

Ontario's Community Legal Clinics

Together Making the Equal Rights Dream a Reality

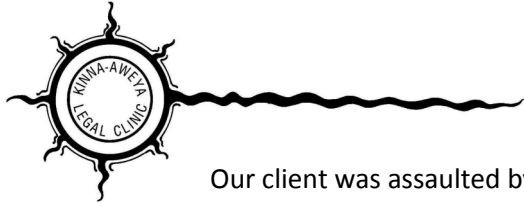
2017 Annual Report



ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINICS OF ONTARIO

www.aclco.org

A Client's Story



Our client was assaulted by police in a small rural community after being pulled over. Due to her physical and emotional injuries, she eventually had to leave the job she loved. The police had investigated themselves and found no wrongdoing. The client, who speaks Ojibwe as a first language, had tried everything she could to find some accountability for what happened.

In 2012, she met with a staff lawyer at Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic who helped her request an extension of time to apply to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. A hearing was scheduled in 2015, and due to Ojibwe interpretation that did not match the client's dialect, she had to appeal the denial of her claim. Three days of hearing were held in 2017. The Criminal Injuries Compensation Board decided they believed the client was a victim of a crime of violence and awarded her \$5,000 for pain and suffering and \$5,514 for her loss of income. They also awarded her \$1,200 for future counselling.

After sixteen years of fighting for justice and accountability, our client was compensated for her injuries, and most importantly, heard and believed.



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."

Roy McMurtry

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. People who live with low incomes have more frequent encounters with the justice system in their day-to-day lives than do those with more resources. Life with very modest means brings about more frequent legal disputes over the basic necessities of life: food, shelter, health care, disability supports, freedom from discrimination, decent work, etc. Clinics assist those who face these life-altering legal processes.

There are 74 Community Legal Clinics in Ontario, each governed by a board of directors chosen by the community. Clinics serve the most vulnerable on critical issues for people who live with poverty. 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, racialized communities, 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. Focused squarely on improving the welfare of the least well off in Ontario, the work of Clinics contributes to the health, vitality and economic growth of the community as a whole. Steadfast advocacy by clinics for equal access to justice and respect for the rights of all, regardless of ability to pay, ensures a just and equitable society for all Ontarians.

Message from the Co-Chairs, ACLCO

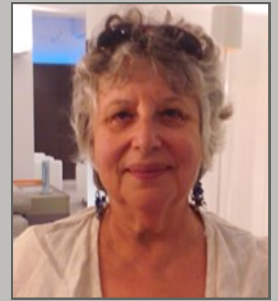
We are delighted to introduce the 2017 Annual Report of Ontario's Community Legal Clinics at a moment when the clinic system is experiencing unprecedented growth. The vital impact of the work that clinics do is increasingly recognized and acclaimed by government and our justice partners. Over this past year, clinics used their expanding resources to speak even more boldly on behalf of our clients and our communities. This is evident throughout this Report.

Clinics have clearly established their important role in Ontario's justice system as advocates for systemic and positive change for the communities that we serve. The pages of this Report are testimony to the many cases that clinics take on to secure basic necessities, dignity and justice for individuals. They also reflect the work that is done systemically to advance the rights of groups of disadvantaged people. Clinics have also used innovative and creative methods to maximize the impact of their services, giving voice to those who have been pushed to the margins of society.

The accomplishments outlined in the pages that follow fill us with optimism that disadvantaged communities can continue to turn confidently to their community legal clinics to ensure that their interests and access to justice are steadfastly advanced. Congratulations to all who have made this happen.



Trudy McCormick



Fran Cherry



Message from the Executive Director, ACLCO

Community legal clinics were created more than 50 years ago primarily as a way of responding to the collective legal needs of low income communities; specifically to effect systemic, or big-picture solutions to those needs. And 2017 was a year that clearly demonstrated that Ontario's clinics are true to their mandate. As the pages of this Report will show, in 2017, Ontario's community clinics had a direct impact on hundreds of thousands of low income people through successful test cases, law reform, organizing, and outreach efforts. These efforts ranged from appearances before the Supreme Court of Canada, to the development of new housing and social assistance policies at both national and provincial levels, to invitations to speak to the United Nations. Typically these systemic initiatives were taken by clinics in collaboration with other clinics and with community partners.

