

Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic

September 2017

Volume 11, Issue 1

In This Issue

Who we are & What we do	1
40 th Anniversary	1
Board & Staff Planning Session	2
Comings & Goings	2
Marathon Office Update	3
Good Food Box	3
Remembering Wanda White	4
Basic Income Pilot Project	4
Tenancies & Domestic Violence	5
Thunder Bay UAS	6
Northern Region Transformation Project	6
Addressing Gaps in ID Services	7
Access to Fee Waiver will help Many Clients	7
Law Society Medal Recipient Sally Colquhoun	8
Incident Reporting Tool	8
Board of Directors 2016/17	9
Important Dates to Remember	9
Federal Poverty Reduction Strategy	10
Client Information Management System	10

Watch for more details about our 40th Anniversary on our website and our Facebook page!

www.kalc.ca

 Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic

Who we are & What we do

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. We help people get income maintenance benefits and maintain access to housing.

We offer our services at no cost to people with low incomes who meet our financial eligibility guidelines.

The main areas that we deal with are income maintenance – Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, CPP Disability, Employment Insurance, Canada Child Benefit – and tenant's rights.

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 have full-time branch offices in Geraldton and Marathon. Armstrong/Whitesand is serviced by a legal worker that travels 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 all-Aboriginal Board of Directors. We are funded by Legal Aid Ontario.



40th Anniversary – Save the Date!

July 31, 2018, 1 – 4 pm

We will be having an open house and celebration at our Thunder Bay office at 86 S. Cumberland Street. Everyone is welcome!!

Special commemorative activities will be held in each of our communities at our Annual Community Meetings in September 2018.

Board and staff get together once per year for a planning session

We have 2 contract lawyers as 1 lawyer is going on maternity leave and another is relocating

Board and Staff Annual Planning Session

Every year, all of our staff and board members from throughout the district get together for a strategic planning session.

Kari Chiapetta facilitated a *Personality Dimension* exercise for us. *Personality Dimensions* is about understanding ourselves and others so that we can be more effective in our relationships, our work, and our lives.

As part of our strategic planning process, the Board and staff discussed the use of the terms "Aboriginal" and "Indigenous". After a lengthy discussion and consultation with our Board elders, the decision was made to retain the use of the term, "Aboriginal".

We also decided to update our references to the "Geraldton" area: we will now be using the term, "Greenstone".

Comings and Goings

Kim Facca has been hired as a permanent caseworker in our Thunder Bay office. In addition to being an experienced caseworker, Kim recently obtained her honours degree in social work (HBSW).

We recently hired Caycie Soke and Larissa Speak as staff lawyers on contract. Claire Littleton is going on maternity leave in September and Monique Woolnough is relocating to Sudbury. Monique has accepted the position as project manager for the Northern Region Transformation Project.

Tracey Lasook has returned to work as a full-time community legal worker/licensed paralegal in our Thunder Bay office.

Carla Marti completed her articles with us in May and has moved back to Toronto to find work as a lawyer.

Brittany Bouchard and Cheyanne DeGagne returned to our Thunder Bay office this year as our summer students. Brittany is working as our 40th Anniversary/Special Events Coordinator, and Cheyanne is our ID Services Coordinator.

Katherine Remington was our placement student from Lakehead University's Bora Laskin Faculty of Law and worked part-time on the Thunder Bay poverty reduction strategy. She has accepted an articling position in Kingston. Victoria Methot will be our law student placement this year; she will be joining our office January to April, 2018.

The Human Rights Legal Support Centre (HRLSC) has been co-located in our office since 2009. With our office staff expanding, we need the additional office space that is currently being used by HRLSC. HRLSC will soon be announcing their new location, which will be effective October 2, 2017.

Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic - Marathon

It's been another great year in the Marathon Branch Office. Still adjusting to the position of Community Legal Worker – but I think it is going pretty good. Every day there is something new and challenging.

The Secretary – Julia Michano is doing a fantastic job. Along with learning the job, we also have a new client management system on the computer - which was just implemented in May, 2017 – and she is becoming very familiar with it and doing a great job understanding and using it.

