

THE HELP CENTRE OF NORTHUMBERLAND

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CHAIR'S REPORT BY KRISTA SKUTOVICH

It's all about the people.

People always seem shocked when they read or hear about the statistics that come from the Legal Centre and Help Centre (prepare to be, if you haven't already turned the pages). 'You served HOW many people last year?' 'You helped clients get HOW much money in lump sum settlements?' 'You did HOW many income tax returns that gave clients HOW much money back?!'

Really, though, **it's not the how, it's the who.** It's two sister agencies who work tirelessly to serve the residents of Northumberland. It's the committed volunteers, devoted Board, and our extremely dedicated staff. With a small staff we accomplish so much, reach so many people. That's what a non-profit does. We're not in it for the money or the glory, we're in it for the people. That couldn't be truer for our organization and dedicated staff.

Never have you seen a group of people so passionate about helping people in need. And the work our staff does, does not go unnoticed. The Help Centre was recognized by

Northumberland United Way this year as **Outstanding Community Partner**, and our Legal Centre was recognized as **Partner of the Year** by the New Canadians Centre, for the progressive work done serving local migrant workers. How does this small agency do SO much? Because **the focus is always on the people.**

Ask any of our staff (and our extremely-dedicated volunteers and students) why they do what they do- and the first thing they will say is 'the people.' Our staff are led by two amazing Executive Directors- one who celebrated 25 years of service with us this year (!)- and both who never stop making sure that low-income and disadvantaged people in Northumberland are served with the dignity and respect we all deserve. The passion, drive, and dedication seen among our staff would make one think they were in it for the quarterly bonus, company vacation or corporate awards that come in the private sector- but none of those incentives drive our

staff, it's the people, the clients, the residents of Northumberland that they help, every day.

I used to be shocked, too. But truth is, it's not shocking anymore, it's just who these people are- the volunteers, staff, Executive Directors, and Board of The Help and Legal Centre of Northumberland. I am so proud to have been linked to these exceptional people for the last 8 years, and look forward to the new ways I will continue to work with them, as my tenure as a Board Director and Chair comes to an end. It's in these people to help people, and WOW, do they ever. **Keep reading to see how, and how much.**

And we know YOU are one of these people, too. So continue to spread the word about The Help Centre and the Legal Centre- that's the MOST important thing you can do- and continue to support our fundraising events, continue to donate, continue to support the United Way, continue to volunteer with us, and continue to be an advocate for social justice for all.



**Northumberland
Community Legal
Centre**

*(funded by Legal Aid
Ontario)*

Tel: 905-373-4464

1-800-850-7882

Fax: 905-373-4467



The Help Centre

*(A Proud United Way
Member Agency)*

Tel: 905-372-2646

1-888-698-3382

We are growing....

One more year The Help Centre, through the different services and programs, provides social-justice advocacy, education, and direct services to empower the residents of Northumberland County. The programs and services of THC are intended to build a stronger community by giving low-income residents the necessary tools to increase their well-being, enhance life skills, reduce barriers to employment and provide housing and financial stability and strength their capacities to face daily challenges more efficiently. Our Agency does not only want to address the needs of our clients by providing them with temporary solutions or short-term life improvements. Our ultimate goal is to increase our clients' self-confidence and engage them to continue enhancing their abilities, capacities and skills to enhance quality of life in a permanent and stable way, in order to produce a positive impact in our community.

Through our different programs and services, such as: Partners in Learning, financial literacy, Support-for-Seniors, affordable housing, utility-disconnection prevention, we educate and

Patricia Orantes – Executive Director The Help Centre

train our clients on how to take care of their finances, to manage challenges they faced and to make better financial and personal decision. By building their skills in these areas, we are improving their capacity to become self-sufficient. Even though THC is a small agency in size, it is large in its community impact. With a small staff, THC delivers a wide variety of services and programs that are not addressed by other government or social service agencies. THC has become an organization most visited and referred to by clients and other agencies in Northumberland County. This fiscal year (2015/2016) we have provided 16,000 units of service compared to 7,545 in 2014/2015. This increase shows the community need and increasing demand for our types of services.

Every day is a new experience in our Agency. THC continues to assist Northumberland low-income residents with completing government forms, free photocopying and fax-

ing, navigating through the social service system, providing information and referrals, budgeting and post-bankruptcy counselling, distributing back packs for kids and food hampers for families, advocating, helping with meal planning and grocery shopping for seniors, providing one-on-one tutoring to residents who would like to improve their language skills, supporting clients to find affordable housing, being a drop off location for translations (any language), assisting through financial grants or advocating with the utility company and helping with the preparation of income tax returns. Our Volunteer Income Tax Program provided assistance with over 2,000 tax returns in Cobourg and throughout the county bringing approximately 4.885 million dollars back into the community.

