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# Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic

## Overview of Services

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 preventing evictions.

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 with toll-free phone numbers. Armstrong and Whitesand are 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 dialed 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.

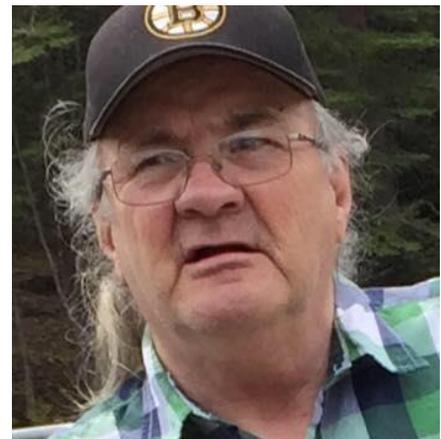


## Louis Brizard

We were shocked and saddened by the unexpected passing of our long-time Board member, Louis Brizard, on July 7, 2018. He was 62 years old and leaves behind his wife, children, grand-children and a vast extended family in Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario. He was born near his home community of Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek (Gull Bay), where he served as a band councillor later in life. He was a pillar of his community, answering calls at all times of the day to assist people in crisis. He was an Elder to people in residential treatment for alcohol and in jail.

Louis was elected to Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic's Board of Directors in 2010, representing the Thunder Bay area. He was the Vice-President for several years and became President of the Board of Directors in 2016 after the passing of Wanda White. He was the recipient of a 5-year service award at the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards presentation held at the Valhalla Inn in May 2017, for his service to Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic.

Louis was on the Northern Region Transformation Project Steering Committee and the Elder and Senior Law and Indigenous Legal Needs Assessment Sub-Committees. He attended the Association of Community Legal Clinic's Annual General Meeting this year and attended a Rural Summit on Poverty in southern Ontario in May. He shared his teachings and made everyone feel welcome and valued. He was a regular at Kinna-aweya's seasonal feasts where we made cedar bundles to protect us from negative energy in our offices. He and his wife Helen named Kinna-aweya's ID Bank, Awenen Niin, meaning "Who am I?" He was always reminding us to take care of our spirits. We miss his silly jokes, his laughter, and his teachings.



# Advocacy North Projects



Northern Ontario's 11 Community Legal Clinics have been working together since 2013 on expanding our capacity to do work collectively to better serve our communities. In 2014-2015, we hired the Social Planning Council of Sudbury to conduct an assessment of the unmet legal needs of low-income people in our region, which stretches from the border of Manitoba in the West to border of Quebec in the East, North to Moosonee and Moose Factory and the James Bay Coast and South to Bracebridge and the Muskoka area. Out of this research came a number of recommendations on how the 11 clinics could better meet the unmet legal needs of low-income peoples in Northern Ontario.

After years of planning, preparing funding applications, negotiating with Legal Aid Ontario and putting in place the structures that would make these collaborations a success, 5 new projects were launched in 2017/2018:

## 1. Advocacy North- Speakers' School and Peer Support

Building on the success of the Lake Country Community Legal Clinic's social justice speakers' school, the Thunder Bay New Directions Speakers' School and peer support work like injured workers' support groups and the ODSP Action Coalition, Angie Lynch is working out of the Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic to expand speakers' school and peer support work across the Northern clinics. The Sudbury Community Legal Clinic and the Manitoulin Community Legal Clinic will be launching their first speakers' schools in the fall of 2018 thanks to Angie's work! She has also joined the ODSP Action Coalition and is looking to expand their work across the North.

## 2. Advocacy North- Community Development

One of the major findings of the 2014-2015 research is that clinics need resources to revive and expand their community development work. Clinics were founded with a mandate to challenge the underlying causes of low-income people's legal problems through getting their communities together to make changes at the municipal, provincial and federal level. Meghan MacDonald is the Northern Region's new Community Development Coordinator based out of the Lake Country Community Legal Clinic. She has been working with clinics on enhancing their capacity to do this type of work, for example by using public legal education as an opportunity to engage their communities in making change or building it into yearly strategic plans. She developed a trauma-informed practice resource guide for all clinic staff.