And, in addition to this significant systemic/impact work, clinics represent thousands of Ontarians before courts and tribunals.

It is important to recognize that clinics were able to accomplish all of this because of ongoing support, including increased funding, from the provincial government, and from Legal Aid Ontario. Both the government and Legal Aid Ontario continued to recognize the critical role that community clinics play in ensuring access to justice and social justice in this province.

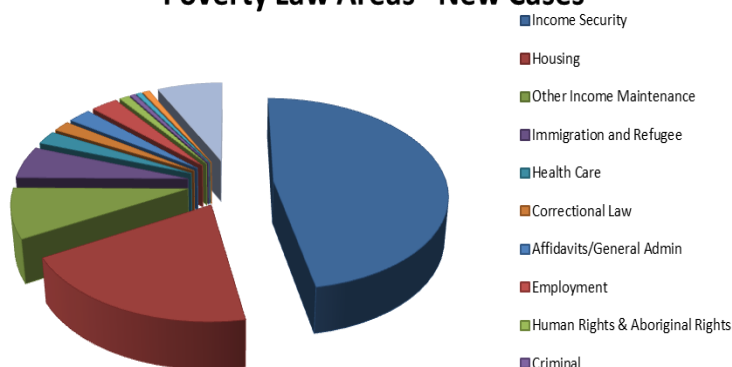


Lenny Abramowicz

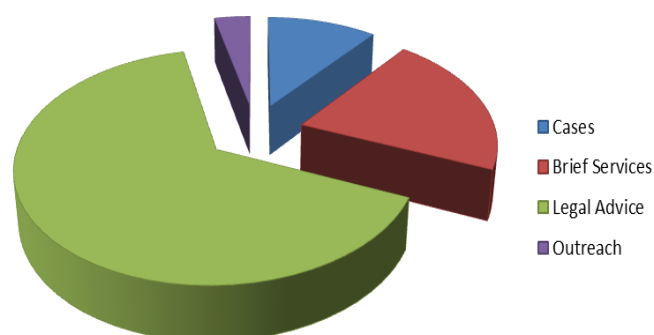
A Full Spectrum of Clinic Services

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.

Poverty Law Areas - New Cases



Clinic Services 2016-17



The numbers

In 2017, clinics across Ontario provided services to over 240,000 people.

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.

Clinic Services	2016-17
Cases	21,289
Brief Services	41,423
Legal Advice	129,749
Outreach: Public Legal Education, Law Reform, Community Development	6,974
Referrals	42,400
Total	241,835

New Cases – Areas of Law	2016-17
Income Security (Ontario Disability Support Program and Ontario Works)	10,045
Housing	4,202
Other Income Maintenance	1,777
Immigration and Refugee	1,161
Employment	614
Affidavits and General Administrative	488
Health Care	486
Correctional Law	385
Human Rights and Aboriginal Rights	223
Education and other Public Services	163
Victims of Violence	122
Criminal	122
Other (including Family, Child Welfare, Environmental)	1,500
Total	21,289

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 2017.

Finding Systemic Solutions

Fight for \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairness for Workers

Several Clinics, with leadership from Parkdale Community Legal Services, saw the fruits of hard work organizing their communities to achieve much needed reform in Ontario's law related to workers' rights. The new law, known as Bill 148, because it amends a number of existing laws related to the workplace, enacts protections for: the general minimum wage increased to \$14 per hour on January 1, 2018, and to \$15 on January 1, 2019; equal pay for equal work between full-time, part-time, seasonal and temporary workers; fairer scheduling including pay for on-call employees who aren't called in or whose shift is cancelled with little notice; paid leave for sexual and domestic violence; the right to unionize; a minimum of three weeks' vacation after five years with the same employer; expanded personal emergency leave in all workplaces; and unpaid leave to take care of a critically ill family member.