After launching our Partners in Learning in November 2014, this year we had a great opportunity to expand this program by offering English as Second Language (ESL) one-on-one tutoring. We are aware that local access to ESL classes is very limited. Therefore, The Help Centre in collaboration with Northumberland County, New Canadian Centre, YMCA and Trinity Church, started offering in April 2016 one-on-

one English as Second Language instructional tutoring to already for Newcomers living in Northumberland County, at least 1.5 hours every day. Another outstanding accomplishment is to be able to provide training on how to use tablets as means of communication to senior residents in Campbellford, Hastings, Codrington, Warkworth and Alderville First Nation. The goal of this program is to enable seniors from the rural areas to connect with other seniors, community, resources and information to reduce the rate of isolation through the use of technology.

All this work could not have been completed without the

support of our core Funder Northumberland United Way. We are a proud United Way Agency, and once again THANK YOU, NORTHUMBERLAND UNITED WAY, for believing in our cause! We also want to THANK our Program funders: United Way Simcoe County & Service Canada for the Rural and Remote program; New Horizons for Seniors grant, through Service Canada; Lakefront Utilities, Veridian Connections and Enbridge Gas and Union Gas for supporting the LEAP program. Thank for the generous donations coming from the JIGGS Dinner; the Labour Counsel and from individuals in our commu-

nity.

Special thanks to our dedicated and committed board members, staff, volunteers and students: THANK YOU for your support and tireless efforts to address the needs of our low-income residents in Northumberland County.



Description	Units of Services	Description	Units of Services
Utility assistance inquiry	249	Advocacy provided	397
Application utility	201	Form requested and completed	305
Post-Bankruptcy (in-house)	23	HAP referral	36
Back packs for kids	176	Referrals	1,750
Budgeting assistance	173	Information provided (walk-ins & phone calls)	3,754
Photocopies	500	Rental listings provided	1,143
Credit counselling	124	Sleep country letters	248
Faxing	1250	Tax intakes	1,022
Use of phone	104	Tax preparation	2,087
Tutor trainings	2	Translation drop-off service	6
Christmas Hampers	14	Tutors intakes	9
Learners intakes	22	One-on-one tutoring sessions	653
OESP	296	Rent assistance inquiry	198
Housing	196	Requested Tax slips	204
Seniors program (referrals, housing, downsizing, benefits navigation, finances, support, meal/grocery planning, transportation, forms completion, among others)	950		
		TOTAL	16,096

Legal Centre Executive Director's Report – on 25 Years by Lois Cromarty

I am proud to be part of a legal clinic system that is the envy of all the other provinces in Canada, and I dare say, within the world. Northumberland Community Legal Centre is just one of 77 legal clinics across Ontario, all of whom are dedicated to improving the lives of low-income Ontarians. Legal Aid Ontario as our funder has made it possible for this legal clinic to exist, and for that we, on behalf of all the Northumberland residents, are very grateful.

I am thankful too that both the federal and the provincial governments recognize the value of investing in Legal Aid, to provide access to justice for the most marginalized of our neighbours – those with low-income, mental or physical disabilities, the homeless and others who find themselves facing a legal problem in their daily lives. Access to justice is not just good for those clients, but it is good for us all. We are all better if our communities and all those who live in it are stronger and better off.

I am very grateful that the original Board of Directors of THCN had the foresight to apply to the then OLAP for funding for this legal clinic. I am grateful not just for ourselves as staff, but more so because the vision of that original Board has given low-income Northumberland residents a place to turn to for help. The current Board of Directors is no less visionary, as they continue to explore ways to ever expand service to reach more people, and to change more lives.

I could speak only of numbers served over the past 25 years, but that would do a disservice to the very way this legal clinic works and to the values we work to embody in everything we do. S.

Wexler stated: "Poverty creates an abrasive interface with society; poor people are always bumping into sharp legal things." We strive every day to make a difference in the lives of those that we serve, to make them believe that someone is on their side, and that there are options that they can choose to exercise. We aim to work with our clients to empower them to make their voice heard. While we do the traditional legal work such as advice and representation, we also undertake law reform, public legal education and community development to make changes to the systems in which our clients find themselves.

Clients are not just "numbers" to us. However, even having said that, we must track numbers and outcomes so that others can see what we have been able to achieve. We are funded with public dollars and it is only the public that can determine if legal clinics and social justice are "worth" that investment. In 2015-16, we responded to 5293 requests for service, by providing 3699 instances of summary advice, 1059 brief services and 535 referrals. Of the 425 files that we closed in that year, we obtained \$1,188,783 in lump sum payments, with an estimated additional

\$46,649 in ongoing monthly payments for these clients (equivalent to another \$559,783 per year). Between the lump sum and the monthly changes in income, this amounted to

an estimated \$1,748,566 in benefits achieved for our clients in the last year. Now, try to imagine the difference that those funds made in the lives

of our low-income neighbours and in our community. Our clients find it hard to express how much it means to them to have someone on their side and we never take that for granted.

