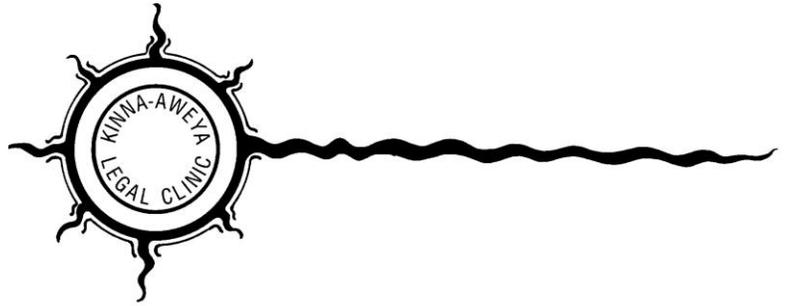


Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic

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Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic provides legal advice and assistance to residents of the District of Thunder Bay, particularly Aboriginal people, who need assistance with poverty law issues. Our focus is on helping people get income maintenance benefits and maintain access to housing. In addition to casework, our staff are involved in community development projects, public legal education workshops, outreach activities, and law reform initiatives.

Our main office is in Thunder Bay and we also have full-time branch offices in Geraldton and Marathon. Armstrong/Whitesand is serviced by a legal worker travelling to the community approximately every two months. Legal workers travel regularly to various towns and First Nations communities throughout the District. We also have a toll-free phone number that can be dialled from anywhere in the District.

Kinna-aweya is an independent, non-profit corporation overseen by an Aboriginal Board of Directors, funded by Legal Aid Ontario.

Put Food in the Budget: Social Assistance Rates Consultation

This fall, the Government of Ontario is hosting province wide consultations on social assistance rates. The rates are too low! Put food in the budget! Look out for the Thunder Bay date at the Kinna-aweya front desk and Facebook page and get ready to make your voice heard! Fact sheets on the different issues they will be discussing at the consultation are available at:

<http://www.odspaction.ca/resource/key-issues-odsp-reform>

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 2nd last Thursday 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.

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.



Northern Clinics Transformation Project

We reported last year that each of the 11 community legal clinics in the northern region had signed an agreement to work together to look at opportunities for transformation and innovation. The Sudbury Social Planning Council was hired to undertake a needs assessment and develop recommendations to help us work together more effectively.

The SPC did site visits at each of the northern legal clinics. Many of our clients and community partners participated in focus groups that were held in the spring in Thunder Bay, Whitesand, and Gull Bay. Thank you to everyone who participated.

A report was completed and submitted to Legal Aid Ontario. There are a number of recommendations that focus on improving service to clients and providing more services. More resources are required to meet all of the unmet legal needs that people living with low income are experiencing and we are looking at ways to access additional resources so that that can happen.



Equal Billing for Utilities

Why not make budgeting for energy easier with a predictable monthly bill?

Most people have higher energy bills in winter and lower bills in the summer. By spreading your annual energy costs evenly through the year, it is easier to budget with a more predictable monthly bill.

You pay the same amount every month. No more high bills during months of cold weather.

You will receive bills of the same amount for eleven months (amount may be revised based on a review of your consumption). During July and August, all budget billing accounts will go through a settlement process and customers will be billed any outstanding balance or credited with any amount overpaid.

Contact Union Gas Call at **1-888-774-3111**. At the voice prompt, press 2, then 5, then 1. You will need your account number.

For Thunder Bay Hydro, you must have already arranged to be on the Pre-Authorized Debit Plan, your account must be in good standing and you must have a year of billing history at the same address. Residents in the North Ward start in September and residents in the South Ward start in October.

Contact Thunder Bay Hydro at 343-1111 to sign up

For Ontario Hydro, call **1-888-664-9376** to find out what you need to do to sign up.

