. A good deal of the Board's energy this past year has been focused on preparing for the upcoming ED transition. Our emphasis in the upcoming year will be on supporting the new ED and achieving CALC's strategic goals for itself as an organization: ensuring effective board governance and supporting CALC as a learning organization providing innovative and sustainable leadership for the organization and in the communities we serve.

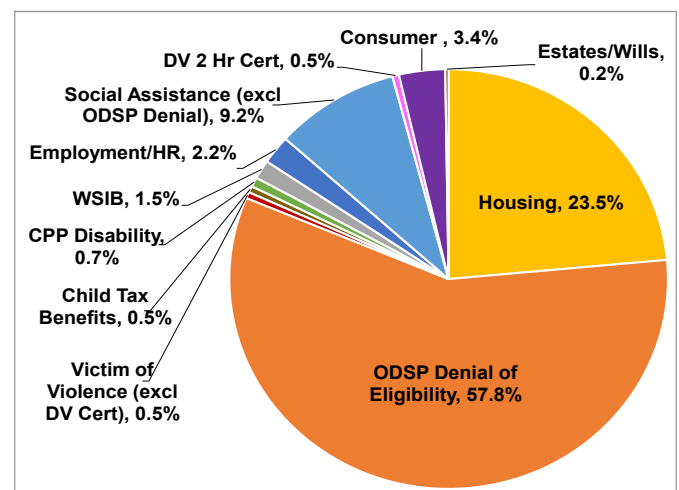
*Steve van de Hoef, Board Chair*

## 2023 Individual Client Service Statistics (Oct 2022 to Sep 2023)

**% Type of legal issues - All calls for help received**



**% Type of legal issues - Full or Limited representation**



## Executive Director’s report (continued from page 1)

provides a snapshot of what we have been doing to be responsive to the legal needs of our community, and to realize the social determinants of health for people living on a low income and from marginalized and vulnerable communities.

You will read about our accomplishments and concerns as we carried out CALC’s strategic plan and directions to serve new people, work with new partners, develop new legal expertise, conduct new research, and undertake new and innovative approaches to providing legal services. There has been no shortage of commitment to the cause and to our clients!

You will notice that our service levels have increased, even over our pre-pandemic levels. Serving new people this year and undertaking new approaches has included helping survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), and continuing to proactively engage more people (youth, male-dominated industries, and employers) in the struggle to end sexual harassment. New research has included a more in-depth look at the impact of intimate partner violence locally, and how the criminal justice system treats victim witnesses in sexual assault cases.

We’ve also been updating [our report](#) on how justice & health partnership approaches can resolve legal problems earlier, help with untangling complex client needs, and prevent the domino effect of unresolved legal issues. We are launching a new Justice & Health Learning Centre virtual hub of resources to help healthcare providers red flag legal problems their patients are having, and to strengthen justice & health partnerships across Ontario. We have also been developing new legal expertise in criminal and family law matters to better support survivors.

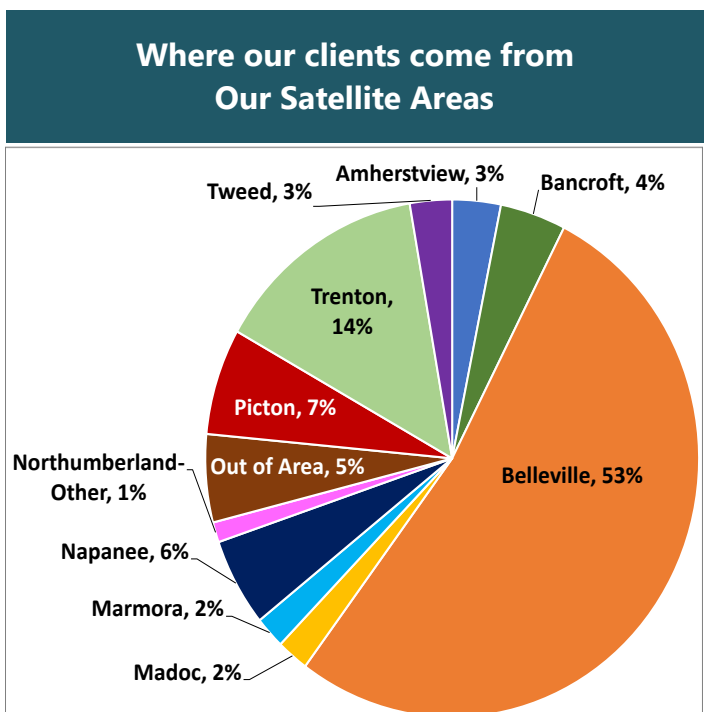
Our staff continue to provide leadership within the clinic system and on systemic issues of poverty and inadequate income security programs, in particular. Sharing and creating new knowledge about how to best support our clients and their legal rights continues to be a strong motivator for participating in communities of practice on GBV, sexual harassment at work, justice & health, and consumer & debt.