The staff who have worked here from day 1 share the same attributes: they are compassionate, caring, and dedicated advocates for the rights of those living in poverty. It is the efforts of all of the staff who have made this legal clinic thrive and grow for the last 25 years. I am truly blessed to have the opportunity to work with such wonderful people.

I am proud of Northumberland Community Legal Centre and what we have achieved on behalf of our clients for this last quarter century. Yet I am still challenged by the fact that there is still so, so far to go to achieve true equality for all in this County and in Ontario. Thank you all for supporting this legal clinic so far. We can only keep working towards the day when our services are no longer necessary, when true access to justice for all comes into effect.



Fundraising Committee Report- 2015/2016 - by Co-Chairs, Elizabeth Greaves & Krista Skutovich

Firstly, THANK YOU, to every supporter who contributed to this year's fundraising activities. As anyone who undertakes fundraising activities knows, it takes a whole lot of people and work behind the scenes to be successful, but most importantly, it requires dedicated supporters **LIKE YOU** who believe in a cause- and clearly we have some dedicated folks in Northumberland who share our passion for serving Northumberland residents in need.

Our events: The Empty Bowls Dinner & Auction raised over \$9,000.00 this year, thanks to the generous hospitality of Rosewood Estates and commitment from the Northumberland Potters- two groups that we are grateful to have behind us and this signature event. The annual Golf Tournament raised over \$5,500.00 and had our best attendance to date! Golfers of all skill levels enjoyed the day at Shelter Valley Pines Golf Club, and our sponsors- including a new one from Fisher's Foodland, and ongoing support from local businesses, union locals and labour groups- really stepped up to the plate again this year. An annual yard sale has become a hit, too, raising over \$750 this year, AND provided low-cost items to local residents. Thanks to all who contributed, and



start setting aside those gently-used items for next year!

Our Committee: A small, but mighty, crew, made up of Board members and community reps, are the engine that drives our fundraising efforts. In addition to the events mentioned above, they assist with two annual fundraisers for the Northumberland United Way: a Fall BBQ, and the Souper Bowl event, held in partnership with Fleming College. And our small but mighty crew is growing! We welcomed aboard Art Seymour this year, as a community rep, and would love to have more of you join us- whether it's for one event, some assistance collecting donations for auctions, or fully joining the committee (we promise it's fun!).

Our Ask of You: Every dollar counts, truly. We want you to feel proud of your donations to The Help and Legal Centre of Northumberland- just flip through this newsletter to see the impact of our work! If you want to be a part of this success, consider these options to donate:

Check with your bank, or visit www.changeit.com to set up easy, automatic round-up donations from your bank or credit card purchases – those few cents from rounding up to the nearest dollar

on each purchase come right to us, and go right to serving clients.

Donate new or gently used items for our auctions and raffles. We're always in need of items for our events- including the annual yard sale!

Make a one-time, or regular, cash or cheque donation to The Help Centre of Northumberland, or visit www.CanadaHelps.org for more giving options.

Assist with event promotions, by circulating our event notices and posters, and encourage family, friends and colleagues to join you at our next event.

Volunteer your time with us (every minute counts!) at one event, at every event, or as an official Fundraising Committee member. We look forward to some new faces, ideas, and enthusiasm!

Our fundraising success means more help for more people. Even with ongoing financial support from Legal Aid Ontario and Northumberland United Way, fundraising dollars are critical to fully support the scope of services that our small agency so expertly (and efficiently!) offers. Your fundraising support, through donations, attendance or volunteer assistance at events helps us to grow and expand programs, and reach more people in need. We, and they, sincerely thank you.

WILLS PROGRAM EXPANDING BY LOIS CROMARTY

The wills program is a terrific example of the legal clinic seeing a legal need going unmet, and then finding partners to assist in meeting that need. The program has been going strong since 2009, utilizing a trained volunteer to conduct the initial interview and private bar lawyers who draft and witness the will for free. We could not run this program without the heavy lifting done by the stalwarts of the program, the private bar lawyers Doug Mann, Bruce Coleman, Alison Lester and our volunteer interviewer Beth Bellaire.

This program will provide one will and power of attorney (POA), done free of charge, where the client meets the Legal Aid financial eligibility guidelines and where there is no existing will or POA. Unfortunately, the program does not have the resources to make changes to existing wills, even if that will was done within this Wills program.

We originally aimed for 20 wills per year, thinking that (at the time) we had 5 volunteer lawyers and 4 wills for each would be manageable as far as their donation of time. However, with the client demand and the lawyers' willingness to help, we have exceeded that target by far in each year since we started. In 2015, there were 33 wills clients; in the first 6 months of 2016, there were 25. These were done by 3 lawyers – and in the later part of 2015 and early in 2016, were being done by only 2 lawyers!