## 3. Advocacy North for Injured Workers

Many Northern clinics had to stop assisting injured workers with their workers' compensation claims in the 1990s due to the impact of the cuts to social assistance rates by the Mike Harris government. As a result, injured workers have largely been left without legal representation. Catherine Boivin-Girard is the new Northern Region Injured Workers' Lawyer based out of the Timmins-Temiskaming Community Legal Clinic. She is working with Northern clinics to train staff in this area of law, supporting existing and new injured worker peer support groups and representing a limited number of injured workers across the North.

## 4. Advocacy North for Workers

Northern legal clinics have by and large been unable to represent workers around Employment Standards Act, Occupational Health and Safety Standards Act and discrimination in the workplace claims until now. The new Employment Law Community Legal Worker, Riley Miller, is training clinic staff in these areas, representing workers from across the North and supporting community development and community organizing by and for workers, for example through a growing relationship with the Sudbury Worker Education and Advocacy Centre.

## 5. Advocacy North for Elders and Seniors

The ever-growing population of Elders and seniors living in poverty have specific legal issues that are largely unmet in Northern Ontario. Between November 2017-January 2018, a team from the Lake Country Community Legal Clinic travelled throughout Northern Ontario to hear from Indigenous groups and communities, seniors and service providers about the challenges facing those communities. The final report from those visits was released in Spring 2018 and translated into French, Ojibwe, Cree-Mushkegowuk and Oji-Cree. The first Elder and Senior Law Lawyer, Grace Alcaide Janicas, moved onto a position with the Crown Attorney on Manitoulin Island and has been replaced by Madeleine Hebert, long-time bilingual staff lawyer at the Sudbury Community Legal Clinic.

# Social Justice Speakers' School

Building on the success of the Lake Country Community Legal Clinic's Social Justice Speakers' School and the Thunder Bay New Directions Speakers' School, the Advocacy North Speakers' School and Peer Support Organizer has been working with the Manitoulin Community Legal Clinic and Sudbury Community Legal Clinic to launch their first Social Justice Speakers' Schools in the fall of 2018.

Speakers' School is a community-based program that engages diverse, marginalized and disenfranchised individuals who are facing economic and social barriers with the intention of building their capacity to communicate and lead with confidence, to understand the legal, policy and regulatory frameworks that affect their lives and to participate more fully in their own communities and society in general.

This is accomplished in a variety of ways through a weekly program that runs for 14 weeks. The intention of this program is to teach public speaking and leadership skills in an environment of peer support and within the context of education in social justice issues. Every week, guest speakers present on issues relating to disability, poverty and unemployment, injured workers, tenant's rights, and Indigenous justice issues to name but a few topics. In addition to this, there are lessons on the development of effective speech writing, which the participants all take part in, along with a good deal of peer support.

The program culminates with a graduation where the participants deliver their speeches to their family, friends, community partners and community dignitaries. This allows their stories to be heard in a forum where there are people in attendance who may have some influence in addressing these systemic issues.

Interested in learning more? Contact Angie Lynch, Speakers' School and Peer Support Organizer at the Kinnowa Legal Clinic:

**Toll-free:** 1-888-373-3309

**Email:** lyncha@lao.on.ca



## Speakers' School – Thunder Bay

Speakers' School is a 14 week course where participants learn speaking, communication, leadership and advocacy skills in a context of peer support and mutual aid. A free meal is provided every class and participants are eligible for free bus fare as well as child/elder care funds to help make Speakers' School barrier free. Our class runs twice a year and our next class runs from Sept-Dec 2018. If you know of anyone who would be interested in taking the course, please have them get in touch. One can register online at [speakersschool.ca](http://speakersschool.ca) or they can contact Richard Togman directly at 807-627-9136 or [speakersschool@gmail.com](mailto:speakersschool@gmail.com).