In September, we shared the successes of our local justice & health partnerships in a [national “pop-up” presentation](#) on access to justice. This was following on a [presentation to the Ontario Public Health Conference](#) in March, and preceded a virtual workshop on the future of these partnerships in Ontario to be held in December.

2024 will be a year of transition and renewal for CALC staff and our poverty law services as long term staff members continue to retire! We’ve been lucky to recruit wonderful new staff and student placements to reinvigorate us. Special thanks to our Board of Directors, who volunteered an extraordinary number of hours to help the clinic transition seamlessly to new leadership. Your patience and dedication are so appreciated.

We are grateful for the continued support of Legal Aid Ontario, our main funder, as well as for local and federal funding that has allowed us to expand our work to prevent homelessness, and to support survivors of sexual harassment and GBV. It’s made all the difference that we’ve been able to leverage in extra resources to make a difference in people’s lives.

*Michele Leering, Executive Director/Lawyer*



## Helping people with consumer and debt problems



We welcome a recent announcement by the Government of Ontario that will see some positive changes to the laws that protect consumers. Particularly welcome is the proposal that when a supplier assigns a contract to a lender, that lender is responsible to the consumer for all the obligations of the supplier. It has been a common tactic of predatory sellers to finance through a separate company, which then washes its hands of any responsibility. The proposed changes to this consumer protection may apply to contracts that are already in place, giving consumers better, retroactive protections.

Unfortunately, we continue to see people being taken in by sophisticated frauds and scams, have complaints about vehicle purchases and repairs, and general consumer contract problems, like home repairs.

We help by giving legal advice, information and representation for the most vulnerable. We empower consumers to solve their issues by offering information and advice about consumer complaints with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (MGCS) and Small Claims Court options.

A 2018 change to consumer protections prohibited many door-to-door sales. However, predatory companies keep finding creative ways enter people's homes to install things like video doorbells, water treatment products and insulation! These services often come with very high price

tags and the added concern that a "security interest" (a lien) may be registered against title to the home. These companies will sometimes tell consumers they are part of a government program, promise rebates, will remove equipment and act very quickly to get their products installed. If this happens to you or someone you know, there is a 10 day "cooling off" period to cancel the contract, so act quickly.

An emerging issue in 2023 are called "exploitative loan agreements". The Law Society of Ontario issued a [notice to the legal profession](#) to be aware that this predatory lending practice is targeting elderly and vulnerable people with loans secured against their homes. These exploitive loans are a direct threat to home ownership and lead to a devastating financial loss, and even homelessness. We are aware of cases in our community where we fear the homeowners became victims of this practice.

This year we spoke to more than 130 clients, a 60% increase over the previous year and agreed to represent a half dozen clients in egregious matters. Our efforts saved our clients more than \$63,000. To strengthen the knowledge in the community about consumer problems, we offered eight public legal education sessions. As in other years, we hosted a virtual Community of Practice to improve the knowledge about consumer issues for legal clinics across the province.