Given this significant rise in demand on the delivery of the program, we risk burn-out of the volunteers we have now. We have now been fortunate enough to add additional resources to the program. Starting in the fall, a new partnership will be added to the program to provide help to meet

the client demand. In addition to the existing private bar lawyers, the Queens University Elder Law Clinic law students and their lawyer supervisor will come out once a month from Kingston to take wills instructions, and then return the following month with the prepared wills for signature. In a win-win situation, this gives the law students (under the close supervision of their Review Counsel) vital experience in drafting wills and powers of attorney, while at the same time, increasing our capacity to provide service to our clients.

So, if you are a low-income person without a will, or if you know of someone who is, please call the Legal Centre. This program recognizes that low-income persons deserve the right to have their affairs in order when the time comes. The simple act of having a will brings peace of mind and respects the dignity of our low-income neighbours.

FIVE COUNTY NETWORK BY PETER VANCE

The Northumberland Community Legal Centre has continued to act as the lead agency in an inter-agency collaborative effort of legal service providers called the Five County Network. For the third year in a row, participating members of the FCN have continued to entrust the leadership of its @LAST Project to NCLC executive director Lois Cromarty.

Now entering its fifth year of collaboration, the FCN's @LAST Project – which stands for Legal Aid Services Together – has involved a continued effort by project partners to implement holistic legal

service provision to our respective vulnerable clientele. Holistic legal services are client-centered services intended to address a client's intersecting legal and non-legal issues through the provision of legal services and the facilitation of appropriate referrals to partnering service providers in an effort to empower the client. Rather than address issues in a piecemeal way, which often obscures the actual circumstances of a client's life, services instead are tailored to assist the person with specific issues as parts of a whole.

Partners to the project include community legal clinics, Legal Aid Ontario, along with Queens Legal Aid and the Queens Family and Elder Law clinics, all of whom are working together to improve access to justice and service delivery to low-income residents of Frontenac, Lennox & Addington, Hastings, Prince Edward and Northumberland counties. For more information about network activities or the @LAST Project please contact the Northumberland Community Legal Centre.

Partners in Learning Adult Literacy Program – Nancy Blackler-Jenkins

During the last year, The Help Centre has become fully aware of the need and demand by clients for access to literacy services in order to assist with life skills and activities of daily living. Those who have poor literacy skills have limitations accessing basic services, better jobs and the possibility of participating in further education and training which is crucial for developing and maintaining skills over the working life and beyond.

From April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016, 22 new learners enrolled in the program plus 6 carryover learners from the previous year. Seven learners

exited the program having gained the skills needed to obtain their

goals, 2 left due to illness, 4 were referred to other programs, 2 left for employment and 3 left the program without notice. The remainder of learners are still meeting with tutors.

We have trained 26 tutors. The next tutor training date will include an English as a Second Language component to accommodate our growing number of ESL learners.

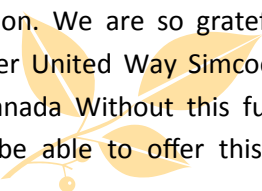
With the recent arrival of Syrian families to the county, we have

partnered with Northumberland County, The **Better Together Refugee Sponsorship Group** and The New Canadian Centre to provide daily classes for all English as a Second Language learners in the area at Trinity United Church, Cobourg.

With Adult Literacy and English as a Second Language programming, adult learners benefit through improvement in reading, writing, numeracy and life skills in order to obtain individual goals related to employment, independence, and/or higher education. We are so grateful to our core funder United Way Simcoe County/Service Canada Without this funding we wouldn't be able to offer this essential service.

If you are interested in donating a couple of hours every week to help learners to improve their literacy skills, please do not hesitate to contact us at 905-372-2646 or by email: nancy@thehelpcentre.ca.

	Units of Service Fiscal Year 2015/16
Tutor Intakes	9
Training Sessions	2
Learner Intakes	20
ESL Learner Intakes	2
# of learner/tutor hours	450.5
TOTAL	483.50



term care; and

- Rights related to health care services including home care and Community Care Access Centre issues.

If you need help with something else, please feel free to call or come see us. Our staff can provide you with advice, and if you need more detailed help, we can make you an appointment to meet with a seniors' lawyer. If we can't help with your type of problem, we will refer you to someone who can.

If you belong to a seniors' group or organization, we would be happy to come speak to you about our services and to provide a talk about a legal topic that interests your group.

More Legal Services For Seniors by Marisa Conlin

The Legal Centre is involved in a project to provide more services to seniors who need legal advice. If you are 65 years old or older and you have a legal problem, you can contact us for help.