International Human Rights Advocacy

Clinics continue to be very active in international human rights forums. In August 2017, staff of the Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic and the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario travelled to Geneva to appear before the UN Committee on the Elimination of the Racial Discrimination (CERD) to comment on Canada's compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). The Clinics had put together a shadow report on the ICERD based on consultation with various racialized groups and individuals including the Colour of Poverty-Colour of Change, and the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI). At the CERD meeting, the Clinics made a deputation to the Committee during the formal meeting with NGOs, and lobbied individual members outside of the meeting, to adopt the key recommendations in their shadow report. The final Concluding Observations of CERD include many of the Clinics' key recommendations.

The Ontario Clinics and their partners asked the CERD to recognize how Canada has failed to comply with its international human rights obligations . . . and domestic human rights laws. Their joint statement cited dismal socio-economic health indicators, suicides, murders and disappearances of thousands of indigenous people. They called for a national action plan on racism for Canada, including chiefly, the collection of "disaggregated" data across all government departments. This kind of data collection that specifies identities such as race, gender or disability is the minimum Canada needs so it can measure the impact of its policies whether in health or housing or jobs. The Clinics are drawing attention to domestic laws that discriminate against specific groups such as immigrant detainees as well as migrant farm workers and caregivers such as nannies — the majority of whom are people of colour — who have their work permit tied to a specific employer leaving them vulnerable to exploitation.





The Right to Housing

For many years, the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO) and the Right to Housing Coalition – alongside housing advocates from across the country, including those with lived experience of homelessness – have pressed for a National Housing Strategy and the recognition in law of the right to housing. Those demands have finally been heard by the federal government in their announcement of a National Housing Strategy.

The courts repeatedly blocked the Clinic’s efforts to have these rights recognized under existing laws. But the community organizing on the ground sent a loud message to the government that enough is enough. Until new legislation is adopted by Parliament, the Clinic and the Coalition will keep up the pressure to ensure that the government stays true to their promise of legally recognizing that housing is a human right.

Rent strike over repairs and unfair rent increases

Tenants claimed their units in 12 Parkdale buildings were badly in need of repairs and they were facing repeated and unfair rent hikes intended to force out low-income tenants. Many tenants had withheld their rent payments in response. Withholding rent was just one of several actions taken by tenants. There were several rallies and marches through Parkdale, the brief occupation of a lobby and stairwell outside the landlord’s office and the short shutdown of a hearing at the Landlord and Tenant Board. Parkdale came together as a community and organized to defend their homes.



Parkdale Community Legal Services reached out to the landlord to talk about tenant demands and what needed to happen to end the rent strike. Negotiations began shortly after. The demands have been constant and consistent through the entire negotiations and the strike: “No more Above Guideline Increases and Fix Our Buildings.” Through effective community organizing and negotiations led by the community legal clinic, the Parkdale tenants achieved their objectives.

Problematic Prosecutions against People Living with HIV

The HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario (HALCO) and the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network provided the federal government with a brief “Exploring Avenues to Address Problematic Prosecutions Against People Living with HIV in Canada”. On World AIDS Day, after years of advocacy by community organizations, both the federal and Ontario governments recognized the need to limit the “over criminalization of HIV” in Canada. Both took a first step toward recognizing that criminal prosecution for alleged HIV non-disclosure is not warranted in the case where a person living with HIV had a “suppressed viral load,” because this is at odds with the science.

The federal **Department of Justice** released their report containing a number of important conclusions warranting a more limited application of the criminal law. It explicitly recognizes that HIV is first and foremost a public health matter, that the use of the blunt instrument of the criminal law should be a matter of last resort, and that the application of the criminal law to HIV non-disclosure is likely to disproportionately affect Indigenous, gay and Black people. The report also recognizes that it is problematic, in at least some circumstances, to use the law of sexual assault to deal with allegations of HIV non-disclosure.