*Karen McLellan, Clinic Lawyer*

## CALC IN THE NEWS

**Dinner event honours International Women's Day**  
 Belleville, ON, Canada / Quinte News  
 Alan-Michael Steele  
 Mar 8, 2023 | 10:53 PM

<https://www.quintenews.com/2023/03/08/302518/>

**Trenton tenants facing 'renovictions' offered legal advice by CALC**  
 Derek Baldwin  
 Published Apr 14, 2023 - Last updated Apr 14, 2023 - 2 minute read

<https://www.intelligencer.ca/news/trenton-tenants-facing-renovictions-offered-legal-advice-by-calc>

**'More tenants than ever facing eviction,' says CALC**  
 Postmedia Staff  
 Published Nov 05, 2023 - Last updated 20 hours ago - 4 minute read

<https://www.intelligencer.ca/news/more-tenants-than-ever-facing-eviction-says-calc>

## Still fighting for real income security



Rising costs and an ongoing refusal by the provincial government to adequately increase income support rates meant that our community struggled with deepening poverty this year. The Market Basket Measure (MBM) establishes poverty thresholds based on the cost of a “basket” of food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and other items for a family of four that reflects a modest, basic standard of living. Statistics Canada found that the cost of the MBM food “basket” rose 8.8% between 2021 and 2022, and the shelter “basket” rose by 6.4% between 2021 and 2022.

CALC has been advocating for the provincial government to raise income security rates, though unfortunately without any new success this year. At least federally, we saw some progress. Bill C-22, which is a proposed federal income supplement to move people with disabilities out of poverty, received Royal Assent on June 22, 2023. The Income Security Advocacy Centre provided [a submission](#) to the Senate, which CALC endorsed, advocating for some important protections in the Bill. Happily, most of these were adopted by the Senate. Next, the government will need to introduce regulations establishing the eligibility criteria, benefit amount, and more.

When Tribunals Ontario announced their “Digital First” approach to hearings - moving all hearings to zoom instead of in-person - we were concerned that clients without the expensive technological resources needed to participate in zoom hearings would be left behind. This is a fear that has borne out over time, with many of our clients lacking laptops, webcams, microphones, or internet. CALC has mitigated and absorbed this cost by having these clients come to our office for their hearings.

We were very pleased to see Tribunals Ontario finally acknowledge this issue and launch an initiative called Mobile Access Terminals (MAT) that seemed designed to address it. Their Operational Update from April 2023 noted that Tribunals would identify a suitable alternate venue and coordinate the required equipment, including a laptop and internet connection, and send technical support. Unfortunately, none of our requests for the MAT have been approved, and clients without technology have still had to come to our office for their Social Benefits

Tribunal (SBT) hearings. We are quite skeptical of this program’s ability to deliver on its promises.

With nearly 300 cases this year, our busiest area of legal work continues to be helping those with disabilities appeal denials of Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefits to the SBT. About 82% of our clients are successful on their appeals, a number significantly higher than the provincial average of 67%. This year, from those successes, we recovered \$1,298,380 for people with disabilities. On average, our clients received \$495 more per month to improve their standard of living. We estimate that each of our successful clients received retroactive benefits of \$7,593. Importantly, 46% of our files settled without a hearing – this saves clients considerable stress and gets money to them faster.

<b>ODSP Files Opened (68% of all income security files)</b>	<b>279</b>
<b>ODSP Success Rate</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>Average Retroactive ODSP Award</b>	<b>\$7,593</b>
<b>Total Income Security Recoveries</b>	<b>\$1.4 million</b>

As noted, the SBT continued to hear our cases exclusively over zoom. We attended 112 hearings this year, which is a huge jump from the 66 hearings we attended in total last year. This increase in hearings was partly due to the SBT’s focus on clearing their pandemic-related backlog, and partly due to faster scheduling. We hosted 60 of these hearings in our Belleville office for clients who needed in-person support or lacked the technology to do their hearing from home.

CALC also joined the Steering Committee for Social Assistance (SCSA) in 2023 as one of the eastern region representatives. SCSA is a provincial inter-clinic organization that works to be a liaison and advocate between government and legal clinics on social assistance issues and law reform activities. We believe joining SCSA improves our ability to identify and address social assistance issues of systemic importance occurring regionally in the east, and provincially.

*Lisa Turik, Co-Director Legal Services*

## Reaching out: Promoting legal literacy and access to justice



Our legal literacy initiatives include legal information sessions, presenting at lunch and learns, university classes, and conferences about our work, publishing two [newsletters](#), and posting a variety of [tip sheets](#) and legal information on our [website](#), as well as to [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Our top 10 tip sheets had over 26,000 downloads.