New Legislation Creates Barriers to Vote

by Cheyanne DeGagne

With the passing of the Fair Elections Act (Bill C-23), there have been changes to who will be able to vote in the federal election on October 15. Previously, a voter without proof of identity or address was able to vote if another eligible voter “vouched” for their identity and address. Under the new regulations, the vouching process has been removed, with a new oath system taking its place. This has created more barriers for two large segments of our clients – people without proof of identity and people without a fixed address.

There are three options to prove your identity at the polling station:

- **A government-issued ID that includes your photo, name and address** (example: driver’s license or Ontario photo card)
- **Two pieces of ID, one must have your name and one piece must have your name and address** (examples: status card and utility bill, or a debit card and residential lease)
- **Two pieces with your name and have an eligible person take an oath swearing to your address** (this person must have proof of identity and address, be registered in the same polling division and can only attest for one person)

Even with the new oath system, there are numerous barriers for clients. In order for a client to be eligible for the oath, they must have two pieces showing their name, and have a fixed address. Many of our clients do not have two pieces showing their name, others do not have an address. Many of our clients are homeless, transient, facing eviction or have recently moved. This makes finding someone to attest to a permanent residence impossible.

One option that may assist some clients is to provide a *Letter of Confirmation of Residence* at the polling station. A *Letter of Confirmation of Residence* is a form that those who are unable to provide a residence can use to satisfy the address requirement. This form must be filled by an employee of an organization that provides long-term care, emergency shelter or runs a soup kitchen. You will still need to provide proof of identity that lists your name. Unfortunately, clients without a permanent address who have not accessed these services or lack any identification bearing their name will still be without a way to vote.

Voting is a democratic right afforded to all adult citizens of Canada. Unfortunately, as the federal election looms nearer, many clients will be unable to exercise this right. These are the people who have lived experience and who know firsthand the struggles of poverty. These are the people we need to hear from in election times. These clients have intimate knowledge of the social structures and systems of our nation. They know what has worked, and what has failed them. We should be empowering their voice, not silencing it.

You can pick up a full list of new voter identification requirements and a *Letter of Confirmation of Residence* at the Thunder Bay office.



The ODSP Action Coalition: Community Organizing in Action

The Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic was founded by Aboriginal people in the District of Thunder Bay with a mandate to support community organizing around poverty, racism and other issues as they impact low-income people.

So what is community organizing?

Community organizing means bringing people together who are directly affected to take collective action on concrete issues and building their capacity and to transform society. Tenant associations and unions, for example, have won lots of victories throughout history.

Another example is the ODSP Action Coalition, a province-wide network of people with lived experience on ODSP, disability organizations, community agencies, anti-poverty groups and community legal clinics. The coalition was formed in 2002 following province-wide community consultations that found serious problems with the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), which many people with disabilities depend on for their survival.

If you want to get involved with the ODSP Action Coalition, check out their website at <http://www.odspaction.ca/page/join-us> or visit Kinna-aweya for assistance completing the membership form. Although the coalition is province-wide, they could use some northern voices and perspectives!



Save the Work Related Benefit Campaign

The ODSP Action Coalition is trying to stop the provincial government's plan to eliminate the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) Work-Related Benefit. The campaign is currently using online letter writing to pressure the provincial government to stop the elimination of the benefit. The campaign also collected 1,500 signatures from around the province in a petition to the Ontario Legislature which was read into the legislature six times this spring.

The \$100 ODSP Work-Related Benefit provides a critically important source of funds to people with disabilities on ODSP who work giving them the ability to pay for much-needed ongoing work-related expenses, such as transportation, clothing, and childcare. Eliminating the benefit will take approximately \$36 million annually out of the pockets of people on ODSP who work. Many people fear that they will have to quit their jobs or work fewer hours if they lose the Work-Related Benefit because they won't be able to afford the costs of working.

To date the provincial government has postponed the changes from April to October. The government is now saying that they are reviewing when the changes will happen and that more information will be given in the next few weeks. Let's keep up the pressure.