In Ontario, the province that has accounted for more than half the prosecutions against people living with HIV to date, the Attorney-General and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care released a joint statement confirming that “HIV should be considered with a public health lens, rather than a criminal justice one, wherever possible.” Furthermore, Ontario’s Crown prosecutors will no longer proceed with criminal prosecutions for alleged HIV non-disclosure in cases where a person with HIV had maintained a “suppressed viral load” for six months.

...Finding Systemic Solutions

Police Accountability

The Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic participated in a review of the Police Oversight system in Ontario by Mr. Justice Michael Tulloch. The Clinic organized a community meeting for Justice Tulloch to meet with the Clinic and other members of our communities, to share their experiences with the police system in Ontario. The final report by Justice Tulloch reflected many of the views expressed by the Clinic and many other community groups who are concerned about police abuse of power and the lack of civilian oversight for police in Ontario. Since the report was released, the Clinic has met with the Attorney General and his staff and continues to be consulted on the legislative changes that are being brought to the Police Services Act.

The Clinic is also meeting with Justice Tulloch about his consultation on the issue of carding.

TRANSforming JUSTICE

The HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario administers TRANSforming JUSTICE: Trans Legal Needs Assessment Ontario. The project is designed to help ensure that the legal needs of trans people in Ontario are being met. While the project is focussed on the needs of the broader trans community, a specific component of the project is dedicated to trans people living with or affected by HIV.

The workshop and data collection phase of the project is complete. Findings from survey, focus group and interview participants reveal that: trans individuals experienced justiciable legal problems in far greater proportion than the general population in Canada; the experiences were often complicated by trans-specific mistreatment; barriers to full participation in social systems, and; obtaining legal assistance for the legal problems was very rare.

Reports on various aspects of project findings will be released over the coming months, as will recommendations for action to address the legal needs of trans people in Ontario.

A Roadmap for Income Security

Since its opening 2001, the Income Security Advocacy Centre has been working toward the transformation of Ontario's social assistance programs. Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program are built to be intrusive and punitive, with ongoing financial eligibility tests that result in frequent suspensions for non-compliance and a web of rules that even caseworkers find hard to understand.

After many years of advocates and stakeholders being at odds with the Ministry's direction for reform, in 2016 the Minister appointed three Working Groups to develop a 10-year roadmap for reform of OW and ODSP as well as other income security programs in Ontario. ISAC's Director of Advocacy and Legal Services was an active member of one of these Working Groups. The Clinic brought forward 10 years of policy analysis developed in partnership with clinic caseworkers and the community, through the ODSP Action Coalition and other community-based organizations that have an interest in income security reform.

The Roadmap was released in late 2017. This consensus report, developed by advocates, persons with lived experience, OW and ODSP managers, and the private sector, recommends positive change and significant financial investment. For the first time in 30 years, a common goal for reform has been reached that community members, advocates, and allies can rally around.

Our clients say:

"My caseworker has been great and very helpful. I would recommend the legal clinic to everyone I know that needs help with any of your services."

Our clients say:

"Thank you so, so much for helping me. You have no idea how much stress you took off me! You made me feel very comfortable and at ease. I am so glad that I met you."

**INCOME
SECURITY**
A Roadmap for Change



The Impact Through Cases

Justice for Claimants in

Institutional Abuse Settlement

ARCH Disability Law Centre is providing a variety of supports for claimants in the *Clegg v. Ontario* institutional abuse class action settlement. The class action involved 12 facilities and institutions where many persons with disabilities were neglected and abused. ARCH represents 90 claimants throughout the Province. ARCH also provides advice and information on making claims through webinars, available in both French and English. The webinars were viewed cross the province nearly 2000 times by claimants and those assisting claimants.

Fighting for Language Rights

Our client was a francophone living in Hamilton and was attending a hearing at the Landlord & Tenant Board. We were working as Tenant Duty Counsel and informed her of her right to have the hearing proceed in her preferred language. She immediately went to the front desk to notify the LTB of the request for French language services. She was assured that her hearing would be assigned to either a French-speaking Board Member or if none were available, than an interpreter would be arranged.