Speakers' School has also recently partnered with both Shelter House and Elizabeth Fry to provide programming directly to clients of Shelter House and individuals incarcerated at the Thunder Bay Correctional Centre.



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

## 4 Reconciliation Committee

Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic has formed a Reconciliation Committee to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People in to our work. This committee will be doing this through the creation and implementation of Aboriginal hiring and procurement policies, education and resources for staff and clients, and by increasing the amount of cultural traditions and knowledge within our organization.

We chose the name 'Debwewin' for our committee as "Debwewin' is the Ojibwe word for 'truth' and is one of the grandfather teachings. It also encompasses the work we are doing. The beginning of the word comes from the Ojibwe word for 'heart' and the end of the word means 'sound of'. The literal translation of 'Debwewin' is 'sound of your heart'. As every heart is unique, this means acknowledging that reconciliation is about coming together in a way that honours and respects the individual histories and traditions of the people of this land. It also honours that reconciliation is an individual, as well as collective, responsibility of all of us.

As this is our 40<sup>th</sup> year of operations, now is more important than ever to put our minds towards reconciliation to ensure we are remaining true to the vision of our founding members – to provide culturally inclusive and respectful services to our clients.

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## Legal Aid Ontario

The threshold for financial eligibility legal aid services has been increasing each year for the past few years, so that more people with low incomes are eligible for legal aid certificates (family and criminal law).

In addition, Legal Aid Ontario announced investments in legal clinics to increase access to legal clinic services. Our clinic was fortunate to receive a permanent increase in our base funding which has enabled us to increase the hours of our branch office administrative assistants to become permanently full-time employees. The additional funding is enabling us to move our Marathon branch office into a larger, more accessible location at the centre block of Peninsula Square; our move is planned for the fall. We were also able to update our Thunder Bay office with new flooring and additional office space, and hire a part-time Operations Assistant (Cheyanne DeGagne).

Due to the election of a new provincial government, Legal Aid Ontario has imposed temporary expenditure restrictions in other areas. We continue to be cognizant of our fixed budget and manage our funding in a transparent, accountable, and responsible manner.



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## Hours of Operation

In Thunder Bay, our regular office hours are Monday to Friday, 9 am to 12 noon, and 1 pm to 5 pm. In July and August, our summer hours are Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 12 noon, and 1 pm to 4:30 pm.

Intake is available on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. We have limited intake capacity; first come, first served.

We have a drop-in service for commissioning documents on Fridays, 1:30 – 3:30 pm.

In the branch offices, our legal workers travel to various communities. Intake availability varies, however, we now have full-time administrative assistants in our branch offices, who can provide assistance and referrals.

# Awenen Niin Identification Program



Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic's *Awenen Niin* Identification Program assists clients in the District of Thunder Bay to obtain birth certificates so they may access housing, income maintenance, education, banking, employment, and other programs and services. We are excited to announce this program has received three years of funding through the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy, which will allow us to expand our services and advocate for systemic change. Fabienne Spiess was hired as the program's ID Services Coordinator in March and has already worked with over 100 clients to obtain ID. She is available to meet with clients every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday by appointment.

Fabienne is also looking forward to setting up ID clinics, raising awareness about our ID Bank, building relationships with ID service providers and partner agencies, as well as assisting clients in accessing income supports and social services with their ID. By covering the upfront cost of applications and providing ongoing case management services, our program works to eliminate the many barriers associated with accessing ID.

Kinna-aweya continues to be an active member on the ID Action Group, a committee of local service agencies that all work together to assist low-income and other marginalized individuals obtain ID. Members from various fields meet once a month to share best practises, expertise, and resources, as well as host training sessions for frontline workers. Kinna-aweya has taken a leadership role on the Indigenous Subcommittee, which focuses on addressing the gaps in services faced by First Nation communities. We are continuing to work with NAN, Indigenous Services Canada, and Service Ontario to map out current services and create community partnerships.