For more information on the campaign and how you can take action visit: <http://www.odspaction.ca/>

Awenen Niin ID Bank Available to Clients

by Cheyanne DeGagne

On July 7th 2015, the ID Bank became an official Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic service marked by a naming ceremony led by Board of Directors' Vice President and traditional elder, Louis Brizard. The name gifted to the ID Bank is 'Awenen Niin', an Ojibway term meaning 'Who Am I'.

For the last three years Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic has been assisting clients with obtaining identification. In 2013, we issued 295 pieces of ID, in 2014 we issued 121 pieces of ID, and in the first half of 2015, we have assisted 58 clients with obtaining ID. Over the course of assisting clients with ID, Kinna-aweya and its partnering agencies have identified a need for a secure facility to store client ID. Many clients attending ID clinics had been previous clients whose ID has since been lost, damaged or stolen. Not only does replacing ID require additional funds, but it also substantially restricts a client from accessing many services while they wait for new identification.

The ID Bank works similarly to a safety deposit box. Clients are able to pick up their ID when they need it and return it for secure storage when they are finished. The ID is kept in a secure, locked filing cabinet that can only be accessed by designated staff upon a client's request. This prevents ID from being lost, damaged or stolen while maintaining easy access for clients. This increases a client's ability to access government, community and medical services that require identification including, but not limited to, income support, housing, medical care, education, employment and food banks. With all of the services and programs that require ID, providing a safe place to store ID is crucial for our clients.

On May 29th, we hosted an ID clinic in Gull Bay First Nation. It was a great success with twenty people attending. There are four more ID Clinics scheduled throughout the summer.

The Awenen Niin ID Bank is free to use for low-income individuals of the Thunder Bay district. If you would like to join or have any questions, please call or stop by the Thunder Bay office.



Comings and Goings

Claire Littleton returned from maternity leave in February. Morgen Patterson accepted a position working for Alberta Legal Aid.

We hired Monique Woolnough on permanent staff. Mary Veltri has retired from the clinic.

Val Biggs retired as the Community Legal Worker in our Marathon office. Miriam McCutcheon, who was the Secretary/Receptionist in Marathon, has been hired to replace Val as the CLW. We've hired Loretta Fitzpatrick as the new Secretary/Receptionist for Marathon.

We hired Paul Reid as a temporary additional caseworker on contract in the Thunder Bay office.

We hosted two placement students from Confederation College: Susan Bujold joined us from the Office Admin program; she has stayed on as casual relief for summer vacation. We also welcomed Cheyanne DeGagne from the Aboriginal Community Advocacy Program. We were able to obtain funding through a wage subsidy program and hired Cheyanne for the summer as our ID Bank Coordinator.

Misbah al-Haque, a student at the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law at Lakehead University, worked with us this summer in partnership with the Human Rights Legal Support Centre.

Julia Tousaw, Legal Aid Ontario's summer student, joined our office for a clinic rotation for a couple of weeks.

In January we will be hosting a third year law student who will be doing a four month placement as part of the law degree program at Lakehead University. James Lisowski will be joining us in the new year.

We also received notice that the CEO of LAO, Bob Ward, is retiring at the end of the year.

Marathon Branch Office - Update

This has been another busy year with a lot of exciting changes. Valerie Biggs was busy getting ready and winding down for her retirement in June 2015. She has been planning it for about 2 years. Val was with the Clinic for over 30 years. She will be missed.

She was replaced by Miriam McCutcheon who has been with the Clinic for 17 years as the Secretary in the Marathon Office. Miriam has been busy adjusting to her new role as the Community Legal Worker.

We hired Loretta Fitzpatrick to replace Miriam. She comes with a lot of experience. Welcome aboard Loretta!!

Another exciting change is that the Support Staff in the Branch Offices have been working full days since March. It is not permanent – but it has been great having them work full time.



Geraldton Update

On January 13, 2014 the Geraldton branch office welcomed Ms. Pam Leblanc as the new secretary of the Geraldton Branch office. Pam's addition has allowed the office to run in a much more organized and efficient manner. July 18th, 2014 marked our Geraldton Community Legal Worker's 16th year with the clinic.

