



Ontario's Community Legal Clinics

Together Making the Equal Rights Dream a Reality

2016 Annual Report



ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINICS OF ONTARIO

www.aclco.org

A Client's Story

Our client, Joe, worked as a cook in a small restaurant for 30 years. Joe is Deaf. His employers did not use ASL, so it was hard for him to communicate at work.

At first, Joe had a good relationship with the restaurant's owner. But after she died his bosses harassed and ridiculed him. They made threatening gestures, claiming they were "jokes". They threw food at his head to get his attention. They pulled down his pants. At one point, his boss closed Joe into a pitch-dark freezer, leaving him stranded without any sensory input. Because of the distress all of this caused him, Joe had no choice but to quit his job.

Joe experienced the workplace events as terrifying. He developed post-traumatic stress disorder. The WSIB denied Joe any compensation over many years, stating that the law limits benefits for mental stress injuries to those that are objectively traumatic. The WSIB accepted that the employer was "joking".



His legal clinic, IAVGO, represented Joe before the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal. The Tribunal agreed to Joe's request for both Deaf and ASL interpreters at the hearing. With the assistance of these interpreters, Joe was able to tell his story convincingly. The Tribunal agreed that the events he suffered were traumatic and had a profound effect on Joe's life.

With the help of community advocates for the Deaf, his legal clinic worked alongside Joe for eight years. This year, Joe finally won his case and received significant compensation for the sustained harassment and traumatic injury he suffered at work.



Roy McMurtry

The Clinics' Champion:

"Legal Aid, and, in particular community law, is perhaps the single most important mechanism we have to make the equal rights dream a reality."

Community Legal Clinics in Ontario

Ensuring equal rights and equal voices

Community Legal Clinics across the province work to protect and promote the rights of low-income Ontarians. Whether speaking for a client whose wages have not been paid, or bringing to the Supreme Court of Canada arguments that underscore the impact of the law on the communities we serve, Community Legal Clinics fight for justice for the most disadvantaged among us. Steadfast advocacy for equal access to justice and respect for the rights of all, regardless of ability to pay, ensure a just and equitable society for all Ontarians.

There are 76 Community Legal Clinics in Ontario, each with our own board of directors chosen by the community. We serve the most vulnerable on critical issues for people who live with poverty such as: affordable and secure housing, education, health care, income security, disability programs and workers' rights, to name just a few. Along with traditional legal representation, clinic staff educate clients about their rights, and employ tools rooted in community law to achieve positive change for large numbers of people living with poverty.

Most clinics serve a particular geographic area. In fact, every community in Ontario is served by a clinic. There are also specialty clinics for specific groups including people with disabilities, injured workers, the elderly, children and youth. Each clinic identifies its community's most pressing legal needs and provides services to meet them.

An essential part of reducing poverty in Ontario

Much of the work that community legal clinics do is aimed at ensuring people with low-incomes have access to basic measures of income support and housing. These essential supports in turn result in improved health, improved opportunities for children to succeed in school and for adults to participate in the labour market and the economy.

People who are poor bear huge costs: living with deprivation and the stresses it imposes; strains within families; hunger and inadequate nutrition; inferior housing; alienation from mainstream society. This all takes a toll on health, self-esteem, the ability to participate in the labour market, and the ability of children to learn and thrive in school. Health care costs related to poverty alone are billions of dollars a year in Ontario.

The work that Community Legal Clinics do to help low-income people secure access to our justice system is therefore not only an issue of justice. Clinic services that result in a reduction of poverty have a significant positive impact on the health, vitality and economic return of local communities.

Our clients say:

"The clinic was very easy for me to use even with my lack of English or French because they were able to find a translator for me."

« Services personnalisé; humanisme des avocats; accès à l'information. »

"The good thing about the clinic is the public are able to enjoy the services of a professional lawyer for free. I am very thankful that such a service exists in the community."

ACLCO Co-Chairs' message



Trudy McCormick

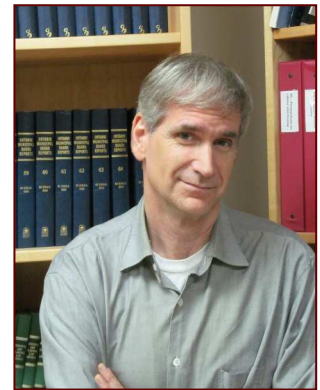


Fran Cherry

It is an honour to introduce the Second Annual Report of Ontario's Community Legal Clinics. In our first Report in 2015, readers learned about the work that Clinics do towards "Making the Equal Rights Dream a Reality". That story continues in our 2016 Report, and is a testament to the thousands of hours of dedicated work and outreach by clinic staff members and volunteers, including volunteer board members, throughout the province. In 2016, we experienced the third and very welcome increase in financial eligibility thresholds for clinic services. Effective April 1, 2016, that financial eligibility income threshold had increased by 18 per cent. This brings new challenges, including new areas of law and new clients and communities to our clinics. This year's Report will speak to some of the ways that clinics have worked to meet these challenges, and to prepare themselves to move forward.