There is another article in this newsletter about our wills program for people who are financially eligible for our services. We can also provide help if you have problems in other areas such as:

- Income security issues such as

CPP, OAS, GIS

- Care homes,
- Accessing long-term care services
- Misuse of Power of Attorney (personal care or property)
- Tax objections and appeals
- What do if a spouse dies or goes into long-

The Help Centre: Financial Assistance and Outreach Programs – Karin Cummings, Program Coordinator

Northumberland County, a thriving, south-eastern Ontario community strategically positioned along Highway 401 to access both Toronto and Kingston within a 1 to 1.5 hours' drive. Northumberland County offers a range of living experiences from historic towns to scenic rolling rural areas to spectacular water settings on Rice Lake, the Trent River and Lake Ontario. This is the description that greets tourists and industry when investigating our region. All of this is true, we see the beauty every day when we move about the county but this beauty for some residents goes unnoticed when they are experiencing a financial setback, facing the loss of their utility or the lack of safe and affordable housing. We strive at The Help Centre to offer services that address those needs or that assist families and individuals to address them confidently on their own.

Sometimes all the family needs is a little more time to pay their utility bill but the provider is not accommodating. Through the Low Income Energy Assistance Programs (LEAP), we can advocate for more time or an

affordable payment arrangement to help manage arrears but at times the situation requires greater involvement. **In 2015/16 we were able to assist 173 families with financial assistance** to avoid disconnection of utility services or to help reinstate services. A total of \$62,725 was applied to household accounts helping 513 family members stay connected to their heat and electricity.

In 2015, to address the rising cost of electricity, The Help Centre working with a number of other Ontario social service agencies, was tasked by the Ministry of Energy to create a program that would help low income families better manage their electricity bills. We all see the rise in our electricity bills with most of us doing everything we can to ensure our electric usage is at the minimum but no matter how much we adjust our lives around the 'time of use' clock, the bill just seems to get larger. Northumberland County has many living in rural areas and by simply their loca-

tion; they see higher bills resulting from higher delivery charges. The Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) was developed to help with these rising costs. Based on family size and income, the OESP program will apply a monthly credit directly to the electricity bill.

The credit is increased when certain criteria are met such as the need for ventilation equipment, heating with electricity or one or more family members

is First Nations or Metis. The credit could be from \$30 a month to \$78 a month depending on the household composition and electricity requirements. In November, The Help Centre was excited to launch the OESP program in Northumberland by offering assistance to low income residents to apply for this credit totaling **296 applications completed in the 2015/16 year.**

We are happy to continue to offer a few options to help with managing finances. Sometimes all that is needed is an overview



of what the household income is against the amount of money having to leave the household through regular housing, employment and/or child expenses as well as any debt the individual is having to deal with. Having to juggle which expenses are to be paid and which ones have to wait is sometimes a regular occurrence in a low income household. We try to make the budgeting process easy and understanding, supplying guidance and tips to reduce expenses and better manage their personal finances. **In 2015/16 a total of 242 individual budgeting appointments were conducted.**

Having bi-monthly services of the Peterborough Credit Counselling Services conducted from The Help Centre, has always been a great advantage for Northumberland residents. For those that require more intensive intervention, they could meet with an accredited Credit Counsellor to have a more in-depth review of their debt and options available to better manage it. **In 2015/16 a total of 124 appointments were arranged.**

With the County of Northumberland spanning over 736

square miles and 7 municipalities/ townships, transportation is an issue for many residents. In 2013 The Help Centre started an outreach program allowing residents to meet with staff at local offices in their area or home visits if necessary. This program has been extremely successful at reaching residents in rural areas and continues to be booked at all locations delivering all services offered by the agency to ease the transportation burden. **In 2015/16 a total of 404 appointments were achieved through outreach locations throughout Northumberland.**

SOCIAL MEDIA BY ARAVINTH JEGATHEESAN

NCLC began its foray into the world of social media in 2013 in an effort to reach more people who might need our services. The initiative proved to be successful right out of the gates, with an immediate burst of activity on our Facebook page and Twitter account.

Three years in and our social media venture is still gaining momentum! Our Facebook page is more popular than ever and our number of followers on Twitter continues to grow rapidly. NCLC currently has 135 Twitter followers and a total of 703 Tweets!

In the month of August, we reached a remarkable 2,663 people with a post on August 15th about an employment law class action lawsuit against a multi-million dollar energy retailer. We finished out the month

strong with an average reach of 140 people.

With a captive audience at our fingertips, we feel it's our responsibility to provide them with the most informative legal and community-oriented content possible. With that in mind, NCLC launched a series of legal education videos, with its premier entitled "Maintenance and Repair Issues?" A completely in-house production, the video proved to be one of our most successful posts on Facebook, and garnered almost 100 views on YouTube! NCLC currently has another production in the works which will discuss individual rights in relation to collection companies.

Being social media dar-

lings hasn't stopped us from being featured in newspapers and radio stations. In August, our own Teresa Williams was featured in an article on www.consider-this.ca discussing migrant worker rights.