Lastly, we are excited to announce a new partnership with the Thunder Bay Public Library. We worked with Lakehead University Legal Services to run an ID Clinic at the Waverley Library in July and completed over 40 birth certificate applications. We plan to run future ID Clinics at the other library locations, as we strive to increase access to ID services within the community.

For more information about the *Awenen Niin* Identification Program, please contact Fabienne at [spiessf@lao.on.ca](mailto:spiessf@lao.on.ca) or call 344-2478.

## Evaluation of the Awenen Niin ID Program

We (Drs. Kristin Burnett, Chris Sanders, and Kelly Skinner) are excited to partner with the Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic in order to provide an independent evaluation of the Awenen Niin Identification Program under the three-year Trillium funded project. The research has several goals: to build a user profile of the program's clients in order to better identify those individuals most in need of services and assistance; to identify those barriers and facilitators to the acquisition of personal identification as both educational and advocacy tools; and to measure both tangible (housing, increased income, access to government services) and intangible (relationships and (re)connection to land, family, and culture) benefits that can be gained through the acquisition of personal identification. By helping vulnerable people acquire personal identification, and providing a safe place to store it (at their I.D. bank), the Awenen Niin program increases individuals access to community and government services and benefits that allow them to demonstrably improve their quality of life in both the short and long term.

As third party evaluators we bring a wealth of experience with program evaluation, community and action-based research, and the employment of Indigenous methodologies. As the Program Lead for the Master of Health Evaluation Program in the School of Public Health and Health Systems at the University of Waterloo, Skinner has worked with First Nations communities and Indigenous organizations on community based health research and evaluation projects for more than a decade. Burnett is a faculty member in the Department of Indigenous Learning at Lakehead University and works with Indigenous people, nations, and organizations around a number of issues dealing with the health and well-being. The other member of our research team, Chris Sanders, is housed in the Department of Sociology at Lakehead University and works with Public Health Agencies around a number of issues including the design and implementation of culturally sensitive disease prevention and health care.

Over the next several months we are keen to engage with a broad range of people involved in the Awenen Niin Identification Program both as service providers and clients. If you have a story you want to tell us about your experiences with the Awenen Niin program? We would love to hear from you at [csander2@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:csander2@lakeheadu.ca).

## 6 Geraldton Branch Office Update



### **ONTARIO ELECTRICITY SUPPORT PROGRAM**

On May 24, 2017 the Community Legal Worker of the Geraldton branch office of the Kinnowa Legal Clinic presented a Public Legal Education on the *Ontario Energy Support Program* to 16 staff members of the Long Lake #58 First Nation.

The OESP is an Ontario Energy Board (OEB) program that lowers electricity bills for lower-income households. The OESP provides a monthly credit to eligible customers based on household income and household size. The OESP credits are applied directly to eligible customers' bills. In order to apply you must be the account holder for the electricity bill and live at the service address for the account. All household members who live at the service address six months or more of the year must be listed on the application. Eligibility for the OESP depends on how many people live in the house and the total household income after tax. Applications can be processed online at <https://ontarioelectricitysupport.ca/> ONWAA is available to assist Indigenous communities with their applications. Indigenous households can contact ONWAA at 1-844-885-3157 or [emailoesp@onwaa.com](mailto:emailoesp@onwaa.com)

#### **Ontario Electricity Support Program Changes May 1, 2017**

Monthly credit amounts for OESP increased by 50 per cent on May 1, 2017. Additionally, the income eligibility thresholds for some household sizes have also increased. For additional information see <https://ontarioelectricitysupport.ca/FAQ>

#### **Important changes for electricity consumers started May 1, 2017**

The Ontario Energy Board's ban on winter disconnections was lifted on May 1, 2017. There are a number of rules in place to protect consumers and help them stay connected. The OEB requires utilities to follow these rules. For example, customers must receive 10 days' notice before electricity can be cut off. Customers must also be provided with payment options. The OEB also expects utilities to reconnect customers within two business days of receiving a payment or agreeing to a payment arrangement. Low-income customers may be eligible for special rules including the right to request equalized billing and a longer payment plan. They may also be eligible for help paying their bill through programs such as the Ontario Energy Support Program (OESP) [www.OntarioElectricitySupport.ca](http://www.OntarioElectricitySupport.ca) or the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) [www.oeb.ca/billhelp](http://www.oeb.ca/billhelp).