Trudy McCormick and Fran Cherry
Co-Chairs, ACLCO

Executive Director's message



2016 was certainly an eventful year for Ontario's community clinics. It began on a high note, with new funding flowing into the clinic system (from the provincial government's Financial Eligibility Guidelines investments), and the start of a new relationship with a new CEO, David Field, at Legal Aid Ontario (LAO). The additional funding has led to expanded community legal services across the province, including the development of new services such as employment and immigration law in many communities. LAO transferred responsibility and funding for clinic learning and training to the clinics, and constructive dialogues were launched between LAO and the ACLCO on a number of topics such as a Funding Plan for the Clinic System, and Support Services for clinics.

Unfortunately the year ended on a more sombre note with the announcement by LAO of a potential financial shortfall and proposed austerity measures that could impact negatively on clinics. The ACLCO immediately began working with LAO and the provincial government to avoid these negative impacts, with some success. These conversations continue.

Despite the financial uncertainty, clinics continue to work hard for their communities, and have achieved great results that are reflected in the pages of this Annual Report. And the ACLCO will maintain its efforts in 2017 to ensure that Ontario's community clinics are strong and well-funded and able to continue our vital social justice efforts.

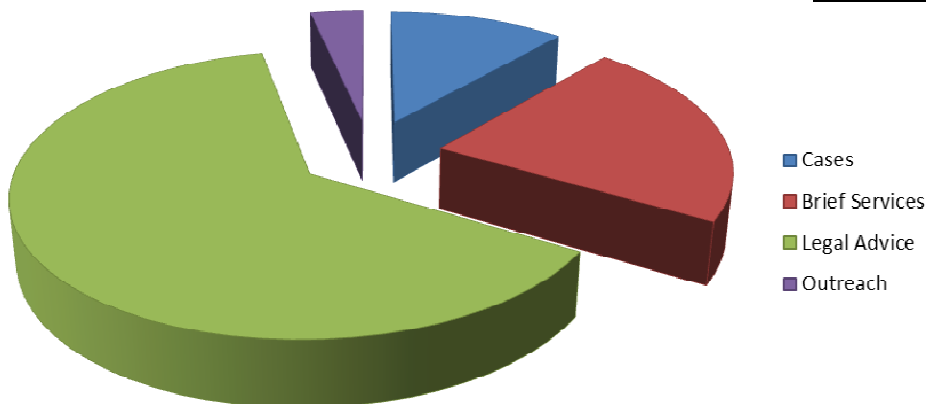
Lenny Abramowicz
Executive Director, ACLCO

A Full Spectrum of Clinic Services

Clinics distinguish themselves among legal aid services providers by offering a broad range of legal services to address the needs of their communities and the inequities confronting low-income Ontarians. Clinics offer legal representation in courts and tribunals, brief services, legal advice, public legal education, and referrals to other sources of assistance. Clinics lead and participate in law reform initiatives, community development and organizing, choosing the right tool in their legal toolkit to address the social justice issue most effectively.

Clinic Services	2015-16
Cases	20,568
Brief Services	39,857
Legal Advice	113,712
Outreach: Public Legal Education, Law Reform, Community Development	6,293
Referrals	41,171
Total	221,601