I participated in the Volunteer Income Tax Program again this year. This is a very essential program in our area. This program is designed to assist financially eligible people complete their tax returns in order for them to qualify or maintain their government funded benefits. These benefits include GST, Ontario Trillium Benefits and Canada Child Benefits. Our clients rely on these monthly benefits. We do workshops in each of the communities that I travel to and the bulk of the returns are completed for the end of April, but we still get a lot of clients coming in throughout the year when they realize they didn't file their return and they stop receiving their benefits.

I continue to travel on a monthly basis to the different communities in the region, including Pic River Heron Bay, Pic Mobert, Pays Plat, Terrace Bay, Schreiber and Manitouwadge. This travel is also very essential, as most clients cannot afford to travel to Marathon to obtain our services.

I continue to do hearings for Ontario Disability Support Program denials, Canada Pension Plan Disability denials, Criminal Injuries Compensation Board and Landlord Tenant issues.

We also participate in any training that is available to us. The support staff travel to Toronto once a year and meet up with all support staff from the north and the legal workers meet twice a year and travel either to Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie or Sudbury. We also participate in training sessions offered through webinars.

There's a new support staff person in Marathon – she's doing a fantastic job.

"....food is accessible at a time when some have less money available for buying food."

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 \$25 or an individual box for \$15. 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.

Wanda White



We were shocked and saddened by the unexpected passing of our long-time Board member, Wanda White, on August 30, 2016. Wanda joined the clinic as a Board member in 1986. She became President of the Board of Directors in October 1989 and served in that capacity continuously since that time until her passing.

Wanda hired many of the staff at Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic and mentored many new Board members during her years of service. She attended the provincial Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario's Annual General Meeting for many years on behalf of Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic.

She was a guiding force of the legal clinic and she is missed by all of us, Board members and staff alike. We miss her stopping by the office to have her decaf coffee and chitchat with us. We miss her friendship. Her guidance and wisdom will continue to guide us and her contributions to the clinic will be cherished forever.

"Wanda hired many of the staff at Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic and mentored many new Board members during her years of service."

"If someone is selected to be part of the pilot project and receive a basic income payment, they have to withdraw from social assistance if that is their current source of income."

Basic Income Pilot Project

The Ontario government is doing a three-year pilot project for a basic income program. People in the pilot project will get money each month with fewer rules than social assistance. They do have to have income below a certain level in order to be eligible to be part of the pilot project. Thunder Bay is one of the five communities where the project will be taking place.

If someone is selected to be part of the pilot project and receive a basic income payment, they have to withdraw from social assistance if that is their current source of income. They will get to keep their drug benefit from social assistance, but not other benefits. They will get more money each month than social assistance recipients, but may have to pay for some things that would be covered if they were on Ontario Works or ODSP.

There will be about 1,000 people from Thunder Bay who will get basic income from the pilot project, and 1,000 more who will be assigned to a control group and won't get more money every month. The control group will get a small payment to complete surveys.

Application packages are being mailed to randomly selected people in the community. If you get an application package and have questions about whether you are eligible, or whether you will get more money if you are in the pilot project, you can call the toll-free number in the application package. If they can't answer your questions please call our office.



Tenancies and Domestic Violence

Survivors of domestic violence and their children can now give 28 day notice to end their tenancies

As of September 2016, if a tenant or a child living with them is experiencing any of the following:

- Harm or damage to their property
- Illegally held against their will
- Fear for their safety because of a series of behaviours
- Stalking
- Sexual violence

AND the person doing those things or threatening the tenant or a child living with them is:

- Their spouse or former spouse
- Someone they live with or have lived with in a marriage-like relationship
- Someone they are dating or used to date
- Someone living in the rental unit who is related to them or the child

The tenant can give their landlord 28 days notice that they have to move out at any point in their tenancy by completing:

- Form N15: "Tenant's Notice to End my Tenancy Because of Fear of Sexual or Domestic Violence and Abuse"

AND

- A copy of a peace bond or restraining order against the abuser, OR
- A form called "Tenant's Statement about Sexual or Domestic Violence and Abuse"

These forms are available on the Landlord and Tenant Board website. The landlord must keep the notice confidential and cannot advertise the unit in a way that makes it obvious who is moving out until the tenant vacates the property. If the tenant changes their mind, the landlord cannot evict them. If the tenant gave notice on behalf of themselves and another tenant, the landlord can apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board for eviction.

