



**Board of Directors 2005/06**

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**Director**

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**Overview of Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic**

Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic was founded in 1978 by Aboriginal people living in the District of Thunder Bay who identified the need for culturally appropriate legal services. The Clinic's special outreach mandate to serve native clients of this district has been preserved by maintaining an all-native Board of Directors who are elected in five area communities—Armstrong, Geraldton, Marathon, Nipigon, and Thunder Bay. The membership of the Clinic is also reserved for individuals of native ancestry. Our services, however, are available to all residents of the District of Thunder Bay who are financially eligible.

**Membership**

Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic is a community non-profit corporation. Community members who meet the membership criteria can complete a membership form to receive notices of the Area Community meetings and the Annual General Meeting of the clinic, as well as other information the clinic may send out. All members of the clinic are eligible to run for a position on the Board of Directors. The Board is made up of

The Clinic's central office is in Thunder Bay and there are four branch offices in Armstrong, Geraldton, Marathon, and Nipigon. Legal workers travel on a regular basis to the following First Nation communities: Moberg, Pays Plat, Long Lake 58, Ginoogaming, Arroland, Macdiarmid, Gull Bay, and Lake Helen. In addition, they also travel to the following non-reserve communities: Manitouwadge, Schreiber, Nakina, Jellico, and Beardmore. We've recently established a full-time branch office in Nipigon, located at the band office of Lake Helen First Nation.

The Clinic provides advice and

assistance in the following areas: tenant's rights, ODSP benefits, OW benefits, Employment Insurance, human rights, Canada Pension, birth registration, income tax, Indian status, employment rights and other "poverty law". The Thunder Bay office mainly focuses on income maintenance issue and housing issues while the branch offices are able to handle a broader spectrum of service. Legal clinic staff are also involved in community legal education, community development and law reform in appropriate areas of law.

The Clinic is funded by Legal Aid Ontario.

Associate membership shall be open to the spouse of a Full member who does not qualify for full membership or any interested persons. Full members are allowed to run for a Board position, be elected as a delegate to attend the AGM and to vote at any meetings of the legal clinic.

Applications can be picked up at any of the offices or by calling any of the offices.



*“What’s happening  
in the branch  
offices?”*



## **Geraldton Branch**

The Kinna-awaya Legal Clinic’s Geraldton branch office opened its doors to the public in 1978. Since then, we have been servicing those in the community and surrounding areas. Currently, our office is located downtown on the main street in Geraldton, which makes it easily accessible to the public. The Community Legal Worker also travels on a regular basis to other communities such as Longlac, Nakina, Aroland, Caramat, Beardmore, and Jellicoe.

Our services are offered in both English and French. Chantal Walterson has been the full-time Community Legal Worker since October 2004. Prior to that, she filled the Secretary/Receptionist position for over 6 years. Renee Belisle is presently in that position and has been since February 2005.

If a client is found to financially ineligible for our services or if our office does not handle their matter, we provide assistance through

pamphlets, referrals, and researched information.

We take pride in offering quality service to the people of the communities and we look forward to many more upcoming years.

Chantal and Renee

## **Marathon Branch**

The Marathon branch office is staffed by a full-time Community Legal Worker, Val Biggs, and a part-time support staff, Miriam McCutcheon. Both have been with the Clinic for a number of years, Val for over 22 years and Miriam for over 7 years.

Val not only serves the legal needs of residents of Marathon, but she also travels on a monthly basis to the com-

munities of Pic Moberg First Nation, Pic River First Nation, Manitouwadge, Pays Plat First Nation, Schreiber and Terrace Bay. It is a very large geographic area. Val and Miriam organize and present community legal education workshops and work with the communities they serve for organized, positive change. Val continues to be involved with the Manitouwadge and Marathon Youth Justice Com-

mittee and Inter-Agency Committees for the communities of Marathon, Manitouwadge and Schreiber/Terrace Bay.

The Marathon office was instrumental in arranging monthly visits from family law Duty Counsel lawyer, James Wilcox. Residents in the area no longer have to travel to Thunder Bay to meet with a family lawyer.

Val and Miriam

## Armstrong Branch

The Armstrong Branch office has been very fortunate to have Patricia Waltho as the Community Legal Worker for the majority of the time that the office has been open. Presently, Pat is off work due to illness.

In 2004 the absence of a Community Legal Worker in the community was identified as an issue by the membership. As a result, we set out to create a viable solution to meet the community's need.