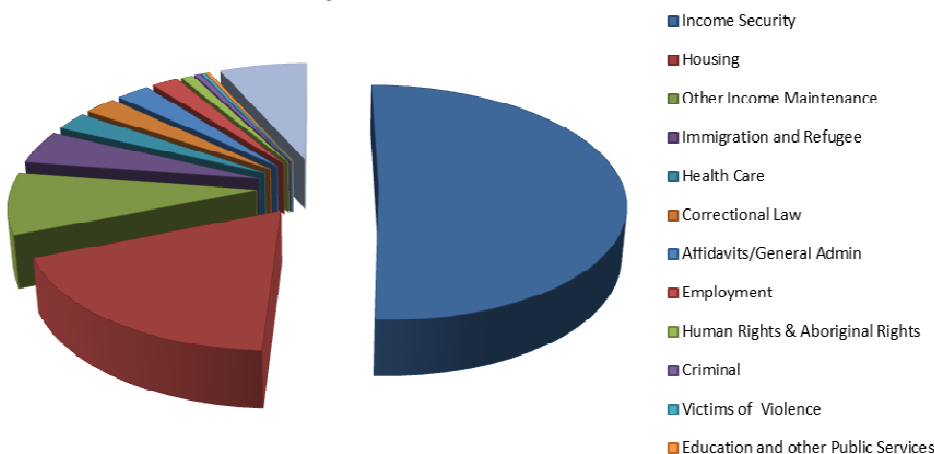
Clinic Services 2015-16



The Numbers

Community Legal Clinics serve the most disadvantaged who have been pushed to society's margins—recent immigrants and refugees, people living with disabilities, single mothers, racialized people, victims of abuse and torture, the elderly, among many others.

Poverty Law Areas - New Cases



The Impact

Strengthened by dedicated staff and Board members, and funded by Legal Aid Ontario, Clinics make a significant difference in their communities. Adopting innovative approaches to stretch their resources and address creatively the growing needs of clients, Clinics produce results that enhance and improve the legal welfare of the communities they serve. The following are only a few examples of the many accomplishments by Clinics in 2016.



Through Cases



Sweet & Sour: *The Struggle of Chinese Restaurant Workers*

In April 2016, **Metro Toronto Chinese and South Asian Legal Clinic** released: “Sweet & Sour: The Struggle of Chinese Restaurant-workers”. The Report is based on the results of a survey of 184 workers of Chinese descent and their work experience in the Greater Toronto Area restaurant industry between 2013 and 2016. The Report found widespread and persistent violations of workers’ rights under the *Employment Standards Act* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. After the release of the Report, MTCSALC called upon the Ministry of Labour to implement the Report’s recommendations. Many organizations including several community legal clinics supported the recommendations. The Report garnered much media attention from both Chinese language media and mainstream media outlets; it served as a catalyst for the general public to share their personal experiences with employment law violations.

Addressing environmental threats to Indigenous lands

The **Canadian Environmental Law Association**, our environmental law clinic, is representing the Grassy Narrows First Nation in legal proceedings against the province of Ontario. The case asks the Divisional Court to overturn provincial plans for a decade of clear-cut logging in Grassy Narrows’ homeland. This small Indigenous community fears that clear-cut logging will release mercury into local waterways. This would further contaminate local fish and harm the health of people consuming the fish who already bear the burden of mercury that was dumped into the river by a paper mill in the 1960s. For Grassy Narrows, the logging plan will prolong and deepen the ongoing tragedy from exposure to mercury in their community. Their rights under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to life, liberty and security of the person and freedom from discrimination will be violated. Significant expert evidence was filed this year on behalf of Grassy Narrows.

Employment Law Services

Employment issues significantly affect clinic community members: many are low-income, precariously employed, vulnerable or unemployed workers. In this past year, supported by new provincial government investments in legal aid services, clinics have expanded their services to include employment law to meet this important need. All of these initiatives are designed to be delivered collaboratively among clinics, sharing staff resources, to maximize their reach. Services provided include individual cases, coordinated outreach and advocacy. The initiatives include:

Toronto East Employment Law Services serving the east end of Toronto through six participating clinics.

The *Mobile Legal and Social Justice Initiative* is a project that aims to provide access to employment law services throughout Southwestern Ontario.

All eleven clinics in the Northern Region have embarked on an *Employment Law Initiative* that involves clinics serving the north, a number of community agencies and clinics elsewhere in the province that already provide employment law services or are working to put these services in place.

Notably, an important component linking all of these initiatives was an employment law training event organized by **Mississauga Community Legal Services** for all interested clinic staff. The training drew over 120 participants who learned about aspects of employment law ranging from Employment Standards claims to complex human rights issues. The goal of the training event was to develop expertise, and establish relationships to take advantage of our greatest asset – our large network of Community Legal Clinics in Ontario.



Building Connections with Temporary Foreign Workers

For many years, the **Northumberland Community Legal Centre** has been reaching out to migrant workers within Northumberland County. With recent funding from Legal Aid Ontario, the clinic has expanded services for vulnerable workers, including migrant workers, within the Eastern Region. Often, the workers - largely here through the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program - are isolated on farms. They fear exercising their legal rights because they may be sent to the country of origin before a claim can be investigated. After several social events, NCLC began offering legal satellite clinics. By then, workers were familiar enough with clinic staff and began asking questions about their legal rights. Workers continue to weigh the risks of exercising their legal rights against being sent home.