We continue to offer both in-person and virtual workshops on legal rights and to promote legal empowerment. In fact, this year we had a marked increase in presentations to groups, most preferring in-person presentations although we still did a few virtual ones.

We provided 66 workshops (up from 35 last year) to over 958 people (up from 400) on topics including sexual harassment at work, tenants' rights, workers' rights, wills and POAs, justice & health, as well as what types of services CALC provides. Workshops provide opportunities to not just listen, but ask questions. We bring pamphlets, materials, and tip sheets which participants can take home. We presented to many different community groups and organizations including high schools, Loyalist College, Queen's University, Career Edge, seniors' residences and Quinte Immigration Services. As well, our Executive Director recorded a television interview with YourTV about the clinic, which aired several times between January 16 and 29.

To help prevent illegal evictions, we also met with Belleville, Quinte West and Napanee OPP to present on tenancy laws to help front line officers respond to possible illegal evictions and identify tenancies that are protected by the *Residential Tenancies Act* (RTA).



CALC and Quinte Immigration Services (QIS) getting the word out at the Caribbean Festival on August 19. (Photo courtesy of QIS' Facebook page)

Workshops and attending community events (such as the one pictured above at the Caribbean Festival) help raise awareness and increase people's knowledge about their rights and who to call if they need help. Any group can call and request a presentation or use our online form at <https://bit.ly/CALC-Speaker>.

*Carolyn Hamilton, Executive Assistant*

### Our Newsletter

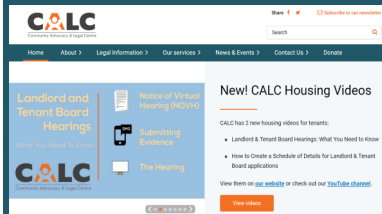
Our semi-annual newsletters were produced in-house, and sent out in the spring and fall. They were also posted to our website and social media accounts.



We distributed over 1,800 copies to subscribers and clients (up 6%), of which 65% were sent by email.

### 59,000 Visitors to Website

Our website hits remain high. Over 59,000 individuals visited the site for the past year, a 90% increase. Pages viewed were over 73,000 (up 19%), with our *Write to your MP or MPP* page being the most popular, with 24% of the views (17,900). Our *home page and Emergencies—Are You Homeless* pages were the next most popular with over 10,900 and 7,600 views respectively.



The most popular downloads were *Benefits Available to People Receiving Income Support* (6,000 downloads), *Tenant Privacy Rights* (4,900) and *Financial Resources for Tenants* (3,200 downloads).

### Reaching further with social media



As of October 31, we stayed steady with over 900 followers on Twitter. Followers include local newspapers, community agencies and other community legal clinics. We sent almost 700 tweets to our followers as of October 31.



Our Facebook page has increased its followers to 1,200, up 5%. Follow us to get the latest legal news and information, as well as details about upcoming events.

## Stop sexual harassment in the workplace (SHIW) project



Since 2019, CALC has been a partner with 19 other clinics across Ontario in a special project, funded by the federal Department of Justice, aimed at raising legal rights awareness to prevent and eliminate sexual harassment at work. Each year, we have met with hundreds of workers to help them to better understand their rights. This has included both providing information and helping participants at our educational sessions to work through practical examples, which help them to think about the ways that rights operate in their and their colleague's everyday lives.

In the past year, we continued to focus on the delivery of services to young and new workers, who are often more vulnerable to workplace harassment. A key focus was to increase our social media presence and other ways of sharing rights education, which we recognized was important to reaching young workers and those who might not be able to attend a public legal education session. Our focus was both on informing the community about new developments in the law and the ways that culture change happens when both employees and employers are aware of and take seriously the rights of workers to positive, inclusive workplaces. We also expanded our focus to include geographic areas in which we have not yet had the opportunity to provide in-person public legal education, including in Napanee and Bancroft.

In keeping with our commitment to Intersectionality, and the ways that people may experience compounding

vulnerabilities, including due to gender, sexual orientation, income and race, our focus also expanded to reaching workers who may be most at risk. This included members of the 2LGBTQI+ community and those in rural communities, who may experience more isolation from service providers than those living in urban areas. Working with our partners, we have also reached thousands of employers and employees through our [web-based materials](#) and brochures, our social media activity and our partnership with our clinic partners in the [SHAPE Your Workplace website](#) and promotional materials.