# 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

My name is Jessica Barry and I was hired on this summer as Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic's summer student and 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Coordinator. It has been a great experience with many learning opportunities. In addition to preparing for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, I have been able to attend a variety of events and committee meetings. I have had the opportunity to attend the Poverty Free Thunder Bay committee meetings, Barriers to Employment committee meetings, as well as a handful of Speakers' School planning sessions; ID Action Group sessions and a recent ID clinic that was held at the Waverly Resource Library. As part of my job, I was required to document stories from clients, board members, area delegates, former staff and members, which has allowed me to gain a glimpse of Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic's rich history; of providing poverty law services to the residents of Thunder Bay and the District. The underlying theme of the interviews has been the dedication of the staff to providing top notch service to many individuals who were denied income benefits. Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic provides an invaluable service to many members of our community. Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration was recently held on July 31, 2018. It was a beautiful day to celebrate a landmark organization in the community. Many guests came out to celebrate. It was an eventful afternoon, from the beautiful smudging and traditional prayer to the beautiful drumming by the Lake Superior Women's drummers and Andrea O'Nabigon. Guests were free to enjoy bannock burgers, cake and refreshments, which was followed by square dancing with Cathy and Roger Fobister. Many of the guests could be found having a bite to eat, catching up with old friends, entering the door prize draw or flipping through photo albums. The lucky winner of the beautiful woodland art was Barb Kulifaj. It was a beautiful day to celebrate Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



## 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – July 31, 2018

Thank you to everyone who came out to celebrate our 40th anniversary at our office in Thunder Bay. We celebrated with bannock burgers, square dancing, and tributes from our elected officials. A special miigwech to our elder, Helen Young-Brizard, the Lake Superior Women Drummers, Cathy and Roger Fobister, Keithie's Bannock Burgers, and all of our volunteers for helping us celebrate this special milestone. The outpouring of well-wishes from clients, friends, and colleagues was very humbling for our staff and we are all extremely gracious for the support of our community. Miigwetch.



## Canada Child Benefit

The Canada Child Benefit has become a very significant part of low-income families' income. The benefit replaced child benefits from social assistance. Without it parents are not able to meet their basic needs such as paying rent. Increasingly our clinic has been retained by parents whose benefits are being reviewed.

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) requests extensive information from individuals that is very difficult and at times costly to obtain. If the person is unable to provide the information, their benefits are cut off and overpayments often totaling tens of thousands of dollars are declared against them.

We are able to provide assistance for Canada Child Benefit matters. In addition, the federal members of parliament (MPs) can assist: Patty Hajdu Constituency Office: 3 – 705 Red River Road, 766-2090, toll free at 1-888-266-8004 and Don Rusnak Constituency Office: 1 - 905 E. Victoria Ave., 625-1160, toll free at 1-800-667-6186.



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada

Canada

## Community Volunteer Income Tax Program

The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program is a partnership between the Canada Revenue Agency and various organizations and volunteers. The program is designed to assist financially eligible people who are unable to prepare their own income tax return. This free program assists people who cannot afford to pay to have their taxes completed and as a result, obtain income they would not otherwise receive. Completing a tax return is needed in order to qualify for many government funded programs, including the Canada Child Benefit, GST and the Ontario Trillium Benefit.

Our Geraldton and Marathon branch offices assist people in their communities who have low income and simple tax situations. In Thunder Bay, clients are referred to the Lakehead Social Planning Council, who have a team of CVITP volunteers who provide this service.

## 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

# Comings and Goings

Due to an increase in our base funding, we have been able to permanently increase the hours of our part-time, branch office administrative assistants to full-time! Julia Michano and Pam Leblanc are now working 35 hours per week, year round, in our Marathon and Geraldton offices.