Along with other clinics, such as **Niagara North Community Legal Assistance** and **Legal Assistance of Windsor**, NCLC has organized a provincial interclinic working group, the Migrant Workers Working Group. The Working Group presented to the Changing Workplaces Review panel stressing that there must be random inspections and Ministry initiated enforcement for workers to feel that they can truly exercise their rights, without fear of reprisal.

A2J: Using Technology to Assist Clients



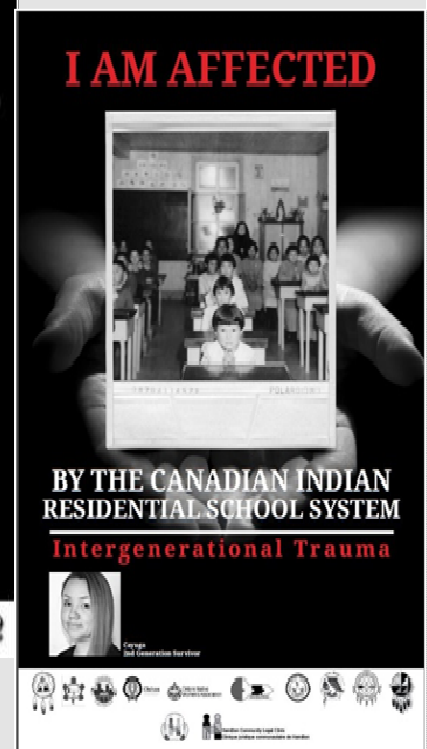
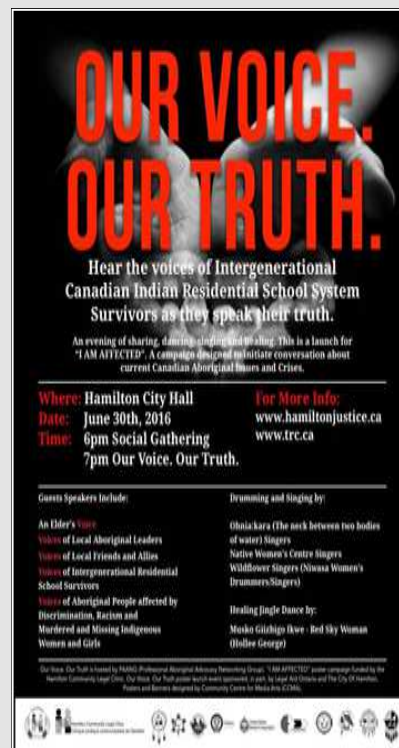
A partnership of community legal clinics is using online interactive tools to assist clients. The project is realizing promising outcomes. Using the technology, clinics are achieving time savings on intake and document generation, which has freed up additional resources for other services.

Called *A2J Guided Interviews*, the online interactive technology has proved helpful to clinics in: preparing appeals of Ontario Disability Support Program denials, a high volume and document intensive area of practice; supporting student volunteers to deliver clinic services; enabling clinics to better work with trusted intermediaries to serve hard-to-reach clients.

A Journey to ReconciliAction

The **Hamilton Community Legal Clinic** released “A Journey to ReconciliAction: Calls to Action Report”. This is an important part of the Clinic’s collaborative journey started in 2013 with the establishment of YÉN:TENE, an Indigenous justice initiative that strives to build relationships of trust with the Indigenous community.

This Report highlights the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action that apply to the Clinic and provides recommendations on how to incorporate them in the Clinic’s policies, procedures and practices. The recommendations provide a thoughtful path to support the Clinic’s decolonization process. In the spirit of Indigenous principles of sharing knowledge and wisdom, the Clinic passed the Report on to their sister clinics and other organizations and community groups to use the report and answer the Calls to Action that affect them.



« Les aspects de la clinique qui selon moi sont excellents : l'accompagnement des besoins des clients, la patience de mon avocat, l'offre de l'écoute, distribution d'autres ressources d'informations, le temps ainsi la compréhension.....il n'y a rien qui laissent à désirer car la clinique d'aide juridique est excellent. »

Our clients say:

“Your foresight on all matters on my case was truly remarkable. I owe the success and victory of my case to your dedication.”

[In answer to the question: “What was bad about the clinic?”] “I have nothing bad to say about the clinic. I have only good things to say.”

With Community

A National Housing Strategy

The **Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario** has continued to actively push for a national housing strategy in Canada that would include enshrining housing as a right for citizens. The Canadian government has promised to fix the affordable housing crisis with Canada's first ever National Housing Strategy. Housing critics, like ACTO, say that housing in Canada has become too expensive in major cities and remote communities, with a lack of affordable housing contributing to homelessness. One of every eight Canadian households is in housing need, according to Statistics Canada's national household survey. Through intense community organizing and policy advocacy, ACTO has pressed the government to ensure our National Housing Strategy will guarantee everyone **the right to safe, adequate, and affordable housing**.

