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Activities Update

Special Interest Articles:

- 2012 rent increase guideline highest in years.
- Low-income energy assistance.
- Social Assistance Review.
- Gala Evening at Valhalla Inn.
- Legal Aid Ontario services.
- New Gov't photo I.D. available
- Ontario Election – Oct. 6th

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It's been a busy year at the legal clinic. We continue to provide services throughout the District of Thunder Bay, primarily by helping people with social assistance problems and housing issues. Last year we opened more files and provided more advice than we did the year before. It's been a year with a lot of changes and challenges: two of our long-term staff have retired and two of our lawyers have been away from work on extended absences.

Kinna-aweya is an independent, non-profit corporation overseen by a Board of Directors, but the clinic is accountable to LAO for the funds given to the clinic to provide high quality poverty law services in the District of Thunder Bay.

In our satellite communities we continue to provide a full range of clinic services with full-time offices in Geraldton and Marathon and a part-time office located at the Whitesand Band Office. Our Geraldton office moved to a new location in January; we will be having an Open House to coincide with our annual Area Community Meeting on September 20th.

Last year we told the membership about the administrative cost savings initiative. All legal clinics, including ours, will be required to submit an Administrative Savings Plan with our funding application in November. We will be looking for cost savings that can be achieved with little to no impact on our clients.

In addition to casework, our staff have been involved in a number of community projects and outreach activities. Some of the community activities our staff have been involved in this year include the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, Speakers' School, Housing and Homelessness Coalition, Shelter House, Geraldton Chamber of Commerce trade show, and the Marathon Interagency Committee.



Comings and Goings

Barry Beaupre retired last year and we hired Melanie MacKenzie as a new Community Legal Worker in our Thunder Bay office. Barbara Kulifaj, our Secretary/Receptionist, retired this year and Teri Hofer moved from part-time to full-time employment. Judy Lasook has been hired on a casual basis to assist with reception and secretarial duties.

Claire Littleton joined our staff on contract as a clinic lawyer. She is replacing Mary Veltri who is on a leave of absence. Welcome aboard Claire!

For the last several years, the legal clinic has provided office space to the Human Rights Legal Support Centre. Recently Amy Britton-Cox left Thunder Bay to accept a new position in Toronto. We expect a replacement for Amy will be joining our office in October. We wish Amy the best of luck in her future endeavours.

Our partnership with Legal Aid Ontario has meant that for the last couple of years Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic has benefited from the services of an articling student provided by Legal Aid Ontario (LAO). This year Marilyn Reckord joined our office for several weeks during her articles. She has now been hired full-time as a staff lawyer for LAO in their Kenora office.

There has been change on our Board of Directors as well. Irene Merineau, the Treasurer of our Board for many years, retired after over 25 years of service at the Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre. She and her husband have moved to Sudbury. Bernice Windsor joined our Board last year to replace Irene but now she will be stepping down because she is having a baby in September. We will be looking for a new Board member with a strong financial background to replace Bernice representing Thunder Bay.

Last year on August 21, 2010, we said goodbye to our cherished friend and colleague, Dave Fortin. Louis Brizard has replaced Dave on our Board of Directors.

Staff

Richard Atkinson	Community Legal Worker/Paralegal	Thunder Bay
Valerie Biggs	Community Legal Worker	Marathon
Sally Colquhoun	Co-ordinator of Legal Services	Thunder Bay
Dan Cox	Staff Lawyer (on leave)	Thunder Bay
Don Henderson	Librarian	Thunder Bay
Teri Hofer	Secretary/Receptionist/Bookkeeper	Thunder Bay
Patricia Fenton	Executive Secretary	Thunder Bay
Cindy Fortin	Assistant Director of Administration	Thunder Bay
Tracey Lasook	Community Legal Worker/Paralegal	Thunder Bay
Guylaine Letourneau	Secretary/Receptionist	Geraldton
Claire Littleton	Staff Lawyer	Thunder Bay
Melanie MacKenzie	Community Legal Worker	Thunder Bay
Miriam McCutcheon	Secretary/Receptionist	Marathon
Beth Ponka	Director of Administration	Thunder Bay
Mary Veltri	Staff Lawyer (on leave)	Thunder Bay
Chantal Walterson	Community Legal Worker/Paralegal	Geraldton
Stephanie Wanakamik	Secretary/Receptionist	Armstrong