During her hearing the presiding Board member could not communicate or understand French, and no interpreters were provided. Whenever a question was asked of our client she affirmed that she had requested French language services. The Tribunal Board Member arbitrarily penalized the tenant for trying to exercise her language rights. The Board Member attempted to advance the proceedings by allowing the landlord's counsel to act as an unqualified interpreter for all parties. After some time and frustration the Board Member adjourned the hearing, and ordered costs against our client due to the inconvenience of her request. Our clinic intervened to bring the injustice to light and wrote to the Landlord & Tenant Board seeking a board initiated review of the order. Given the egregious nature of the original order, it was stayed and a new hearing was rescheduled with a bilingual Board Member.

Fighting for Workers

"In the last year, I worked for four Temp agencies. One of my employers did not pay my wages for over 300 hours and forced me to face hardship. When I asked for my unpaid wages, I was terminated and almost lost my apartment. TEELS helped me and I was able to save my housing. They also helped me file a claim at the Ministry of Labour for my unpaid wages, vacation pay, holiday pay and termination pay."

Toronto East Employment Law Services is an initiative to bring free employment law services to low-income individuals in the east end of Toronto. Participating clinics include: East Toronto Community Legal Services, Flemingdon Community Legal Services, Neighbourhood Legal Services, Scarborough Community Legal Services, West Scarborough Community Legal Services, and Willowdale Community Legal Services.



Fighting Human Trafficking

Legal Assistance of Windsor's anti-human trafficking initiative, "WEFiGHT," provides direct services to domestically and internationally trafficked people. In collaboration with over 20 community partners, WEFIGHT develops effective community strategies, provides education and awareness to the general public and service providers and participates in systemic advocacy with provincial and national partners. Funding from the Ontario government's Community Support Fund for survivors of human trafficking will allow WEFIGHT to enhance services to include crisis intervention, advocacy, case management as well as rent supplements for trafficked survivors. Supporting trafficked people through the social work and legal services at Legal Assistance of Windsor has assisted trafficked people to obtain basic needs such as immigration advocacy, Ontario Works, ODSP and safe, affordable housing. As relationships are established, survivors begin to recognize they have a right to expect to be treated with dignity and achieve basic rights.

A lifeline for low-income people in Ontario

A new toll-free hotline operated by the Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic (CSALC) provides free legal consultations in five different languages for non-English speakers. The hotline provides linguistically or culturally appropriate legal services for those in smaller cities and rural areas. The challenges faced in the Chinese, Vietnamese, Laotian Cambodian communities arise in part from their low income status, but also because they are a racialized group.

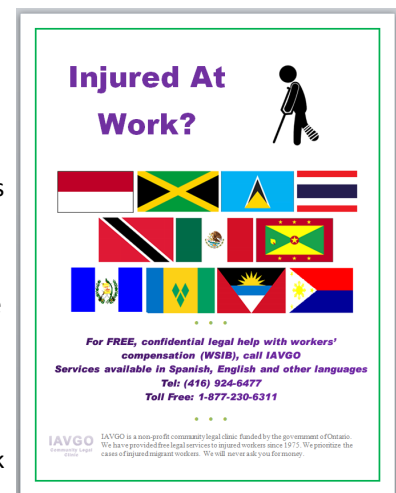


Two lawyers who speak Mandarin, Cantonese and Vietnamese staff the hotline responding to calls mostly related to immigration or employment: whether it is someone trying to bring family members to Canada, gain legal status as a resident of Ontario or fight a removal order; as well as clients who work low-wage jobs, are cheated out of pay and face exploitation. Many other challenges are faced by low-income non-English speakers. Issues with landlords, access to government services and navigating life in a new country are all problems the clinic helps clients solve including assisting people who are scammed out of savings in "informal financial agreements" such as syndicated mortgages.