CLEO's collaboration with public libraries

Research by The Action Group on Access to Justice (TAG) has indicated that staff at public libraries are often asked by patrons for help with a legal problem they're experiencing. Librarians said that they are most asked about government benefits, housing and employment issues, separation and divorce, and wills and powers of attorney, after the patron has already talked to friends and family, and other intermediaries like government offices.

Recent initiatives have highlighted the potential for local public libraries to work with community legal clinics as partners in striving for access to justice. This year, **Community Legal Education Ontario** has delivered in-person and online capacity-building workshops to about 125 library staff across the province, showing them how to find reliable online legal information and make good referrals to local legal and community services.

CLEO, the Ontario Library Association, and the Southern Ontario Library Service with funding from the Law Foundation of Ontario are developing an 8-week online course that will support library staff in finding reliable information to help their patrons who come to them with legal problems.

Respecting Rights

Respecting Rights is a unique advocacy project that focuses on the rights of persons labelled with intellectual disabilities. Housed at **ARCH Disability Law Centre**, Respecting Rights is a committee of people labelled with intellectual disabilities, advocacy staff and ARCH lawyers. Respecting Rights provides accessible rights education workshops to people labelled with intellectual disabilities, developmental services agencies, and families. Respecting Rights also conducts accessible law reform activities. More information about the Respecting Rights Committee is available at: www.facebook.com/respectingrights.



Librarians and Access to Justice in Ontario



Graphic recording from a Respecting Rights

Our clients say:

"The ease and user friendly services/forms/information provided to the client(s) is/was excellent! Very, very important to me as I am a client with a brain injury as a result of a car accident."

Rural Justice

The first ever Rural Justice Forum for Ontario's community legal clinics was held on January 30 and 31 2017 in Gananoque, on the picturesque but frigid banks of the St. Lawrence River. The Forum was hosted by the Eastern and Central Region's Rural & Remote Transformation Project and provided an opportunity for 30 participants to come together around the needs of underserved communities. Forum participants attended from throughout the province, including from Eastern and Central Region clinics, the ACLCO, the Law Commission of Ontario, The Law Foundation of Ontario and LAO staff, as well as representatives from the Southwest clinics and Northern clinics, CLEO, and speciality clinics with a provincial mandate.

This interactive forum:

- raised awareness of the challenges and opportunities for rural and remote access to justice, which included environmental issues, lack of access to fundamental technology such as internet service, lack of reliable communication networks and transportation, prisoners' issues and isolation issues;
- developed principles for service delivery in rural and remote communities that continue to reflect the community based and governed model of community legal clinics;
- considered practical ideas and plans for moving forward such as collaborative planning and improved use of mobile technology; and
- discussed laws, regulations and policies that are discriminatory in their impact on rural residents.



Clinic-led improvements to Disability Support Adjudication

Since the inception of the Ontario Disability Support Program, the resources of community legal clinics have increasingly been devoted to appeals of flawed Disability Adjudication Unit (DAU) decisions to the Social Benefits Tribunal. The clinic system has been advocating for improvements to the adjudication of disability by the DAU for many years. Following clinic system advocacy to address a troubling medical review process, the Minister of Community and Social Services invited a coalition comprised of the **Income Security Advocacy Centre**, the Steering Committee on Social Assistance, the Ontario College of Family Physicians Poverty and Health Committee, the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Association of Community Health Centres and the ODSP Action Coalition to join a working group with a mandate to improve the disability adjudication process.

We are beginning to see the results of this work as the Disability Adjudication Unit rate of granting disability benefits has increased by 11%, with even bigger increases to their internal review reversal rate. A corresponding decrease has occurred in appeals to the Social Benefits Tribunal. For the first time, clinics are seeing a reduction in demand for ODSP appeals.

Orange Shirt Day

The **Community Legal Clinic - Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk** expanded their staff to include a full time Community Developer opening many new opportunities for the Clinic's active participation and engagement in the community. Staff wore orange on September 30th to support "Orange Shirt Day". The orange shirt honours the children who were forced to attend Residential schools, and raises awareness about this atrocity in Canadian history. Staff continued "Orange Shirt Day" outside the office at the 2nd Annual Pride event in Six Nations. On October 19th, the staff wore purple shorts to recognize the need to address, and end violence against children.