GALA EVENING TO CELEBRATE 25 YEARS OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE WANDA WHITE, PRESIDENT OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

On May 19, 2011, the President of our Board of Directors, Wanda White, was presented with a service award for her many years of service to Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic. Wanda has been on the Board of the legal clinic for 25 years! She was first elected to the Board of Directors at the Nipigon Area Community Meeting in September 1986. She's been the Chair of the Board for 22 years.

A volunteer appreciation evening was held at the Valhalla Inn in Thunder Bay. The Honourable Michael Gravelle, MPP for Superior North, Bill Mauro, MPP for Thunder Bay-Atikokan, and Deputy Minister for the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, the Honourable Chisanga Puta-Chekwe, were on hand for the presentation. Wanda's husband, Leo, also attended the event. Congratulations, Wanda, and thank you for your many years of service to Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic.



Board of Directors News

Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Board members are elected at our Area Community Meetings, which are held each year in our five main communities: Armstrong, Geraldton, Marathon, Nipigon, and Thunder Bay. Each area elects one member to the Board of Directors, except Thunder Bay, which elects three members to the Board.

2010/11 Board of Directors:

Wanda White	Nipigon	President
Louis Brizard	Thunder Bay	Vice-President
Bernice Windsor	Thunder Bay	Treasurer
Andrea O'Nabigon	Geraldton	Secretary
Angela Nodin	Armstrong	Director
Alta Fenton	Thunder Bay	Director
Michael Deschamps Jr.	Marathon	Director

All of our Board members are volunteers who donate their time and energy to the clinic. Board members oversee the activities of the legal clinic and provide direction to the management staff. The clinic is funded by Legal Aid Ontario; the Board of Directors ensure that the legal clinic complies with their funding conditions while providing high quality legal services to low-income residents of the District of Thunder Bay.



Board and Staff Planning Session at Dog Lake Resort 2009



Best Friend

A best friend anyone could ask for,
 He's not just a man, he's a lot more.
 He brings joy and happiness in all of us,
 We will all miss this amazing man we trust.
 Days seem longer, with no more fun.
 He was what brought out the sun
 And warmed us all up.
 Tears from us all will never stop,
 And memories will never be forgotten,
 Not even the smallest things, nothing.
 It almost seems just yesterday,
 We are still in shock, it just blows us all away.
 It doesn't even seem real to me,
 But now we all have to wake up and face reality,
 And wake up from our dreams,
 An opened up gate to heaven, where the sun
 beams
 To a new world, to some of us seems pretend,
 But overall, this man is my true friend,
 My friend Dave

Cody Lennstrom
 Aug. 23/10

In Memoriam – Dave Fortin 1960 - 2010

On August 21, 2010, we lost a dear friend and colleague, Dave Fortin.

Dave joined the Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic Board of Directors representing the Marathon area in September 2003. Dave was working at Bidaaban Healing Lodge in Pic River. In November that year, the legal clinic held a Board and Staff Planning Session at Quetico Centre near Atikokan. It was there that we got to know Dave better and see his wonderful sense of humour.

Through his work at the legal clinic, Dave met and fell in love with Cindy Johnson, our Assistant Director of Administration. Dave moved to Thunder Bay and worked at the Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre, first as the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness worker and then as the Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin (I am a Kind Man) worker, which was a new program with a focus on inspiring men to promote equality and get involved and stop abuse. In August 2009, Dave and Cindy were married in a beautiful outdoor ceremony at their home on the outskirts of Thunder Bay.