As this project draws to a close in March 2024, we will continue to provide public legal education and will be focusing on two new initiatives. First, we have developed brochures that provide information

to employers in male-dominated industries about sexual harassment and the importance of embracing inclusive workplace cultures across an organization and workplace. Through a mail-out campaign and in-person contacts, we will reach hundreds of new employers by the end of the project, helping them to understand their crucial role in maintaining positive workplaces for all workers. Second, we are working with a clinic partner on a manual about SHIW for Workplace Health and Safety Committees.

We hope to build awareness of sexual harassment as both a human rights and workplace safety issue, and expand our partnership now and in the future with these important stakeholders.

*Claire McMenemy, Clinic Lawyer*

**What is Workplace Sexual Harassment?**

Sexual harassment can take many forms. It includes:

- Having unwelcome contact or closeness
- Making remarks, including teasing and talk about sexual activities or gender identities
- Staring and gawking
- Making unwelcome requests for dates
- Requesting sexual favours
- Spreading rumours of a sexual nature (including on-line)
- Displaying sexually offensive pictures or graffiti

**Have you been sexually harassed at work?**

**Are you an employer or worker who wants more free information about your rights and responsibilities under the law? We can help.**

**CONTACT US NOW!**

**Community Advocacy & Legal Centre**

158 George Street  
Belleville, ON L1A 2E7

Telephone: 613-966-8886  
Toll-free: 1-877-966-8886  
Online: <https://bit.ly/calc-help>  
<https://communitylegalcentre.ca>



**SCAN ME** We offer help for people who live in Hastings, Prince Edward and Southern Lennox & Addington Counties, as well as Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. Contact us for more information.



This project has been made possible with funding from Justice Canada



**Sexual Harassment in the Workplace:**

**Know your Rights and Responsibilities as an Employer and Worker**



## Raising awareness about sexual and domestic violence

A CALC staff member continues to sit on the executive of the [Quinte Coordinating Committee against Violence \(QCCAV\)](#)—a group that promotes education, training and awareness about sexual and domestic violence—while another is on both their steering & education committees.

We once again co-sponsored our local *Take Back the Night* event with other organizations, part of a world-wide effort to end sexual violence against women and victim blaming. We also take part annually in the *National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women* on December 6 to commemorate the lives of the 14 women murdered in 1989 at L'École Polytechnique in Montreal.

SEPTEMBER 28, 2023 @ 6PM  
MARKET SQUARE IN BELLEVILLE



**TAKE BACK THE NIGHT**

RALLY + MARCH + VIGIL

SHATTER THE SILENCE.  
END SEXUAL VIOLENCE

**Proudly Organized By:**

Community Advocacy & Legal Centre | Helpline & Family Resource Centre  
Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault | Helpline & Family Resource Centre  
Recovery Program | Helpline & Family Resource Centre  
Hastings and Prince Edward | Sexual Assault Centre for Quinte & District  
Occasional Teacher's Local | Three Oaks Foundation

For more info contact Jocelyn at [jocelyn@csacqcd.com](mailto:jocelyn@csacqcd.com)

## Housing: Finding security in insecure times



Every year, affordable housing remains one of the biggest challenges for our clients. It feels like there is no end to increasing rents and the low vacancy rate. Unfortunately, this trend continued throughout 2023. Housing retention continues to be vital to reduce the real risk of homelessness faced by those who have to find accommodation in this challenging rental market.

We continue to work with other community agencies to find ways to keep people housed. As an example, over the past year we provided eight education sessions to police detachments in Belleville and Napanee. The sessions help front line officers respond to possible illegal evictions and identify tenancies that are protected by the *Residential Tenancies Act* (RTA), with the goal of preventing illegal eviction and unnecessary tenant displacement. As a result we saw an increase in police officers contacting us for our legal opinion on whether a tenancy was covered by the RTA before becoming involved with an eviction request by a landlord. We believe this led to a decreased number of illegal evictions across our catchment area.