Since November 2004, I have been the Community Legal Worker providing service to Armstrong. Stephanie Wanakamik, the secretary/receptionist, is on-site daily. I travel to Armstrong on a monthly basis.

In order to best utilize our available resources, Stephanie is the first point of contact for clients from Armstrong and surrounding area. She provides referrals or completes the initial intake, which consists of filling out the Summary Advice sheets and collecting basic information. She then passes the information on to me.

For advice matters I am able to review the information collected and contact the client to provide advice. For matters requiring ongoing representation we determine whether the matter is urgent or if it can be scheduled for the next time I am in Armstrong.

Stephanie has been receiving additional training to provide immediate on-site assistance to clients with urgent matters. Stephanie is able to contact me for help by telephone, facsimile and email.

At the Area Community Meeting in September 2005, the membership suggested that we might be able to improve access to service for our clients if our office was located on the Whitesand First Nation. In response, we entered into discussions with the Band. We relocated our office to the Whitesand Band office at the end of October 2005. The move has proven to be very beneficial - we seem to have more contact with people from the White Sands First Nation, and people from Armstrong and Gull Bay continue to access the clinic.

We have faced many challenges over the last two years. We continue to address difficulties that arise and work on creative solutions. I have really enjoyed working in Armstrong and I look forward to continuing to provide service to these communities.

Tracey-Kathleen Kirby

Community Legal Worker





*“The Board of Directors sets policies, reviews and approves the annual budget, and provides overall direction to the Management Team of the legal clinic.”*



## **Board of Director's News**

### **Cathy Creighton**

Cathy Creighton has served on the Board representing Geraldton for the last five years. She continued the legacy of her mother, Dorothy Creighton, who was a long-time member of the Board of Directors.

Cathy has accepted employment at the Friendship Centre in Fort Frances, working with the Ak:Wego program. Her term expires in September and she will not be running again. We are very sorry to say goodbye to Cathy. Cathy has been a great Board member and served as the Vice-President for the past three years.

We all thank Cathy for her valuable contributions to the work of the Board of Directors. Cathy has helped guide the clinic on many issues but her particular area of expertise has been in human resources. We will miss her thoughtful analysis and helpful suggestions. Thank you Cathy, and good luck in your future endeavours.

There will be a spot available for a position on the Board of Directors of the legal clinic at the upcoming Geraldton Area Community Meeting on September 19. A member of the clinic from the Geraldton area will be able to let their name stand for election to the Board.

Sitting on the Board means coming to Thunder Bay approximately every two months for meetings. The legal clinic pays for the travel expenses, including hotel accommodation.

If you are interested in information about sitting on the Board of Directors please call Beth Ponka, Director of Administration, at the legal clinic in Thunder Bay. The toll-free number is 1-888-373-3309. More information will also be available at the Area Community Meeting.

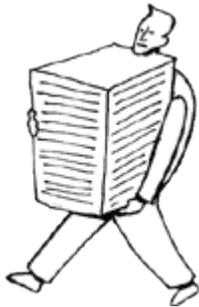
### **Wanda White**

The President of the Board of Directors of Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic, Wanda White, is celebrating an amazing milestone this year: 20 years on the Board of Kinna-aweya!

Wanda has been President of Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic for over 15 years. She has seen many changes over the years and many people come and go. Wanda has sat on the Hiring Committee of many of the existing staff of the legal clinic. She has represented the clinic at the Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario Annual General Meetings and has welcomed many dignitaries to the office over the years, most recently Attorney General Michael Bryant, who along with MPPs Michael Gravelle and Bill Mauro, visited the Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic's Thunder Bay office on July 31, 2006.

Although retired, Wanda continues to work as a teacher at Lakehead University in the Native Language Instructor's Program, and as a supply elementary teacher in Nipigon. Wanda represents the Nipigon area of the legal clinic.

Congratulations, Wanda, and thank you for your many years of service to the legal clinic!



“it’s important to be aware of changes in law that may affect your benefits”



## Nipigon Branch

The Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic has been providing service to the residents of Nipigon and surrounding communities since we first opened our doors in 1978.

The way that service has been delivered to the Nipigon area has changed over the years. This is in keeping with the changing needs of the communities as well as finding ways to best utilize the Clinic’s resources.

Early on service to Nipigon was provided by the Community Legal Worker from the Geraldton Branch office. Later, the Community Legal Workers from Thunder Bay traveled to Nipigon bi-monthly.