These changes to the law are quite complicated. If you or someone you know is not sure whether these new laws apply to their situation, please have them call the clinic. Although these changes do not protect people in all situations of violence, they do provide a bit more protection for those who stayed in apartments or home where they were unsafe because they were afraid of being on the hook for rent for the rest of their lease.

"These changes to the law are quite complicated. If you or someone you know is not sure whether these new laws apply to their situation, please have them call the clinic."



Thunder Bay UAS Supports Indigenous Youth Conference

Kinna-weya has been an active member of the Urban Aboriginal Advisory Committee (UAAC) since its beginning in 2003. There are 4 community members involved, along with representatives from the Ontario Native Women's Association, Ka-Na-Chi-Hih Solvent Abuse Treatment Centre, Shkoday Abinojiiwak Obiiwedoan, Matawa, Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre and Beendigen.

In 2016/2017, although the federal government rolled out one year of funding so late there were only 4 months left to spend it, the UAAC supported the local host organization, ONWA, to organize a two-day conference for Indigenous youth. The planning and organizing was all led by Indigenous youth.

The conference featured on site WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems), CPR-A, SafeTalk (suicide intervention) and SmartServe training. All participants left with a USB key with their resume on it. There was a job fair where youth were able to provide feedback to employers about their experiences in the job market. The conference also featured local comedian Janine Desmoulin and a hip hop show with Cody Coyote.

In 2017/2018, the UAAC is applying for funding from the federal government "Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples" to revive the justice, education, food and other circles that were once a part of the UAAC's work bringing community members and agencies together to build on the strengths of local Indigenous communities and address pressing challenges.

Northern Region Transformation Project (NRTP)

A new project manager – our staff lawyer Monique Woolnough – has been hired to oversee the next phase of the NRTP.

Staff are being hired for the three permanent positions that will provide services throughout the northern region in the areas of Workers' Compensation, Employment Law, and Elders/Seniors Law.

In addition, there are two, two-year contract positions: one focussed on community development and one focussed on developing the speakers' school model for the northern region. Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic has agreed to host the speakers' school position in Thunder Bay. We hope to be able to hire someone over the next few months for this position.

"All participants left with a USB key with their resume on it. There was a job fair where youth were able to provide feedback to employers about their experiences in the job market."

"Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic has agreed to host the speakers' school position in Thunder Bay."

"Much of the work of this committee involves advocacy around the barriers faced in obtaining ID, assisting clients to complete identification applications, and providing follow-up case management."

"Access to this fee waiver will greatly improve the lives of clients who do not have housing or do not have stable housing."

Addressing Gaps in ID Services

Lack of identification prevents many in the District of Thunder Bay from accessing community and government resources such as housing, medical services, and income maintenance benefits. This can create an emergency situation for those who rely on these services and benefits to meet their basic needs. Some of the identified gaps include the absence of a fee reduction for all clients on social assistance, assistance with form completion, or specialized caseworkers trained to assist clients with mental health, addictions, literacy, and other barriers that prevent these individuals from accessing identification on their own.

To address this gap, Kinna-aweya has been instrumental in the formation of a committee of local service agencies that all have a vested interest in assisting the most marginalized individuals in the community access ID. These service agencies work in a variety of fields including medical, legal, and social services. This committee pools resources and expertise to target the gaps in service. Much of the work of this committee involves advocacy around the barriers faced in obtaining ID, assisting clients to complete identification applications, and providing follow-up case management. Several of these community partners have even begun to host their own regular ID clinics and provide district outreach in area communities. At these ID clinics, the hosting organization services dozens of clients who need identification.

As Kinna-aweya moves ahead with these partnerships, our hope is that lack of ID is no longer an impediment to accessing vital services and benefits for the residents of the District of Thunder Bay.

Access to Fee Waiver will help many Clients

The Office of the Registrar General (the agency that issues Ontario Birth Certificates) provides a fee waiver program for individuals who are homeless or marginally housed. This fee waiver eliminates the cost of a Birth Certificate for these individuals if their application is submitted by an approved non-profit agency. As of July 2017, Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic has been approved to access a fee waiver on behalf of eligible clients.

Access to this fee waiver will greatly improve the lives of clients who do not have housing or do not have stable housing. A Birth Certificate is needed to obtain housing, rent subsidies, income maintenance benefits, and community supports. Without access to these resources, many of clients will not be able to find or maintain housing. While not every client will meet the criteria for this fee waiver, it does greatly increase the resources Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic has to meet the needs of many clients.