The requests from tenants for advice on “renoviction” notices (eviction notices for a landlord wanting to do substantial repairs to a rental unit) increased by over 50% over last year, due largely to an entire building in Trenton receiving notice that the landlord wanted them to leave.

We helped tenants by giving them individual legal advice and provided public education sessions about their rights. This helped tenants to ride a wave of “renovictions” and the majority of tenants retain their housing.

We provided legal help and advice for more than 1,700 tenants, continuing the trend of rising demand each year.

Requests from tenants for help with housing account for 51% of all requests to the clinic for help.

We continue to try to accommodate the challenges of a “Digital First” Landlord Tenant Board (LTB). We were scheduled to provide Tenant Duty Counsel (TDC) services for 177 hearing days at the LTB, all of which were held over Zoom. Many hearing days consisted of multiple “blocks”, meaning the TDC would need to switch between different Zoom links, to make sure tenants were able to speak to a legal worker before their hearing.

The problems with “digital first” haven’t improved: TDC still doesn’t have access to tenant documents ahead of time and can’t access them at the hearing, many tenants attend by phone and aren’t able to see evidence being presented against them, and some tenants did not have reliable internet or phone access, causing disruption in their ability to participate in their hearing.

Our [tip sheets](#) and resources continue to be the most popular downloads from our website, with over 18,000 downloads of our most popular tenant tip sheets (out of the top 10 tip sheets, eight were tenant related) and more than 6,000 people were accessing our emergency housing referrals.

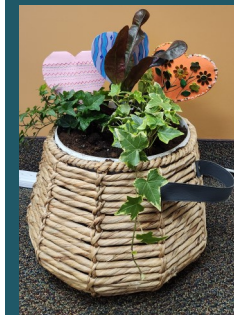
With the increased need for housing legal support, we are ever grateful to Hastings County and Prince Edward Lennox & Addington for supporting us with Homelessness Prevention funding. With these funds, we are able to support more tenants and further our goal of housing retention to combat homelessness.

*Samantha Hayward, Clinic Lawyer*

## Volunteers — A great asset

We are pleased to continue to host professional students from law, nursing, and occupational therapy schools at our clinic as interns or for work placements. We were fortunate to have 13 students working with us this year.

In addition, members of CALC’s Board of Directors contributed at least 800 volunteer hours.



### “Heart Garden”

Created by CALC staff on September 30 for the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation.



## Protecting workers' rights and compensating workplace injuries



Demand for workers' rights services and retained cases remained consistent with 2021/2022 making up about 10% of the retained clinic cases. We were successful in

getting about \$20,000 for clients, primarily related to human rights cases. There were no Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) awards this year. As we know, WSIB cases are slow to move through the resolution process and often take many years to conclude.

Over the past year, we have increased our capacity to assist on legal issues faced by seasonal migrant farm workers. We have participated in the Quinte Local Immigration Partnership (QLIP) Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Working Group, which involves various community stakeholders, including Quinte Immigration Services, Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW) and The Neighbourhood Organization (TNO). The TFW Working Group meets regularly and works collaboratively to support and promote the needs of vulnerable temporary foreign workers, including migrant farm workers, in Hastings and Prince Edward County.

To raise awareness of clinic services, we have engaged in outreach and information sessions in the community. This outreach included an evening information session for migrant farm workers at Casa Dea vineyards in June 2023; hosting a booth on CALC services at the Belleville Caribbean Festival in August, and an evening information session for migrant workers at the St. Thomas Anglican Church in October.

We anticipate that with government changes to immigration programs allowing for low-wage foreign

workers to be hired in various sectors (including accommodation and food services, construction, hospitals), we will see increasing need for legal advice and services to this group.

We have also been active in working with partners to increase accessibility to migrant farm workers who face language barriers. We have arranged interpretation as needed and collaborated with NGOs to help with translations and referrals. We are looking at opportunities to work with OHCOW to provide services to Spanish-speaking workers in their claims with the WSIB.

We continue to be active in the provincial clinic system Community of Practice group—Workers' Compensation Network—including participating in a sub-committee on the proposed changes to the WSIB dispute resolution and appeals procedures. We also lodged a submission to WSIB raising concerns that the changes to the administrative procedures would have an adverse impact on workers and are seeking more opportunities for public engagement and consultation on the proposed changes.