Civics Human Rights and Housing Project: Community Leadership Building



Civics Human Rights and Housing Project: Community Leadership Building is a project of the **West Scarborough Community Legal Clinic**, funded by Maytree, to provide education for community leaders about poverty, human rights and housing issues in Scarborough. The project provides training for 20 Scarborough community members with lived experience of these issues. The project will empower the community members to educate other community members about the issues that are affecting Scarborough communities. The goal is for the community leaders to advocate for poverty reduction and progressive change through law reform activities.

TRANSforming JUSTICE

The **HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario** is administering the TRANSforming JUSTICE: *Trans Legal Needs Assessment Ontario* project. The project uses "trans" as an umbrella term to refer to people whose gender identity or expression is not reflected by the sex assigned to them at birth, including people who identify as two-spirit, non-binary, agender, gender queer, cross dresser, transgender, or transsexual, as well as those who identify as men or women with a history that involves a gender transition.

Funded by Legal Aid Ontario and the Ontario HIV Treatment Network, the project aims to:

- document the legal burden, challenges and needs facing trans people in Ontario;
- identify challenges the law and legal system may pose for trans people;
- understand barriers to accessing justice and legal services; and,
- help determine and support law reform and legal service priorities.

Information about the project can be found at: www.halco.org/our-services/trans-legal-needs-assessment-ontario.



"They understand what we go through."

Our clients say:

"Their good attitude, enough patience, good care gave me a warm feeling in a foreign country with no friends, just with my baby daughter."

The Colour of Poverty



In February 2016, staff from the **Metro Toronto Chinese and South East Asian Legal Clinic** (MTCSALC) attended the 57th Session of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) for their 10 year review of Canada. In addition to written submissions, MTCSALC staff made the trip to Geneva, Switzerland, as part of the delegation of Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change (COPC) in order to provide oral submissions to the CESCR. The COPC submissions called on the UN Committee to address the growing racial economic disparities in

Canada and highlight the discrimination facing migrant workers and immigrant women subject to conditional permanent residence requirement. In their final concluding observations, the UN adopted MTCSALC's recommendations on strengthening employment equity and the collection of disaggregated data.

Southwest Clinic Services – en français

The Integrated Legal Clinics' French Language Service Program was initially a clinic-run pilot project funded by Legal Aid Ontario that offered *legal advice and referrals* in French via a toll free number. The clinics involved since the initial project for their respective regions are in Sudbury, Ottawa, Toronto and Windsor.

When the project received "program" status, the **Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, Justice Niagara and Neighbourhood Legal Services (London & Middlesex)** had partnered with the **Windsor-Essex Bilingual Legal Clinic** in an extended French regional initiative: "*Clinics supporting Clinics en français*". In 2016, **Mississauga Community Legal Services** and **Waterloo Region Community Legal Services** joined in.

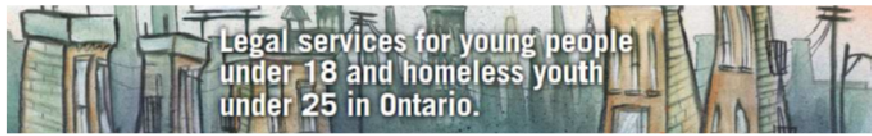
The objective is to ensure that, any service provided by community legal clinics whether advice, representation or community outreach, be equally available in French for communities in underserved areas of our region. A team of representatives from this group extend these services to clinic colleagues, while maintaining their own daily caseload. In addition, this program also provided funding for necessary translation of various SW clinic transformation projects such as Hamilton's Journey to Reconciliation, the Legal Health Check-Up, LAW's Advocacy for Aboriginal peoples in Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent and the Southwest Transformation Group.

The Next Generation of Clinic Practitioners

Many clinics are engaged in clinical legal education as partners with law schools and community colleges. The clinics introduce law students to the poverty law issues faced by persons with low-incomes and help them learn the most effective ways of delivering legal services to our community.

In 2016, **Parkdale Community Legal Services** celebrated its 45th anniversary. PCLS is one of the first community legal clinics in the province, established in 1971 as a project of students and faculty at Osgoode Hall Law School. Since that time, the clinic has grown into a valued community asset in Parkdale. The Clinic has trained hundreds of students in poverty law. This past year, PCLS contributed to pushing for the broadest possible framing of the Changing Workplaces Review. The Clinic supported the sizeable Tibetan community in the area of family reunification and, delivered public legal education workshops and application clinics for people on social assistance to be able to access emergency housing funds.





A Day in the life

of a Clinic Lawyer: **Andrea Luey**
Justice for Children and Youth

8:20 am

arrive at work hoping to take care of a few time-sensitive things in my first hour before I'm due to meet my client at 9:45am.