Historic Victory for Injured Migrant Workers

In 2017, IAVGO Community Legal Clinic won a historic victory in a critical case for injured migrant workers. The Clinic had been working on the legal injustice facing injured migrant workers for over 10 years. Their client is a migrant worker from Jamaica; a father of four who came to work on an Ontario farm to improve his children’s lives. In 2008, after working for almost ten years putting food on the tables of Ontario families, the worker injured his back in an accident on his employer’s peach farm. As a migrant worker, the migrant worker is tied to one employer, does not have any form of labour or social mobility and does not have permanent immigration status in Canada. After his injury, the worker had to return to his home country. His injury has caused him to lose his livelihood and his ability to work in Ontario. He and his family have fallen into poverty.

The WSIB only paid the worker approximately six weeks of benefits for his lifelong injury. Its decision was based on its policy to end migrant workers’ compensation as if they can live and work in Ontario, even though they cannot. The migrant worker fought for nine years to bring his case to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal. He considered the Board's practice discriminatory both under the Charter and Human Rights Code. In September 2017, the Tribunal agreed with him and said that the WSIB’s practice was not fair and not legal. IAVGO persuaded the Tribunal that the worker’s ability to become employed should be based on the actual availability of jobs to him in Jamaica, not based on his fictional ability to work in Ontario. The Tribunal ruled that the WSIB’s way of reducing compensation to migrant workers “abrogates the requirement set out in the Act”.



Building Community Connections to Better Serve Indigenous People

After three decades of working together, the three Ottawa legal clinics - Community Legal Services Ottawa Centre, South Ottawa Community Legal Services and West End Legal Services of Ottawa - amalgamate their operations. Ontario's "newest" legal clinic is called Community Legal Services of Ottawa / Services juridiques communautaires d'Ottawa (CLSO).

A major amalgamation goal was to improve access to clinic services for Ottawa's Indigenous populations through partnerships with Indigenous organizations. CLSO has taken its relationship-building to heart. CLSO community legal workers and lawyers established a regular drop-in service at the Odawa Native Friendship Centre in downtown Ottawa. On June 21, 2017, CLSO closed its doors for the first time to commemorate National Aboriginal Day and staff members took part in the Ottawa parade. The clinic's Board of Directors also wrote to the Prime Minister to support the recognition of June 21 as a national holiday. At CLSO's first Annual General Meeting, an Indigenous elder led an opening prayer and the clinic honoured the Odawa Native Friendship Centre for its community service. With inspiration from the Hamilton and St. Thomas legal clinics, CLSO supported the "Running for Water" campaign of Hasan Syed, who ran across the country to Parliament Hill to raise awareness of the lack of access to clean water for Indigenous communities.



Who am I ?



Awenen Niin ID Bank

In 2012, ***Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic*** began holding ID clinics to assist low income individuals in obtaining basic identification, crucial in accessing housing, income support, health care, education, and other community services. Since then, the Clinic has helped hundreds of clients obtain ID and access vital services. The Awenen Niin ID Bank provides secure and accessible ID storage to low-income individuals in the City of Thunder Bay. The name of the ID Bank means "Who am I?" in traditional Ojibway. In 2017, the Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic partnered with Lakehead University Community Legal Services in providing training to law students who volunteered to participate in an ID clinic hosted at Anishnawbe-Mushkiki in Thunder Bay.



Access to Justice through Technology

Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) launched the **Steps to Justice Website** in January 2017. The website gives practical, reliable information and “real-world answers” on problems in many areas of law, including housing, social assistance, employment, family, consumer rights, and human rights – key issues identified by clinics.

Steps to Justice sets out easy-to-understand next steps, links to checklists and forms, and gives up-to-date referral information. It offers two hours of live chat to help users navigate the site. People with legal problems can find out what actions they

can take in their situation – on their own but more often with assistance – including getting help from their local legal clinic.

Mindful that people who are marginalized often lack access to the internet and digital literacy skills, CLEO is delivering workshops to scores of community workers across Ontario on how they can use the site to help their clients. Collaboration is the mainstay of the project, from development through delivery. The “no wrong door” delivery strategy enables organizations to integrate Steps to Justice content into their own sites, eliminating the need to maintain the information themselves.

Our clients say:

“Very helpful and informative. Thank you!”

“The staff were very pleasant, helpful and understanding.”