We continue to update and add to the [workers' rights-related tip sheets](#) and other resources available on our website.

To develop strategy on systemic issues and our capacity to provide quality services, we continue to participate in clinic Community of Practices on employment law and our Eastern Region Clinic Workers' Compensation group.

*Karen McLellan, Clinic Lawyer*

## Fostering truth and reconciliation

This year on National Indigenous People's Day (June 21) staff undertook a variety of learning activities. A group attended a walk and ceremony at Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. This included the chance to learn more about Indigenous cultural traditions, and to share some information about CALC's programs with those we met. Other staff engaged in learning activities in the office. This year, CALC observed the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on October 1. Staff joined together to watch the powerful movie portrayal of Richard Wagamese's novel *Indian Horse* about a young boy's experiences in the residential school system. We also made materials for a Heart Garden (pictured on page 8), a visual remembrance of the experiences of residential school survivors, that is now in CALC's waiting area.

## Justice & Health Partnerships: Keeping people legally healthy

Through our Justice & Health Partnership (JHP) project we work with local healthcare providers to identify and address legal issues impacting their clients' physical, emotional, and mental health. Our project thrived this year with 217 referrals and secondary consultations from healthcare partners. We also presented on the importance of legal health to over 300 healthcare providers, including nursing students and medical residents.

Our work this year was primarily focused on completing the "Trusted Help" project generously funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario (LFO). Through this project we have been hard at work

developing an online course for healthcare providers on topics at the intersection of law and health. The course has five modules that include short videos, tip sheets, case studies, and other bonus resources. It will be launched on a new Justice & Health Learning Centre website in the coming days.

The Justice & Health Learning Centre will benefit not just our local healthcare providers, but also support the continued building of a justice and health movement in Ontario. We started our JHP in 2015 on a hunch that there was a strong association between the social determinants of health and legal needs, and that this association was especially strong in the areas of community law that CALC practices including income, housing, and employment. In the near-decade since we started our project, Canadian research has emerged that shows justice and health partnerships are indeed effective at bringing together healthcare and legal services to mitigate the health-harming consequences of unmet legal needs. This echoes the [research findings](#) from the United States, Australia and the UK. Thanks to this research, and the experiences of other justice and health projects in Ontario, we don't have to rely on hunches anymore: we have concrete evidence that these partnerships work. But we also know from personal

experience how difficult it is to do this work without dedicated funding. The provincial Health Justice Community of Practice has been hard at work this year looking for possible funding grants to support the expansion of this work in legal clinics, and we fully support these efforts.

We stepped back from chairing the Health Justice Community of Practice in January 2022 after concluding

the work on an updated strategic plan. The new co-chairs have brought wonderful energy and passion to the role. We continued regularly attending meetings, providing input and support.



This year we continued to collaborate with Queen's University Faculty of Nursing students to develop educational tools for healthcare providers and our own staff. In the winter, students developed video scripts, case studies, tip sheets, and quizzes for our Justice & Health Learning Centre course. This fall, one group of nursing students is working on educational materials for healthcare providers related to the Canada Pension Plan-Disability program, while another group is working on a presentation for CALC staff on the effects of food insecurity on health and a handout mapping food resources in our area. We are also working for the first time with Loyalist College nursing students this fall as part of their clinical practicum in community and population health nursing. The students are working on posters for CALC's 40th anniversary open house that connect our areas of legal practice and some special projects with the social determinants of health.

*Lisa Turik, Co-Director Legal Services*

*For more information on our JHP project, please visit our [website](#).*

## Supporting survivors of GBV: Your Way Forward project



For over 30 years, CALC has provided services to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) survivors including those who experience intimate partner and sexual violence. Through helping people to apply to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board until the provincial government dismantled it in 2019, we helped many survivors receive compensation for and recognition of the injustice of their injuries. We also helped survivors with their problems related to housing, employment, and social assistance rights. However, we recognized there was so many more entangled legal issues arising from interactions with the family and criminal law system, but we did not have a mandate or funding to do any legal work in this area.