As a Board member, Dave was thoughtful and supportive. He helped develop and nourish the clinic's spirit. He had a sensible, no-nonsense approach. Once he had all the information he needed about an issue, he was practical and decisive. He had a great sense of humour and his laugh was infectious.

At the time of his passing Dave was the Vice President of the Board of Directors. He made an enormous contribution to the clinic and he is dearly missed but not forgotten. Chii Miigwech Dave for all the gifts you had and shared with us.



2012 Rent Increase Guideline

Ontario's annual Rent Increase Guideline is based on the Ontario Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is a measure of inflation calculated monthly by Statistics Canada. This year, the rate of allowable rent increases for 2012 will be 3.1 per cent.

The guideline is the maximum amount that most landlords can increase a tenant's rent during the year without making an application to the Landlord and Tenant Board.

The 2012 guideline applies to rent increases between January 1 and December 31, 2012.

The average yearly increase from 2004-2011 was 1.89 per cent. The average yearly increase from 1993 - 2003 was 3.17 per cent.



Ontario Liberals announce highest rent increase in years

From a Toronto Star article July 29/11:

Ontario's governing Liberals say if they are re-elected this fall they will change the way the province's rent increase rate is set after it took one of the biggest jumps in years Friday.

Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Rick Bartolucci made the promise after announcing the rate by which landlords would be able to increase tenants' rents in 2012 would be 3.1 per cent.

That's more than four times higher than the 2011 rate of 0.7 per cent.

"We believe we have to revisit the legislation and fix the legislation so that the increase is in line with what's happening in the real world for those who rent," said Bartolucci.

The rent increase guideline is the maximum amount a landlord can increase the rent of most sitting tenants without seeking the approval of the Landlord and Tenant Board.

The Liberals were responsible for drafting the current system of setting rent increases when they adopted the Residential Tenancies Act in 2006. It tied the

annual rate to the Consumer Price Index, which is calculated annually by Statistics Canada to show how much more ordinary products cost than they did the year before. The idea was to make rent increases equivalent to the rate of inflation so tenants weren't shelling out much more for rent than they were likely getting paid in wages. But the higher price of products like gas have skewed the numbers, Bartolucci said.

"That's more than four times higher than the 2011 rate of 0.7 per cent."



Low-income Energy Assistance

The Ontario Energy Board's (OEB) **Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP)** is being rolled out in stages in 2011. LEAP was established as a result of the OEB's consultation on low-income energy consumer issues in 2008 in which ACTO, through the Low-Income Energy Network, actively participated.

LEAP has three components:

Emergency financial assistance – a year round program as of January 1, 2011. Funded through the rates of electricity and gas distributors, grants will be given to eligible low-income customers who are experiencing short-term difficulty paying current arrears.

More flexible customer service rules for low-income consumers - these rules come into force October 1, 2011. Eligible low income consumers will be able to access waivers for security deposits, service charges and late payment fees, and extended payment plans for bill arrears.

Targeted energy conservation programs - to assist low-income energy consumers in reducing overall energy usage and costs in their homes similar to those in place for electricity distributors. Programs are being offered by both gas and electricity utilities and include weatherization retrofit programs at no cost, free energy saving devices, free direct-installation of energy efficiency measures and conservation education to low income residential electricity consumers that focus on deep retrofits to help qualifying participants reduce their electricity use and manage their utility costs in the long term.

For more information about LEAP and how to access the measures, please visit the OEB web site at:

www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/OEB/Consumers/Consumer+Protection

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Ontario's new government-issued photo I.D. card now available

As of July 25, 2011, Ontarians can apply for the province's new government-issued photo identification (ID) card. The new photo ID can be obtained at one of 21 ServiceOntario locations across the province and will be available at all locations by 2012.

This secure card will make it easier for people aged 16 years and over who do not have a driver's licence to open a bank account, make travel arrangements or perform other activities that require official ID.