Our clients say:

“Without your help I would not have made it this far.”

“You guys are amazing. I felt like at least you made me have faith again.”

Our clients say:

“... went above and beyond my greatest expectations and I am extremely pleased with the outcome. Thank you!”

Spreading the Word

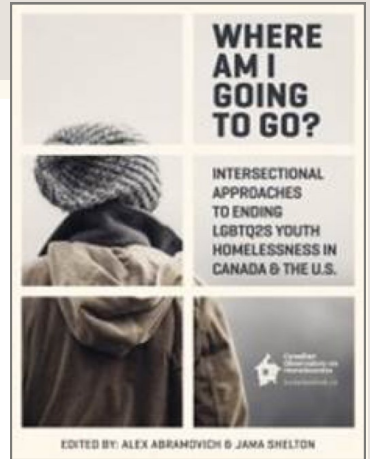
Addressing the Legal Needs of LGBTQ2S Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Staff lawyers at Justice for Children and Youth contributed a chapter in the recently published book entitled *Where Am I Going to Go? Intersectional Approaches to Ending LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness in Canada & the U.S.*

The book is an effort to address LGBTQ2S (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning and two-spirit) youth homelessness in both countries. It includes an examination of the identity-related structural barriers LGBTQ2S youth experiencing homelessness face while accessing adequate services and transitioning out of homelessness, as well as program models that successfully address those barriers. The book is intended to motivate readers to make changes in the part of the world they live in.

Each chapter addresses a specific need and its associated barriers, accompanied by a case study of a successful program that acts as a solution. It will share new knowledge, inform the development of LGBTQ2S-inclusive and affirming systems and service provision at the local, regional and national levels.

The book's authors have found that factors such as institutional erasure, homophobic and transphobic violence and discrimination that is rarely dealt with, or even noticed, make it difficult for LGBTQ2S youth experiencing homelessness to access shelters and supports they need. The result is queer and trans youth feeling safer on the streets than in shelters and housing programs.



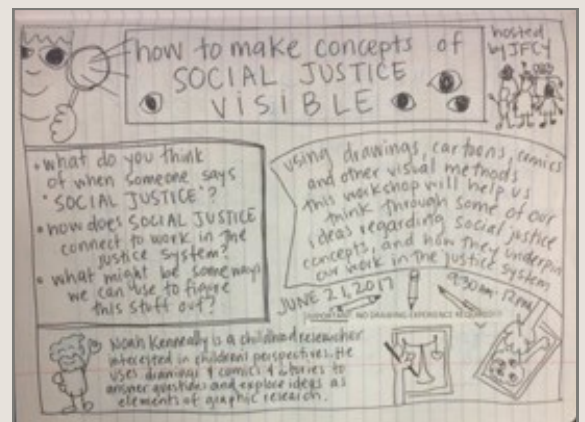
Fighting Works

An injured worker demonstrates how the law can be changed for the better with years of fighting for justice; standing up for your rights; going public about injustice; and not staying home afraid that publicly criticising injustice will bring retaliation; and, continuing to fight for others after you win your case.



Justice for Children and Youth makes Social Justice Visible

What do you think of when someone says “social justice”? How does social justice connect to work in the justice system? What might be some ways that we can use to figure this stuff out? Using drawings, cartoons, comics and other visual and collaborative methods, this workshop will help us think through some of our ideas regarding social justice concepts, and how they underpin our work in the justice system. IMPORTANT: NO DRAWING EXPERIENCE REQUIRED!!!



Recognitions & Awards



**Community Legal
Education Ontario**

CLEO's *Steps in a Family Law Case* won first place in the long website category at the 2017 ClearMark Awards. The prestigious award recognizes excellence in writing and information design and is presented annually by the Center for Plain Language in Washington, D.C. As the Center says, "With the ClearMark Awards, the Center for Plain Language sets a high standard for clarity and simplicity in the documents created by North American companies, governments, and organizations." The *Steps in a Family Law Case* flowcharts present complex information in a clear, easy-to-follow format. We congratulate CLEO's skilled staff for developing and presenting this important resource for the people of Ontario.