Last year we received a small grant (until March 2026) from the federal Department of Justice to help survivors and trusted intermediaries (the people and organizations they turn to for help) to understand legal rights in family, criminal and related areas of law. The grant also enables CALC to enhance, through a deepened trauma-informed practice, our supports to survivors who seek help in other areas such as social assistance. One of our first steps was to complete a local Needs and Capacity Assessment. Our goal was to better understand what the legal needs of GBV survivors are, the ways these needs are being met by existing services and the gaps that exist and how we might help to fill them.

Our assessment began in April 2022, and included interviews with over 45 service providers, a review of government statistics and research studies, and of our own staff and clients' experiences. We have identified 12 areas where additional resources and focus are needed. We were pleased to share these findings with community members at the Quinte Coordinating Committee against Violence (QCCAV) Education Day in March 2023, during our Open House on November 30, and we look forward to continuing to share them in the coming year.

One of our key findings is that survivors need early information and advice in multiple areas of law. For example, it is helpful for someone who experiences intimate partner violence to understand as soon as possible:

- what their legal rights may be to remain in their home after their relationship ends,
- how the criminal justice system functions including their rights as a witness testifying in a criminal case, and the alleged offender's rights to interim release/bail when they are charged with a criminal offence,
- how they can seek emergency orders related to safety and parenting, and
- whether they may be able to seek damages in small claims and civil courts for the abuse they experienced.

Early support can help survivors feel empowered and make informed decisions that meet their needs. Through our research, we found that there are opportunities for survivors to receive some of the information and advice that they need. However, to access it, they must often contact multiple different service providers, which is very challenging in times of intense stress and threats to their safety. They are often left without support in certain areas, and unanswered questions.

At CALC, we meet with survivors with diverse experiences. We provide information and advice in multiple areas of law, and if we cannot provide specific legal help, we work to help survivors access as much free or affordable support as possible. We are working to enhance our web-based resources to provide credible legal information and helpful resources. We are also offering legal literacy and awareness sessions to community organizations that wish to know more about how the legal system works so that they can better help their clients to navigate through our complex family and criminal law system.

We are also working with partners in and outside our community to explore ways to increase the number of lawyers providing accessible legal services to our clients. Our clinic is one of nine community legal clinics collaborating in this special project, which we have collectively called *Your Way Forward* (YWF). At CALC, and with our partners, we will continue to work to improve the rights of survivors and for reform of our legal system to be more responsive to their needs. To learn more, contact CALC and ask about the YWF project.

*Claire McMenemy, Clinic Lawyer*

# Community Advocacy & Legal Centre



158 George Street, Level 1  
Belleville, Ontario K8N 3H2  
[www.communitylegalcentre.ca](http://www.communitylegalcentre.ca)

Phone: 613-966-8686  
Toll-Free: 1-877-966-8686  
Fax: 613-966-6251  
Email: [contact@calc.clcj.on.ca](mailto:contact@calc.clcj.on.ca)

## 2022-2023 Board of Directors

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## Client services rated highly!

Clients who retain us formally provide feedback through a survey.

Of the clients returning the surveys, 94% would refer us to others and 88% said our help made a difference in their lives.

## Staff as at November 30, 2023 (full-time, part-time and special project staff)

Emma Camilleri	Samuel Clements	Gina Cockburn	Chloe Dick	Alex Garrett
Carolyn Hamilton	Samantha Hayward	Brynne Kioke	Michele Leering	Karen McClellan
Claire McMenemy	Elizabeth Mena	Lynda Morgan	Abby Nolan	Randy O'Brien
Sharon Powell	Brittany Prytulka	Dan Shoom	Lisa Turik	Keith M. Villanueva
John Wernham				

<b>Queen's Externs (Nursing):</b>	Caroline Congram	Joseph Cubelic	Ben Kobe	Allie Lawrynuik
	Sophia Peters	Megan Prinsen	Renée Richard	Anya Sheltra

**Loyalist Nursing Students:** Anthony Cherubino Erin Hately Hayley Mcrae Amy Ro Mahaz Sheikh

From our clients:

"[Staff] was great, helpful, and professional."

"You are amazing, without your help I would have gone on fighting for the 6th time."

"The team is awesome at CALC."

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



Individual Private Donations