Quick Facts:

- To apply for a photo card you need to be an Ontario resident, and provide original identity documents with your legal name, date of birth and signature.
- The photo card will cost \$35 and is valid for five years.
- Approximately 1.5 million Ontarians aged 16 years and over do not have a valid driver's licence.
- Ontario joins eight other provinces that offer a government-issued photo ID card.
- The Ontario photo card mirrors the same security features as the driver's licence to help prevent fraud and identity theft.

“Eligible low income consumers will be able to access waivers for security deposits.....”

“The Ontario photo card mirrors the same security features as the driver's licence.”



Social Assistance Review

The Ontario government has launched the first major review of the province's social assistance programs in 20 years.

The review will examine social assistance and its relationship with other federal, provincial and municipal income security programs to gain a better understanding of how these programs, working together, can provide better outcomes for people. The review is the first step in developing a concrete action plan that will make social assistance:

- more effective at getting people into jobs by connecting them with the right education and training opportunities, while providing security for those who cannot work
- easier to understand
- work better with other federal,

provincial and municipal income security programs, such as Employment Insurance, and

- financially sustainable

These are the issues that the government asked the Commission to look at.

The review of social assistance is part of the commitment made by all parties in the legislature when they unanimously approved Bill 152, the Poverty Reduction Act, in May 2009.

As part of the 2008 Poverty Reduction Strategy, the provincial government committed to do a review of social assistance in Ontario. In 2009, the Poverty Reduction Act was passed, and the government appointed an advisory council to

give ideas on how a review would work. In 2010, the Commission was appointed.

Going forward, the Special Diet Allowance will also be revised to make it compliant with the recent Order of the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario and more accountable to taxpayers. The program, along with other existing social assistance benefits, will be considered within the context of the Social Assistance Review.

The Commission is just wrapping up the initial round of consultations and will make a preliminary report in December. The final report is due next year.

Ontario Election – October 6, 2011

Provincial elections are scheduled every four years. During a provincial election, you elect a Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) to represent you in the Legislative Assembly. Our next provincial election will take place on **Thursday, October 6, 2011**.

There are 107 electoral districts in Ontario, which are sometimes also called "ridings." Your electoral district has an elected MPP who speaks for you and everyone who lives in your electoral district. When all the MPPs meet in the Legislative Assembly, they make the laws that govern Ontario.

When you don't vote, you let others speak for you. Stand up and be counted, vote.



Good Food Box



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

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)345-7819.



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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.kalc.ca

Legal Aid Ontario

A wide range of services are available through Legal Aid Ontario's toll-free number. Dialing 1-800-668-8258 connects you to a client service representative who can assist with your legal aid matter. Services available over the phone include:

General Information

- information on the range of legal aid services available to eligible clients
- legal and financial eligibility criteria
- legal aid office locations
- phone numbers for agencies, shelters and community legal clinics

Summary Legal Advice

If you have a criminal or family law issue, you may be able to speak with a lawyer for up to 20 minutes of summary legal advice and information. When you call Legal Aid Ontario, the client service representative will determine if you are eligible for summary legal advice.

Applications for Legal Aid

You can apply for Legal Aid Ontario's certificate program over the phone. In order to be eligible for the certificate program, you must qualify financially, and your legal matter must be one that LAO covers.

Referrals

Staff can refer eligible clients to one of Legal Aid Ontario's many services, or other social service agencies, including:

- duty counsel
- community legal clinics
- Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) or Ontario Works
- Family Responsibilities Office
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Ontario Labour Relations Board
- The Law Society of Upper Canada (LSUC)

Important Dates to Remember

KINNA-AWEYA LEGAL CLINIC AREA COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Armstrong	September 7	6 p.m.	Whitesand Rec Centre
Marathon	September 13	7 p.m.	52 Peninsula Square
Thunder Bay	September 19	12 noon	86 S. Cumberland St.
Nipigon	September 19	6 p.m.	Lake Helen Reserve
Geraldton	September 20	4 – 6 p.m. (Open house) 6:30 – 8 p.m. (ACM)	404 Main Street

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, October 22, 2011 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Prince Arthur Waterfront Hotel – Provincial Room