8:25 am

log onto my fake Facebook account that I use for one, very vulnerable Youth Criminal Justice Act client, to remind her that today is the day she is being voluntarily admitted to a youth in-patient treatment program at CAMH and that I am picking her up at the shelter at 9:45 am. She's already online, waiting for me. She tells me she is ready NOW and needs me to come to the shelter immediately.

9:00 am

I arrive at the shelter to take my client to check into the treatment program. She is perhaps the most vulnerable client I have ever had (homeless, trans, serious mental health, severe addiction...but layered with a very compelling charm). I help to get her to CAMH and facilitate her admission. Normally it is family who would do this, but she doesn't have any. Together we meet with the psychiatrist, social worker, and nurse. It goes fairly well and I leave her at 12pm. This is a very big step and daunting for many reasons including the reality that she is going from the streets to a very high level of structure and expectation. I am feeling positive and hopeful for her as I ride the streetcar back to my office. Her success or even attempt in the program will have positive impact on resolving her 12 outstanding charges.

12:30pm

lunch break - I do a workout in the building stairwell because I am too cheap for a gym membership, especially with two kids in full-time childcare. I do 51 flights, plus two cartwheels while I wait for an elevator. I feel recharged to get on with my other work.

1:00 pm

I finalize a case conference brief for filing at family court for a youth who has claimed child support after leaving an abusive home. I deal with email "negotiations" with a very condescending opposing counsel. I feel that sometimes part of the larger legal community forgets that JFCY's clients are legitimate rights-holders who instruct counsel. I wonder why it has to be this way. I attempt to take the high road and be courteous while still zealously representing my client. It's not easy.

2:00 pm

I try to find other service providers who can visit my CAMH client over the weekend. I worry that she will self-discharge without this support.

3:00 pm

I work on notes for upcoming workshop for Connecting to Care 2, a conference hosted by Nishnawbe Aski Nation in Thunder Bay. The conference aim is to support queer and trans people—especially youth—who are living on various remote reserves in Northwestern Ontario.

3:30 pm

I call a 16 year-old client, with help of a Mandarin interpreter who joins via conference call, to inform him about the Interim Assistance Order from the Social Benefits Tribunal. He was denied Ontario Works for various reasons, including that they believe Mom's word that he can still live at home and that it's not abusive. The Interim Assistance Order, which requires Ontario Works to pay him assistance until the resolution of the case, means that he is less likely to become homeless as we wait for the hearing date.

3:45 pm

I prepare supporting documents to send to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board for a case involving the surviving children of a murder victim.

4:05 pm

I correspond with a CAMH social worker about scheduling off-grounds pass for my client. I connect with my client's amazing Peer Support Worker and schedule their pass date for Sunday.

4:20 pm

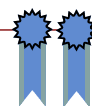
I call my spouse to request that she pick up the kids today. I want to get a couple more things done before I leave. It's been a heavy day. I regret my decision to cut back on sugar.

4:25 pm

I'm back to dealing with the mean opposing family law counsel via email. I attempt to bring the focus back to the legal issues. I call my client at the end of his school day. His instructions are clear. I am amazed by his maturity and resilience.

5:45 pm

I leave the office. I get home just in time to see my 19-month old make a "hat" out of her full bowl of soup. I smile.



Recognitions and Awards

Community Legal Clinic- Simcoe, Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes

Community Legal Clinic- Simcoe, Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes was given a *Gifts of the Heart* award In September 2016 by Simcoe Community Services, an organization that provides supports and services for persons with intellectual disabilities. The award was made in recognition of the Clinic's work in assisting persons with their claims in the Huronia Regional Centre and the Schedule 1 Facilities class action law suits. In the now concluded Huronia Regional Centre class action, the Clinic obtained total awards in excess of \$750,000 for 37 of its clients. Staff Lawyer, Lisa Loader leads this project. The award was accepted on behalf of the Clinic by Staff Lawyer, Francesca Allodi-Ross who works closely with Lisa on these files. She is shown with David Farquhar, a person supported by Simcoe Community Services.



Shelley Gilbert

Shelley Gilbert, co-ordinator of social work services with Legal Assistance of Windsor, was honoured at Queen's Park for her work supporting victims of human trafficking with an Attorney General's Victim Services Award of Distinction. Shelley was lauded for working closely with victims as they navigate the criminal justice system, for advocating and creating support systems for trafficked victims, including safe housing and employment, and for her commitment in spreading education about human trafficking.



Jane Meadus

Lawyer Jane Meadus, the Institutional Advocate with the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, Is the recipient of the Osgoode Professional Development 2016 Award for Outstanding Contribution to Continuing Legal Education. Jane has been a Program Chair for the Osgoode Certificate in Elder Law, as well as for programs on Advising the Elderly Client and the Legal Guide to Consent, Capacity and Substitute Decision-Making.