Want to be part of the social media movement? It's easy! Just 'like' our Facebook page, Northumberland Community Legal Centre, and follow us on Twitter @NCLC_Legal to get daily updates about our activities and find out about important information that could affect you and your community.

If you're new to Facebook or Twitter, visit or call our office, and we'll help you get connected. We hope to see you there!



PARALEGAL STUDENT PROJECT BY LAVINIA INBAR

The initial funding agreement for the paralegal student project was made May 19, 2011 and the program began in January 2012. Currently, this project involves three community legal clinics: the Northumberland Community Legal Centre (NCLC), Community Advocacy & Legal Centre in Belleville (CALC), and the Community Legal Centre, Simcoe, Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes (Simcoe Clinic). The Project is also a partnership with Durham College School of Justice and Emergency Services and with Fleming College School of Justice and Business Studies.

As part of the project, we cur-

rently run two on-campus legal clinic sites, one at Durham College in Oshawa and one at the Lindsay campus of Fleming College. These two student clinics allow for greater services to the low income population as well as to the student populations. The paralegal students providing free services at these student clinics are supervised by a full-time lawyer, referred to as "Review Counsel."

Review Counsel also supervises the paralegal and other students at NCLC and CALC. Additionally, Review Counsel herself serves and represents NCLC clients.

The project helps to create a work force of students who possess a

greater sensitivity to issues facing low income clients.

The project has been successful in that it has provided increased service to clients and reaches a greater number of clients. Through the use of paralegal placement students, wage costs are minimized and by sharing existing space within the two colleges, there are no "bricks and mortar" expenses.

Unfortunately, the funding for this project will end as of March 31, 2017. However, our Executive Director, Lois Cromarty is seeking other sources of funding to continue this valuable project.

MENTAL HEALTH (from the Eastern Region Transformation Project Materials)

(from the Eastern Region Transformation Project materials)

The Legal Aid Ontario Mental Health Strategy study demonstrates that a significant percentage of legal clinic clients have mental health issues which are exacerbated by the circumstances they face daily as people with low-incomes. The client with mental health issues faces "sharp edges" in almost every aspect of their life, and their illness, despair and desperation causes consequences that have far-reaching effects. With few exceptions, all clients accessing clinic services are experiencing a situational crisis impacting their ability to cope emotionally, "hear" the legal advice

provided, and take the next steps to bring about resolution to their matter.

Studies show that clients in this situation can benefit from a "wrap-around" strategy which addresses their complex, co and inter-dependent legal and non-legal needs. Clients with mental health issues often require upstream interventions to prevent problem escalation and need help to implement legal advice and access community supports. This level of service, although necessary to ensure good outcomes for the client, is difficult for clinic staff to provide. An embedded social worker/placement student can help the clinic to provide more effective service to this client group, while freeing up clinic

capacity.

As part of the transformation of the delivery of legal services in the Eastern Region, Northumberland Community Legal Centre will be one of several legal clinics piloting a program with social work students to begin to address this issue. The social work students will spend their placements in the legal clinics, under the supervision of a registered social worker housed in one of the legal clinics.



divorce for immigration purposes;

- o you need a divorce to meet a requirement of your religion;
- o you are pregnant as the result of another relationship; or
- o you need the divorce to be eligible for a social program (such as Old Age Security or the Canada Pension Plan).

If you want to help to get an uncontested divorce, you should go to:

Family Law Information Centre
Northumberland County Court-house
860 William St.
Cobourg ON K9A 3A9
Monday, Wednesday and Friday
1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Divorce Help in Northumberland County By Marisa Conlin

Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) is offering services to help people with low-incomes in Northumberland County to get a simple divorce. If you qualify, LAO staff will draft the paperwork that you need to get an uncontested divorce.

An uncontested divorce is a divorce in which all issues have already been resolved, usually by court order or a separation agreement. (If you have issues that are not resolved such as custody or support matters, you should call Legal Aid Ontario at 1-800-668-8258 to apply for a certificate to hire a lawyer to help you with your problem.)

Legal Aid Ontario only helps to prepare the documents. It does not pay for court fees. You may qualify for a fee waiver, and LAO staff can help you with the application to have the fees

waived. If you are not able to get the fees waived, the fees will cost you about \$500.00.

In order to be eligible for this program, you must:

- be eligible for LAO's duty counsel services;
- have been separated for at least a year;
- be a resident of Ontario for at least a year (or the person you are divorcing has been a resident for at least a year); AND
- meet at least one of the following special circumstances:
 - o there is a history of domestic abuse;
 - o you have a letter from an immigration lawyer stating that you need the

We come to you: Legal Centre Satellites

At the Legal Centre, we want to make our services accessible to you no matter where you live in Northumberland County. In order to meet this goal, we come to satellite clinics in Brighton, Campbellford, Hastings, Bewdley, Colborne and Port Hope once or twice a month.