On May 3rd, 2014, the Geraldton branch office participated in the Annual Geraldton Trade Show. This was a great opportunity for the clinic to inform the public of its services. Pamphlets were handed out on various areas of law. In 2014, our clinic's Board Member who represents the Greenstone area, Mrs. Andrea O'Nabigon, showed her continued support to the clinic by participating in the event.

The Geraldton branch office continued with their participation in the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program in 2014. Their office completed 269 income tax returns in 2014. The completion of income tax returns is very crucial to our clients as it insures that families continue receiving benefits, i.e. Child Tax and Ontario Child Benefit, GST, without interruptions. Income tax clinics were held in Aroland/Nakina and Longlac where the clinic assisted families, individuals, elders and the disabled to complete their returns.

The Community Legal Worker of the Geraldton branch office continues to be an active member on the Board of the "Greenstone Harvest Centre". The Greenstone Harvest Centre is also known as the Greenstone "Food Bank". The Community Legal Worker attends monthly meetings and volunteers on the food distribution nights preparing numerous food hampers. The GHC provides food to low income families and individuals on a membership basis. It offers non-perishable food items and sometimes provides frozen food, fresh fruit/vegetables depending on available donations. The GHC serves the communities within the Greenstone area. The centre is funded by the Municipality of Greenstone and the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board.

On November 11, 2014, the Geraldton Community Legal Worker was invited to speak before the grades 6, 7 & 8 students of the St. Joseph's School in Geraldton regarding the local Food Bank. This was a wonderful opportunity that allowed the Community Legal Worker to educate the young students on the importance of having a local food bank in Greenstone. Students participated in the task of filling hampers of various family sizes. On November 16, 2014 the Community Legal Worker also welcomed the grade 3 students to the local food bank where the students assisted with filling the shelves with various food items that they had collected.



Lakehead Legal Services

By Misbah Haque

Lakehead Legal Services (LLS) is a new legal agency that offers free legal assistance to low-income members of the Thunder Bay community. Currently the LSS is taking clients charged with minor (summary conviction) criminal offences or more serious provincial offences. The LSS will only represent accused individuals that are ineligible for a Legal Aid certificate.

The LLS office is at 401 Red River Rd (West Entrance of PACI), and is operated by two lawyers and 15 students from the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law.

Kimberly Gagan is the Director of the LSS. She was called to the bar in 1997 and has been working with the Crown's office since the year 2000. Through her 14 years with the Crown, she developed expertise in the areas of criminal law and provincial offences.

Access to justice is a local issue that the LSS seeks to improve. Katherine Remington, a law student at the LSS, says the office was created "to fill the gaps that are not [served] by the legal community or the free legal clinics in the community."

The LSS can be reached at 346-7815. Drop-ins are also welcome.

Examples of minor criminal offenses:
Assault
Wilful mischief under \$5000
Escape, failure to appear
Theft under \$5000
Taking motor vehicle without consent
Failing to stop for police
Dangerous operation of vehicle with no injury
Criminal harassment
Threat to damage property or harm animal
Being unlawful in dwelling house
Assault officer or resist arrest
Identity fraud
Breach of recognizance
Possession of property under \$5000 obtained by crime
Disturbance
Indecent exhibition or loitering
False alarm of fire
Fraud \$5000 or less

Provincial offences may include:
Careless driving
Failing to remain at the scene of collision
Driving while suspended
Driving without insurance
Serious speeding offences
Failure to stop for a school bus

Housing Crisis Worsens

Finding affordable housing in our communities is difficult. Social assistance rates are too low, and rent costs have skyrocketed. Many members of our community are living in inadequate housing because it is all that is available, or are homeless. The emergency shelter is consistently over capacity.

We are concerned that things will get worse if the federal government does not continue to provide funding for rent subsidies. There are hundreds of subsidized units in our communities, including housing co-operatives, which will lose federal funding in the next few years. Rents will have to increase, and may not be affordable for residents on social assistance.

Homelessness is more expensive for governments than providing affordable housing would be.