Claire Littleton will be returning from maternity leave in October.

Cheyenne DeGagne, who has been working in our office casual part-time and as our summer student the last few years, has been hired as part-time Operations Assistant.

Jessica Barry joined us in April as a placement student through the Aboriginal Community Advocacy Program. We hired her as our summer student, to coordinate the legal clinic's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary event. Jessica is returning to school in September but will be joining us at some of our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in our branch office communities. We hope to keep her on casual employment through the school year.

Jamie McGinnis and the Human Rights Legal Support Centre (HRLSC) moved out of our Thunder Bay office at the end of September last year. For several years HRLSC was co-located at our office and it was a mutually beneficial partnership.

The legal clinic has recently received additional project funding for two additional contract positions: the Advocacy North Speakers' School and Peer Support Organizer, Angie Lynch, funded by Legal Aid Ontario and the ID Services Coordinator, Fabienne Spiess, funded by the Local Poverty Reduction Fund (administered by the Ontario Trillium Foundation).

Victoria Methot was our Integrated Practice Placement (IPC) student from Lakehead University's Faculty of Law, January to April 2018.

Sherry Abotossaway will be our new IPC placement student this upcoming academic year. She will be joining the clinic on placement from the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law, September to December 2018.

## Board of Directors 2017/18

Louis Brizard-ban	President	Thunder Bay
Alta Fenton	Vice President/Acting President	Thunder Bay
Cindy Whittington	Treasurer	Thunder Bay
Andrea O'Nabigon	Secretary	Geraldton
Manon White	Director	Nipigon
Michael Deschamps Sr.	Director	Marathon
Mary Day	Director	Armstrong

## Staff Members

### Geraldton Office:

Chantal Walterson	Licensed Paralegal
Pam Leblanc	Administrative Assistant

### Marathon Office:

Miriam McCutcheon	Community Legal Worker
Julia Michano	Administrative Assistant

### Thunder Bay Office:

Richard Atkinson	Licensed Paralegal
Sally Colquhoun	Coordinator of Legal Services
Kim Facca	Community Legal Worker/RSW
Cheyenne DeGagne	Operations Assistant
Patricia Fenton	Executive Secretary
Teri Hofer	Administrative Assistant
Cindy Johnson	Assistant Director of Administration
Tracey Lasook	Licensed Paralegal
Claire Littleton	Staff Lawyer
Angie Lynch	Advocacy North Speakers' School & Peer Support Organizer
Melanie MacKenzie	Licensed Paralegal
Beth Ponka	Director of Administration
Caycie Soke	Staff Lawyer
Larissa Speak	Staff Lawyer
Fabienne Spiess	ID Services Coordinator

# Board and Staff



## Wanda White Board Room Dedication



On July 31, 2018, we dedicated our Board Room to Wanda White.

Wanda was a member of the Board of Directors of Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic for 30 years. She was first elected in September 1986 to represent the Nipigon area. She was elected as President of the Board of Directors in October 1989 and served as President until her passing in August, 2016.

Wanda hired many of the staff at Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic. She attended the provincial Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario's AGM for many years. She was a guiding force of the legal clinic and she will be missed by all of us, Board members and staff alike.

May her guidance and wisdom continue to guide us and her contributions to the clinic be cherished forever.



# Basic Income Pilot Project

Participants in the OBIP were shocked and anxious when the new provincial government announced on July 31<sup>st</sup> that they will not be continuing the pilot for the three years that it was originally supposed to last. Participants had signed an agreement with the government that they would receive basic income payments for three years, and people had made plans based on that commitment. It had just been a year since the first payments were rolled out, and people were enrolling as late as April.

At first the only information available to participants was that they would get their next cheque on August 25<sup>th</sup>. Then after significant criticism the government said the next week that "there will be a lengthy and compassionate runway", whatever that might mean.