We recognize that transportation can be difficult for some of our clients, so we try to have our satellites clinics in places where people might already be going such as community meal programs or food banks.

If you need legal help, please feel free to drop in to one of

our satellites. If you are planning to come to a satellite, you are welcome to call us at 905-373-4464 or 1-800-850-7882 to talk to us about your issue first. This allows us to make sure that we have any paperwork that you might need when we come to meet with you.

Our satellites times and locations are:

BRIGHTON: 2nd and 4th Friday of the month from 9:00AM to 10:00AM
WHERE: Community Living, 1 Young Street, corner of Young Street and Hwy 30

CAMPBELLFORD: 2nd and 4th Friday of the month from 10:30AM to 11:45AM
WHERE: Campbellford Free Methodist Church, 73 Ranney Street North

HASTINGS: 2nd and 4th Friday of the month from 12:15PM to 12:45PM
WHERE: Hastings Civic Centre, 6 Albert Street East

BEWDLEY: 2nd Thursday of the month from 11:00AM to 12:00PM
WHERE: Bewdley Arena – Community Works office, 7060 Lake Street

COLBORNE: 4th Tuesday of the month from 9:00AM to 10:00AM
WHERE: Colborne United Church, 1 Church Street East, corner of Percy and Church Streets

PORT HOPE: 2nd Wednesday of the month from 5:00PM to 6:00PM
WHERE: St. John's Church, 33 Pine Street North

Senior Services Help Program by Maureen Forbes

The Help Centre launched a new county wide initiative in Jan 2015 to help connect low income people over 50 years of age to the services they need.

Good news! We received three year funding in 2016 to continue offering this valuable program. Services offered include budgeting, meal/grocery planning, transportation and support to client appointments, referrals and sourcing information, downsizing, benefits navigation, community partner consultation and collaboration to support mutual clients, assistance to access food, general advocacy, forms completion, housing and participating at community events geared towards seniors.

In the first year our Agency observed that the biggest issues facing the people we work with is isolation and lack of information about what information of what other resources are in the community. Other realities that tremendously affect low income seniors are lack of affordable housing and

healthy food. On average, the monthly income of an older adult that accesses support is approximately \$1400.00 per month. Most seniors prefer to reside in cities such as Port Hope or Cobourg because they need accessible transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping and opportunities to socialize.

Unfortunately, the most basic monthly budget falls short:

Rent & utilities - 1000.00 (1 bedroom per month)

Food -230.00 (for the whole month)

Phone—50.00 (cell 200 minutes per month)

Laundry—20.00 (for the whole month)

Transportation groceries ___
40.00 (4 trips for the whole month)

Transportation med appoint-
10.00 (1 trip for the whole month)

Medication dispensing fees -
50.00 (average monthly fee for covered medications)

If seniors have extra costs they may not have a phone or they could have a phone card that may not provide service for the entire month. It often is a situation of “borrowing from Peter to pay

Paul”. Sadly, food and a telephone are often the budget items that are compromised in order to pay for housing and medication costs. Please take into account the items not listed that typically are comforts for us such as cable, cigarettes, clothing and social activities.

It can be unpleasant to hear about the realities of low income seniors living in Northumberland, but; please know access to information; human connection and someone giving of their time really can make an enormous change in the life of a senior!

Since last year, we have been working together with Mr. Smith. He is a senior of our community who didn’t have enough money to buy food, pay his phone service and medications. He felt alone, depressed and did not know what to do. We started assisting him with his monthly budget. There were some items and spending patterns that could be changed to free up money. Mr. Smith felt nervous to make changes, but; he agreed to try. He consistently has had food, phone service and medications covered each month for the past year and he is currently setting and working on new goals to improve the quality of his life. Three hours each month with Mr. Smith continues to make a positive difference.

Building on the knowledge that access to information and affirmative connection to others is vital to the lives of seniors, The Help Centre applied for funding to

teach older adults in rural communities to learn to use a tablet. Tablet Talk became a reality! Seniors



ages 50 to 80 living in the communities of Alderville First Nation, Campbellford, Roseneath, Warkworth, Hastings and Cordington are currently having FUN together and developing alliances as they gain skills to improve access to information, community, family and friends through the use of technology! This initiative became a reality thanks to the support of collaborative partners including

Trent Hills Public Library; Warkworth Branch, the Community Training and Development Centre, and Northumberland United Way. It

was generously funded by New Horizon's for Seniors through Service Canada.

What's next? Watch for Silver Line: cell phone information sessions for seniors to know more about cell phones and service options that are available, having a more affordable telecommunication plan and improved access to information, community, family and friends! Also on the horizon are social engagement opportunities for seniors that ac-

cess our services.

The Help Centre is pleased to be able to offer assistance to improve the lives of seniors living on lower incomes. This The Senior Help Program is possible with federal funding through the Homelessness Partnership Strategy Rural & Remote, our dedicated board of directors, volunteers, and staff; please also know that we have been able to provide assistance to older adults through the SSH Program because of the positive reception and collaboration from community partners in Northumberland County. Thank you!