"Sarah Colquhoun is a recognized for her leadership and advocacy, having devoted her career to increasing social justice for low income people and First Nation communities in Ontario's Northwest."

Incidents can be reported in-person or online

Law Society Medal



Sally (Sarah) Colquhoun received the Law Society Medal at an awards ceremony at Osgoode Hall in Toronto on May 24.

Each year, the Law Society of Upper Canada awards the Law Society Medal to selected lawyers who have made a significant contribution to the profession.

The award is given for outstanding service within the profession, whether in the area of practice, in the academic sphere, or in some other professional capacity where the service is in accordance with the highest ideals of the legal profession. It may be awarded for devotion to professional duties over a long term or for a single outstanding act of service.

Called to the Bar in 1984, Sarah Colquhoun is a recognized for her leadership and advocacy, having devoted her career to increasing social justice for low income people and First Nation communities in Ontario's Northwest.

Congratulations Sally!

Incident Reporting

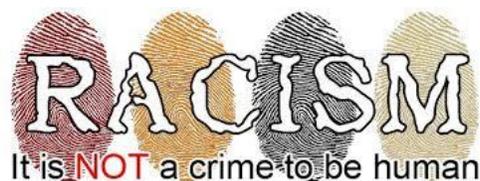


City's anti-racism and respect advisory committee debuts a new racism reporting tool for people who have either experienced or witnessed incidents of racism.

The reporting tool is a one-year pilot project and will track the incoming data to try to identify trends to help develop future strategies and initiatives. There is an online reporting component that asks for a description of the incident as well as information about the type of interaction, information about who it happened to, where it happened and when it happened.

Incidents can also be reported in-person at the Lakehead Social Planning Council office in Victoriaville or by calling 211.

<https://www.lspc.ca/incidentreport/>



Board of Directors 2016/17

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

Important Dates to Remember

The Area Community Meetings and AGM are scheduled as follows:

Armstrong

Monday, September 11, 2017
6:00 pm
At the Multiplex

Marathon

Monday, September 18, 2017
6:00 pm
Marathon Public Library

Thunder Bay

Friday, September 22, 2017
Noon
86 S. Cumberland, Boardroom

Nipigon

Tuesday, September 26, 2017
Noon
Resource Centre

Geraldton

Tuesday, September 26, 2017
6:00 pm – 7:30 pm
Public Library

The Annual General Meeting is on Saturday, October 21, 2017 at the Prince Arthur Hotel in the Bertrand Room.

The following Board member terms are expiring at the upcoming Area Community Meetings: Alta Fenton (Thunder Bay), Manon White (Nipigon), and Michael Deschamps (Marathon).

Area Community Meetings are held in communities to provide members with an update of the legal clinic’s activities over the past year.

Federal Poverty Reduction Strategy

We made a submission to the federal government's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

We have been supportive of the federal government's creation of the Canada Child Benefit (CCB), given its potential to better address the poverty faced by lower-income people with children in Canada. However, we have concerns about the ways in which the CCB is being administered and the impact that this has on low-income families in our community.

Our main concern is that the Canada Child Benefit represents a very significant portion of income for families with children who are living in poverty, and the federal system for delivering the benefits is cumbersome and difficult to access.

One of our concerns is the disproportionate impact of eligibility reviews on Indigenous people, single mothers, and individuals living on social assistance.

People living on low income who are having problems accessing their Canada Child Benefits or whose benefits have been suspended, are encouraged to contact our office for assistance.

Clinic Information Management System (CIMS)

CIMS is an information management system designed by our funder, Legal Aid Ontario, for case and information management.

Our clinic officially went live with CIMS on May 1.

The transition to CIMS and the learning curve that it's presented has been challenging. Everyone has been really positive and helpful yet we know it's been stressful and time consuming for everyone. The training provided wasn't adequate and we've had to close the office for internal training sessions to learn the program and figure out how to use it in our office. That's had an impact on our availability to clients and our ability to provide intake services. The information gathering has been more time consuming for staff and clients.

We appreciate everyone's patience as we have muddled through. We have developed processes to operationalize CIMS more effectively. We are more adept at the program and are much more familiar with the program now.