Participants and other community members are meeting to discuss possible legal and political action in response to the premature end to the pilot. It is our understanding that there had not been any formal analysis of information obtained through the pilot, but the anecdotal information was overwhelmingly positive. If people have an income that is enough to meet their basic needs they feel better and make plans for the future.

The government also announced that they would not implement positive changes to social assistance that were scheduled to be effective September 1<sup>st</sup>, and that they plan to announce changes to social assistance after 100 days.

## Latest News on the Ontario Basic Income Pilot Project:

*(from CBC News – August 23, 2018)*

Thunder Bay- Superior North MPP Michael Gravelle says he's hopeful that the province's basic income pilot project can still be saved.

Gravelle said he made a Facebook post earlier this month asking for feedback from residents who have been "directly or indirectly affected" by the abrupt and early cancellation of the research project on August 1.

He said he's collected testimonials from more than 50 of the program's participants and have heard from residents with personal experience on how much this pilot project has made "a huge positive difference" in their lives.

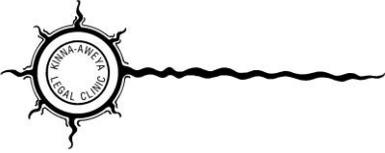
Gravelle said he spoke with the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services Lisa MacLeod and expressed his objection to the cancellation of the project.

She advised him to collect personal stories and letters of examples from residents who have been affected and Gravelle has done just that.

"It was a three year research project [and] there's a need to let that program carry on," Gravelle said, "and I just want to continue to fight this fight to see that the decision by the provincial government is reversed."

## Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic

Main office:  
86 S. Cumberland St.  
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 2V3  
**Phone:** 807.344.2478  
**Fax:** 807.345-2842  
**Toll Free:** 1-888-373-3309



We're on the Web!

[www.kalc.ca](http://www.kalc.ca)

facebook



The clinic's main office is in Thunder Bay and there are two branch offices in Geraldton and Marathon. Each branch office is staffed by a full-time Licensed Paralegal and Community Legal Worker and a full-time Administrative Assistant. The legal workers are supervised by lawyers in the Thunder Bay office. The branch office legal workers travel on a regular basis to the following First Nation communities: Mobert, Pays Plat, Long Lake 58, Ginoogaming, Aroland, MacDiarmid, Gull Bay, and Lake Helen. In addition, they also travel to the following non-reserve communities: Manitouwadge, Schreiber, Nakina, Jellicoe, Beardmore, and Nipigon.

### Geraldton and Area

404 Main Street, Unit A  
P.O. Box 1090  
Geraldton, ON P0T 1M0  
Phone: (807)854-1278  
Fax: (807)854-1542  
Toll Free: 1-866-875-4952

### Marathon and Area

#109 – 52 Peninsula Square  
P.O. Box 658  
Marathon, ON P0T 2E0  
Phone: (807)229-2290  
Fax: (807)229-0486  
Toll Free: 1-866-389-1477

## Important Dates to Remember

An area community meeting is held every year in Armstrong, Geraldton, Marathon, Nipigon, and Thunder Bay. These meetings provide members with an update of the legal clinic's activities over the past year.

This year, the meetings are scheduled as follows:

Nipigon:	Monday, September 17, 2018	Noon
Marathon:	Monday, September 17, 2018	6:00 p.m.
Geraldton:	Tuesday, September 18, 2018	6:00 p.m.
Armstrong:	Tuesday, September 25, 2018	6:00 p.m.
Thunder Bay	Friday, September 28, 2018	Noon

The Annual General Meeting: Saturday, October 27, 2018, 9:30 a.m.

Prince Arthur Hotel

The following Board member terms are expiring at these meetings:

Cindy Whittington (Thunder Bay), Vacant (Thunder Bay), Andrea O'Nabigon (Geraldton), and Mary Day (Armstrong).

Membership in the legal clinic is open to people 18 years of age and older who reside in the District of Thunder Bay and who are of Aboriginal ancestry. Membership application forms will be available at the meeting for new members.