I was hired in the Geraldton office in 1993. Being from the area, I offered to take over the Nipigon travel. Over the years, the need for additional service in the Nipigon area, as well as my desire to spend more time at home, led to weekly travel to Nipigon.

In October 2004 Chantal Walterson was hired on contract as the Community Legal Worker in the Geraldton Branch office and shortly after, Renee Belisle was hired as the part-time secretary/receptionist.

We established a full-time satellite office in Nipigon which is now my home base. In addition, I provide service to the Armstrong area through monthly visits. I also travel to Thunder Bay to do intake approximately one week out of every six.

My monthly travel schedule is prominently posted and toll-free contact numbers provided to reach me.

Tracey-Kathleen Kirby  
Community Legal Worker

## Changes in Law

### Residential Tenancies Act

The provincial government is in the process of approving new legislation for landlord and tenant relations. The new *Residential Tenancies Act* will replace the existing *Tenant Protection Act*. The Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal, where decisions are made to settle disputes between landlords and tenants, will be changed to the Landlord and Tenant Board. The new changes are expected to be in effect come January 1, 2007.

Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic staff are available to speak to groups about the new changes to the residential tenancies legislation. To arrange for a presentation, please contact the Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic closest to you.

### Special Diet Changes

People who receive Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefits are eligible for an additional amount for “special diet” if their doctor verifies that they need a special diet.

Many people who have been receiving special diet payments have had the benefit reduced because of changes in the way the benefit is paid. The doctor used to indicate what special diet a recipient needed; for instance, a high calorie diet, or a low-salt diet.

Now the form asks the doctor to identify a specific diagnosed medical condition. Many conditions are not included on the form, and the amounts have been reduced

in some cases.

The changes that have been made in the program are causing serious hardship to many people who were receiving special diet money and now get less or none. Unfortunately, the government is entitled to make changes in the regulation that outlines the amounts of money that people receive.

We are encouraging people who have been affected by these changes to contact their Member of Provincial Parliament to ask them to fight to have the previous benefits restored. The MPPs for our area are Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay Superior North) 345-3647 and Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay Atikokan) 623-9237.

## Residential School Survivor's Compensation

If you attended a recognized Indian Residential School, you may be entitled to compensation.

An Agreement-In-Principle (AIP) was reached in 2005. The agreement proposes to offer compensation in lump-sum payments to individuals who attended Indian residential schools.

### Common Experience Payment

The compensation available is a Common Experience Payment (CEP) for all Residential School Survivors. The CEP is a payment of \$10,000 for the experience of attendance at an Indian Residential School, and an additional \$3,000 for each year of attendance at an Indian residential school. The Common Experience Payment can be paid to eligible former students living on May 30, 2005.

### Advance Payments for Elders

Elders 65 and over who attended residential schools are entitled to receive an advance payment of \$8,000 once their application has been subject to verification and approval. The Advance Payments would be deducted from any future Common Experience Payment or other payment related to their experience at Indian Residential Schools. Applications for the Advance Payment will be accepted until December 31, 2006.

### Will the Payments Affect My Social Assistance?

It is anticipated that payments to former students provided for under this agreement will not affect social assistance payments. Settlement payments will not be subject to income taxes.

### Other Components of the Agreement

A **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** will be established to promote public education and awareness about the Indian Residential School system and its legacy, as well as provide former students, their families and communities an opportunity to share their Indian Residential School experiences in a safe and culturally appropriate environment.

Additional funding for events and memorials to **commemorate** the legacy of Indian Residential Schools.

- An endowment to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation to support its **healing programs** and initiatives for a period of five additional years.

In addition, survivors of residential school can still pursue additional compensation for serious physical, sexual, or psychological abuse.

The forms for Advance Payments for Elders are available at all offices of the Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic.

### For more information you may contact:

Sam Achneepineskum, NAN Thunder Bay office at (807) 623-8228

Toll free 1(800)465-9952

[www.nan.on.ca/residentialschools](http://www.nan.on.ca/residentialschools) Email: [sachneep@nan.on.ca](mailto:sachneep@nan.on.ca)

The Assembly of First Nations ([www.AFN.ca](http://www.AFN.ca)) Toll free 1(800)869-6789

The National Survivors Support Line (24/7) Toll free 1(866)925-4419

Indian Residential School Resolution Canada website at <http://www.irsr-rqpi.gc.ca/>

Your respective First nation Band Office or your lawyer



*“If you attended a recognized Indian Residential School, you may be entitled to compensation”*