Jenny Vuay Quan,

Jenny Vuay Quan is the inaugural recipient of the J. Shirley Denison Award. Jenny has served for more than 28 years as a Community Legal Worker for the Metro Toronto Chinese & Southeast Asian Legal Clinic; since the day the Clinic opened its doors. She is the longest serving staff of her Clinic. The award recognizes the contribution of a lawyer or a paralegal working to advance poverty law and access to justice. With her fluency in English, Mandarin, Cantonese and Vietnamese, her vast legal knowledge and commitment to justice, Jenny has served tens of thousands of clients from marginalized communities.



Ryan Peck

Ryan Peck, the Executive Director of the HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario, is this year's winner of the Legal Aid Ontario Sidney B. Linden Award. This award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to assisting low-income Ontarians in the pursuit of access to justice. Since starting as ED in 2007, Ryan has diligently worked to further HALCO's mandate of advancing the human rights of people living with HIV and of using laws and the legal system to reduce discrimination, stigma, poverty and injustice faced by people with HIV.



Judith Wahl

For over 32 years, Judith Wahl has been very active in advocating for the rights of older adults and in the development of elder law as an area of practice. The occasion of her retirement as the (founding) Executive Director of the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, is a good opportunity to recognize Judith's incomparable contributions to our clinic system and her many awards and recognitions. Among them are the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal (2013) and the Osgoode Hall Law School Gold Key Award for Public Service (2006).



Chantal Walterson

Chantal Walterson, Community Legal Worker/Licensed Paralegal for Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic, has been awarded the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award, in recognition of her contribution to her community. The Caring Canadian Award, which was established by the former Governor General Roméo LeBlanc, recognizes individuals who volunteer their time to help others and to build a smart and caring nation.



Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario

Who we are

The ACLCO is the representative body of Ontario's Community Legal Clinics. Seventy-four community legal clinics throughout Ontario are members of the ACLCO. We are governed by an elected 13-person executive, comprised of staff and board members from Clinics from all regions of the province. We have developed expertise in poverty law services delivered through the community legal clinic model. We act in a leadership role to advocate for sustainable legal aid services and, are recognized throughout Canada and internationally as a champion of community based legal services.



What we do

The ACLCO communicates and collaborates regularly with government, funders, community and justice organizations regarding legal aid and community legal clinics. The ACLCO helps coordinate the clinic system's interactions with a variety of external justice partners.

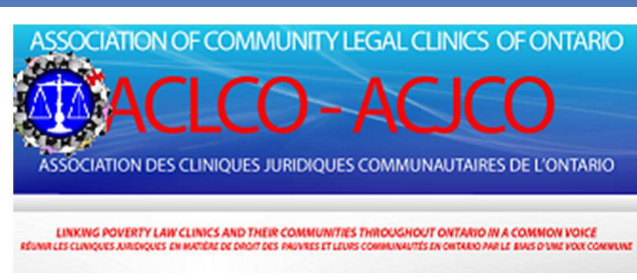
Over the past few years, the ACLCO worked with other legal aid service provider groups, primarily through the Alliance for Sustainable Legal Aid, to pursue increased government funding for legal aid. Discussions with the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) led to a multi-year plan to raise the financial eligibility guidelines for legal aid services, along with funding to provide those services. Approximately \$10 million of this increased funding has been targeted for Clinics in the first three years.

Collaboration with the primary funder of Clinics, Legal Aid Ontario (LAO), remains an important focus for the ACLCO. We work with LAO to ensure robust and thriving poverty law services in Ontario. Recently, the ACLCO worked with LAO, and MAG, on an understanding that transformative initiatives in the clinic system would be clinic-designed, in line with the principles of community-based legal services, and would benefit our clients and communities.

In addition, the ACLCO works with LAO on a wide range of issues affecting the clinic system through the ACLCO Executive and a number of standing and ad hoc advisory committees.

The ACLCO is expanding its supports for community clinics. We continue to operate the KnowledgeNow program, promoting knowledge creation and sharing throughout the clinic system. The ACLCO Policy Counsel plays an important role in clinic support and leadership. LAO has transferred the responsibility and funding for the clinic learning and training program to the ACLCO on a "pilot" basis. In 2018, if both parties agree, the transfer will be permanent.

Next year the ACLCO will continue to work on behalf of Ontario's community clinics by ensuring the ongoing flow of new funding into legal aid and the clinic system, by strengthening the clinic – LAO relationship, by fostering strong relations between the clinic system and our justice sector partners, and by expanding the supports we provide to clinics throughout the province.



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