We need to be sure that the candidates in the federal election are aware of the worsening housing crisis not only in our communities, but across the country. Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic is part of the Thunder Bay Housing and Homeless Coalition which advocates for affordable and supported housing.

Supreme Court Slams Door Shut on Canada`s Housing Crisis

(Press Release by Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario)

Toronto, June 25, 2015 - The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that a Charter challenge holding governments responsible for the crisis in affordable housing and homelessness will never be heard in Canadian courts.

With no evidence before them, two out of three judges at the Ontario Court of Appeal upheld a controversial lower court decision that issues of homelessness do not belong in the courtroom. The Supreme Court decision affirms this ruling and brings to a close the five year wait by homeless and precariously housed applicants to have 10,000 pages of evidence detailing the impact of homelessness on hundreds of thousands of people across the country presented to the court.

"The housing and homelessness crisis is directly related to policy decisions that governments make every day," said Alex Neve, Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada, one of sixteen organizations that intervened in the case. "The Supreme Court's ruling means that the troubling ways that those decisions impact and even violate the rights of some of the most marginalized communities in Canada remain unexamined."

There continues to be a worsening housing crisis in Canada. Over the past five years, Ontario's affordable housing waiting list has ballooned to 168,711 households, the Federal government has announced the revocation of 365,000 housing subsidies for low income households across the country, and the cost of keeping people homeless has continued to skyrocket. It is currently estimated at \$7 billion annually.

"Housing should be a fundamental human right," asserts Janice Arsenault, an applicant in the case. "It is shameful that disadvantaged people like me have been refused access to court on issues basic to our health, life and well-being. But if the courts think this is a political issue, it's time for the government to sit up and do something."



KINNA-AWEYA LEGAL CLINIC STAFF

Richard Atkinson	Licensed Paralegal	Thunder Bay
Valerie Biggs	Licensed Paralegal (Retired June '15)	Marathon
Sally Colquhoun	Co-ordinator of Legal Services	Thunder Bay
Cheyenne DeGagne	ID Bank Coordinator/Summer Student	Thunder Bay
Kim Facca	Community Legal Worker	Thunder Bay
Patricia Fenton	Executive Secretary	Thunder Bay
Loretta Fitzpatrick	Secretary/Receptionist	Marathon
Misbah Haque	Articling Student	Thunder Bay
Don Henderson	Librarian	Thunder Bay
Teri Hofer	Secretary/Receptionist/Bookkeeper	Thunder Bay
Cindy Johnson	Assistant Director of Administration	Thunder Bay
Tracey Lasook	Licensed Paralegal (on leave)	Thunder Bay
Pam Leblanc	Secretary/Receptionist	Geraldton
Claire Littleton	Staff Lawyer	Thunder Bay
Melanie MacKenzie	Licensed Paralegal	Thunder Bay
Miriam McCutcheon	Community Legal Worker	Marathon
Beth Ponka	Director of Administration	Thunder Bay
Paul Reid	Community Legal Worker	Thunder Bay
Chantal Walterson	Licensed Paralegal	Geraldton
Monique Woolnough	Staff Lawyer	Thunder Bay

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2014/15

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

Area Community Meeting Dates**Armstrong**

Wednesday, September 30, 2015 at 6:00 pm
Whitesand Wellness Centre, Whitesand
Supper provided

Marathon

Tuesday, September 21, 2015 at 5:30 pm
Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic, 52 Peninsula Square
Supper provided
Michael Deschamps' term expires

Thunder Bay

Friday, September 18, 2015 at 12 noon
86 S. Cumberland St.
Lunch provided
Alta Fenton's term expires

Geraldton

Monday, September 14, 2015 at 6:00 pm
Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic, 404A Main St.
Supper provided

Nipigon

Monday, September 14, 2015 at 12 noon
Resource Centre, Lake Helen Reserve
Lunch provided
Wanda White's term expires

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, October 17, 2015, 9 am – 4 pm
Lunch provided
Prince Arthur Hotel, Bertrand Room