*“Our mission: to work towards identifying and overcoming the barriers which prevent people from achieving economic security and dignity”*



**Come on out and support your community by participating in Thunder Bay's Good Food Box Program**

## Thunder Bay Economic Justice Committee

The Thunder Bay Economic Justice Committee (TBEJC) consists of community members and agencies committed to improving the conditions for people living on low-income. Its objectives are to: 1) Provide an opportunity for people living in poverty to have a voice and speak out to identify need and solutions; 2) Advocate for the elimination of the barriers to achieving economic security; 3) Increase awareness within the community about the issues of poverty and related risk factors; and 4) Encourage and sustain meaningful interaction among service providers, decision-makers and community members.

TBEJC was formed in January of 2003 as a community response to the recommendations resulting from the Kimberly Rogers Inquest. Kimberley Rogers, a woman who was eight months pregnant, died of an overdose in 2002 while under house arrest for committing welfare fraud. Her crime was that she had collected social assistance while receiving a student loan in the hope that further studies would enable her to find work and make a contribution to society.

Three core goals help shape the activities of TBEJC. These are to increase social assistance rates, to increase minimum wage rates and to end the National Child Benefit Supplement Clawback.

2006 is shaping up to be another successful year for TBEJC. On May 25 the Committee co-hosted a town hall meeting with Member of Parliament Michael Gravelle. This event was a great success with over 100 people attending, most of which were people living on low-income. As a result of the evening, MPP Michael Gravelle promised to bring forward the concerns raised at that public dialogue to his fellow members of the liberal caucus.

On June 1 and 2, in partnership with the Lakehead Social Planning Council, TBEJC co-hosted “Finding a Place” A Community Forum on Housing and Income Security. Close to one hundred fifty people attended the Evening Gala on Thursday June 1<sup>st</sup> to hear keynote speaker Cathy Crowe. Cathy Crowe has been a Street Nurse in downtown Toronto and worked in the area of homelessness for over 15 years. In 1998 Cathy co-founded the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC) which declared homelessness a National Disaster. The disaster campaign is a three level campaign targeting federal, provincial and municipal solutions to the homeless disaster and housing crisis. Its signature 1% slogan refers to the demand that all levels of government commit an additional 1% of their budgets to an affordable, social housing program. On Friday June 2, approximately 100 people returned to the Da Vinci Centre to take part in workshops and a panel discussion concerning housing and income security issues in Thunder Bay.

Currently the committee is also organizing film screenings of the film it produced in 2005, “Poverty Line: The Face of Poverty in Thunder Bay.” The film screenings are combined with facilitated discussions intended to educate the public about the realities of living on low-income. To date, 24 screenings have taken place with approximately 1024 participants.

TBEJC is supported by the Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic and funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre's Community Mobilization Project.

Monthly meetings are held the last Monday of the month, 3:00 p.m. at the Canadian Mental Health Association. New members are always welcome. For more information call Melanie MacKenzie at 344-2478.

## Thunder Bay Good Food Box

Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic is a host site for the Good Food Box program in Thunder Bay.

The Good Food Box is a non-profit program for families and individuals who want to purchase quality, fresh, local produce at a lower price than shopping at grocery stores.

You can purchase a family box for \$20 or an individual box for \$12. Boxes are ordered and paid for by the first Thursday of each month. Food is available for pick up at the legal clinic on the third Tuesday of the month. This means food is accessible at a time when some have less money available for buying food.

There are many other host sites throughout the city, to make it easier for people to pickup their food. To find the host site closest to you, call (807) 628-5768.

To order and pick up a Good Food Box through the legal clinic's office at 86 S. Cumberland Street, please call (807) 344-2478 for more information.

## Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Strategy

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy was announced by the Government of Canada in 1998 through the Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan, in response to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples to better address the serious socio-economic needs of urban Aboriginal peoples. The Strategy is designed to improve policy development and program coordination among all levels of government.

In 2003, the community engaged the Thunder Bay Aboriginal Interagency Council to oversee the UAS Pilot in Thunder Bay, which is to focus on child poverty. This process is managed by a management committee. The committee is made up of six Aboriginal representatives and two community members at large who are appointed by the Thunder Bay Aboriginal Interagency Council. Other committee members include representation from the federal, provincial, and municipal governments. As a member of the Thunder Bay Aboriginal Interagency Council, Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic has a representative on the Management Committee that oversees the strategy in Thunder Bay.