Grace Alcaide Janicas

The Law Society of Upper Canada has recognized Grace Alcaide Janicas with the J. Shirley Denison Award for her service to those most marginalized and disadvantaged. The award recognizes significant contributions to access to justice and/or poverty issues. Grace Alcaide Janicas is the Director of Legal Services at the Algoma Community Legal Clinic in Sault Ste. Marie and has held positions in Northern Ontario's community legal clinic system for more than 20 years. Grace was a driving force for change through her involvement in the Justice With Dignity campaign and the Kimberly Rogers Inquest, which resulted in changes to the criminal justice and social welfare systems. Grace was also a lead counsel in the case of *Tranchemontagne v. Ontario*, in which the Supreme Court of Canada endorsed the clinic position that the Social Benefits Tribunal must apply the Ontario Human Rights Code in its decision-making.



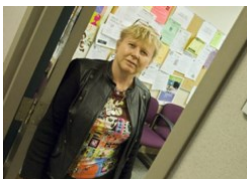
Sarah E. Colquhoun

Sally Colquhoun, the Coordinator of Legal Services at the Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic, received the Law Society Medal. Each year the Medal is awarded to selected lawyers who have made a significant contribution to the profession, in accordance with the highest ideals of the legal profession. Sally's leadership and advocacy was recognized with this award. Sally has devoted her career to increasing social justice for low income people and First Nation communities in Ontario's northwest.



Avvy Go

The Society of Ontario Adjudicators and Regulators Medal is SOAR's top honour. It honours those who have made a significant contribution and demonstrated their commitment to the field of administrative justice. Avvy Go, Executive Director of the Chinese and South Asian Legal Clinic received the 2017 SOAR medal in recognition of her work in the administrative justice sector as a litigant, activist, campaigner, and adjudicator, and for her commitment to addressing the experience of racialized participants in the tribunal justice sector.



Marjorie Hiley

Marjorie Hiley, Executive Director of the Flemingdon Community Legal Services, was recognized by the Leading Women, Leading Girls, Building Communities Recognition Program of the Ontario Ministry of the Status of Women. The Program acknowledges and celebrates women and girls who demonstrate exceptional leadership in working to improve the lives of others in their communities through volunteer work, such as breaking down barriers and encouraging women and girls to get involved in careers where women are underrepresented; actively promoting equality, diversity, healthy equal relationship; preventing violence against women and girls; reducing racism and discrimination; encouraging women and girls to participate in any part of public service; acting as a positive role model by mentoring, coaching, leading events or organizations; providing a positive example to women and girls in their communities.



Shalini Konanur

Shalini Konanur, Executive Director of the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario has been awarded the Ontario Bar Association's Award of Excellence in the Promotion of Women's Equality. The Award recognizes the significant contributions made by feminist lawyers to the promotion of women's equality rights in Canadian society, through their work for social justice or the advancement of substantive law. It reflects the spirit of s. 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as expressed and developed in the substantive equality jurisprudence of the Supreme Court of Canada.



Grace Pluchino

The Sidney B. Linden award recognizes exceptional individuals who have demonstrated a long-standing commitment to helping low-income people in Ontario and who have made an outstanding contribution of their time, expertise and service in the pursuit of access to justice in Ontario.

Grace Pluchino is the recipient of the 2017 Sidney B. Linden Award, in recognition of her commitment to the highest ideals of access to justice and for her determined advocacy for justice for the most vulnerable in our society. Grace is a paralegal and a community legal worker at the Downsview Community Legal Clinic. She is known in Downsview and the clinic system as a tireless champion for the legal right of tenants. Grace is the first CLW to receive the Sidney B. Linden Award.



WHO WE ARE

The ACLCO is the representative body of Ontario's Community Legal Clinics. Seventy-two 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.



ACLCO 2017-2018 Executive

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.

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 has expanded its supports for community clinics. We 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, with a view to making the transfer permanent.



Presenting at the ACLCO Annual Meeting 2017

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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