The Neighbourhood Capacity Building Project (NCBP) is an initiative of the Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Strategy. This project is under the sponsorship of Shkoday Abinojiwak Obimiwedoan (Thunder Bay Aboriginal Head Start Day Nursery).

The NCBP strives to empower the Aboriginal community by responding more effectively to the needs of Aboriginal families and their children. The programs and services are brought to the neighbourhoods where there is a high concentration of Aboriginal families. In Thunder Bay, these areas are Windsor, Limbrick, academy and County Park.

NCBP activities include:

- Housing and Research - to address homelessness and affordable housing issues of Aboriginal families.
- Sponsorship - sponsoring children to participate in sports and activities that they would otherwise be unable to access due to financial limitations.
- Food Security - to address the basic human needs of proper nutrition for Thunder Bay Aboriginal families and their children.
- Research - developing an emergency needs data base to assist in the future expansion of services of the NCBP.
- Information Services - to ensure that the NCBP activities, programs and services are promoted throughout Thunder Bay.
- Volunteer Programs - to provide opportunities and exposures to transferable skills and recruit, train community members and increase Aboriginal role modeling.
- Family Support Program - coordinates specific workshops geared to needs identified by families.
- Building Partnerships - with community organizations and service providers throughout the city of Thunder Bay.
- After School Programs - NCBP Youth Workers plan, coordinate, implement culturally sensitive Aboriginal youth specific programs for children between the ages of 7 - 13 years old. Sites: Sherbrooke, McKellar and Forest Park Public Schools, with activities at St. Judes School and Our Kids Count location in County Park.

An Annual Report summarizing the mandate and activities of the Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Strategy can be obtained by contacting the legal clinic or by contacting the TBUAS staff at 343-4843.



In Ontario, Service Canada is the lead department responsible for delivery of the UAS

*“the Thunder Bay  
Aboriginal  
Interagency Council  
oversees the UAS  
Pilot in Thunder  
Bay, which focuses  
on child poverty”*

**KINNA-AWEYA LEGAL CLINIC**

86 S. Cumberland St.  
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 2V3

Phone: 807-344-2478  
Fax: 807-345-2842  
Toll Free: 1-888-373-3309



**Staff Listing**

Richard Atkinson	Community Legal Worker	Thunder Bay
Barry Beaupre	Community Legal Worker	Thunder Bay
Renee Belisle	Secretary/Receptionist	Geraldton
Valerie Biggs	Community Legal Worker	Marathon
Karli Brotchie	Research Assistant (summer student)	Thunder Bay
Sally Colquhoun	Co-ordinator of Legal Services	Thunder Bay
Dan Cox	Staff Lawyer	Thunder Bay
Don Henderson	Librarian	Thunder Bay
Teri Hofer	Secretary/Receptionist/Bookkeeper	Thunder Bay
Cindy Johnson	Assistant Director of Administration	Thunder Bay
Tracey Kirby	Community Legal Worker	Nipigon
Barbara Kulifaj	Secretary/Receptionist	Thunder Bay
Melanie MacKenzie	Co-ordinator (TBEJC Project)	Thunder Bay
Miriam McCutcheon	Secretary/Receptionist	Marathon
Patricia McGuire	Executive Secretary	Thunder Bay
Beth Ponka	Director of Administration	Thunder Bay
Mary Veltri	Staff Lawyer	Thunder Bay
Chantal Walterson	Community Legal Worker	Geraldton
Stephanie Wanakamik	Secretary/Receptionist	Armstrong

**Important Dates to Remember**

**Area Community Meeting Dates:**



- Armstrong**      Thursday, September 14, 2006—6:30 p.m.  
Whitesand First Nation Band Office  
\*\*Lena Wabason's term expires\*\*
- Geraldton**      Tuesday, September 12, 2006—6:30 p.m.  
Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic, 521 Main Street  
\*\*Cathy Creighton's term expires\*\*
- Marathon**          Tuesday, September 12, 2006—7:00 p.m.  
Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic, #109-52 Peninsula Square
- Nipigon**            Tuesday, September 19, 2006—7:00 p.m.  
Red Rock Band Office
- Thunder Bay**      Tuesday, September 19, 2006—12 noon  
Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic, 86 S. Cumberland St.  
\*\*Meladina & Lorrie's terms expire\*\*

**Annual General Meeting:** Saturday, October 21, 2006  
Prince Arthur Hotel—9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.