Expansion of Employment Law Services by Lavinia Inbar

NCLC has always provided services in some areas of employment law with particular expertise in the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (WSIA)*, but we are now planning an expansion of our employment law services. Employment law includes *Employment Standards Act, Employment Insurance, WSIA, Occupational Health and Safety Act* and wrongful dismissal issues. We will be working with other clinics in the eastern region to achieve this expansion. Since this has not historically been a core area of clinic practice, the goal is collaboratively to develop capacity in all clinics to be able to provide some summary advice, possibly do basic representation, recognize issues, make appropriate referrals and do intake for cases being referred to a shared eastern region clin-

ic caseworker.

In addition, the eastern region clinics are hoping to establish a study group for non-WSIA employment law (there is already a well established WSIA study group) that will engage all of the clinics in the eastern region. The study group would have access to the knowledge that is already out there at clinics that have engaged in employment law. It can develop a standard knowledgebase through reviewing and studying modules in specific areas of employment law.

In developing a standard comprehensive knowledge base through the study group, other clinics in the region can be supported in future

funding applications for employment law positions. With a developed knowledge base and resources, they will be in the position to start up rapidly, and a more robust employment law representation system will be available throughout the region with potential employment law specialists available within reasonable distance from any clinic or client.



W O R K P L A C E I N J U R I E S A N D P O V E R T Y (R E P R O D U C E D F R O M I N J U R E D W O R K E R S O N - L I N E)

The impact of occupational injury or disease on a worker's household income can be devastating. Recent [policy changes](#) to workers' compensation that have increased claims denials and cut benefits are forcing more and more injured workers onto taxpayer-funded social assistance (in 2009 6,883 Ontario families were on social assistance because their workers' compensation benefits were below the poverty line). Additional others – unknown because the government does not track such statistics- are forced to rely on welfare because their claims were denied or delayed. The links between poverty and health are well-known. For injured workers, financial insecurity resulting from [WSIB austerity cuts](#) compounds psychological and physical harm.

A recent study led by Peri Balantyne "[Poverty Status of Worker Compensation Claimants with Permanent Impairments](#)" (*Critical Public Health*, March 17, 2015) provides an in-depth examination of the level of poverty among Ontario injured workers and families, health and social characteristics,

income and employment changes.

The second of two RAACWI-funded surveys "[ONIWG 2010 Injured Worker and Poverty Survey](#)" confirmed that injured workers take the risks and pay the price:

- Injured workers experience nearly 4 times the rate of poverty for Ontario
- 1 in 5 workers are living in extreme poverty after injury (less than \$10,000 per year). Just over 40% reported an income of less than \$15,000/year
- only 7 of the injured workers surveyed had used a food bank before they were injured. After injury, the number rose to 77
- 1 in 5 workers lost their home after injury
- over 50% were unable to afford the prescriptions they needed
- before injury almost 90% were employed full-time, after injury only 9% still were

During economic downturns, injured workers are among the most vulnerable. Between 2008 and 2012 the number of ODSP recipients also

receiving WSIB benefits went up from 593 to 755, a 27% increase. High unemployment poses challenges for those able to return to work. Statistics Canada's "*Canadian Survey on Disability 2012*" reports the employment rate of working-age persons with disabilities was only 49%, compared to 79% of those without disabilities.

The Ontario government's "[2014-2019 Poverty Reduction Strategy](#)" includes a commitment to supporting employment for persons with disabilities and to helping employers overcome misconceptions. While this is welcome, injured workers and their advocates asked for more.

... Poverty reduction for injured workers means embracing a system that treats them with dignity and respect, and that truly seeks to support them through their workplace injuries or illnesses. A return to Meredith's founding principles is key to re-establishing a just compensation system that addresses injured workers' needs while also freeing up resources in health care and social assistance that can be used towards a broader poverty reduction goal..." (Injured Workers' Consultants' [Submission to the 2013 consultations](#))

I S T H E R E A N A P P F O R T H A T ? B Y L O I S C R O M A R T Y

Thanks to funding from Legal Aid Ontario, the answer to that question will soon be Yes! Northumberland Community Legal Centre, working with Ryerson Futures Inc, is developing a legal app that aims to launch in 2017. More details will be forth-

coming, but in the meantime, if you are interested in being one of the test users – and we are looking for all ranges of technical ability - please contact the Legal Centre.



Volunteer Work at The Help Centre – Judith O’Leary (Volunteer)

For almost a year I have been a Help Centre volunteer. The first observation I want to share is that no day here is predictable. Although early morning often starts with the mundane, such as preparing labels and answering phones, it’s not long before we are deployed on the front lines, phoning the CRA about someone’s tax matter, tracking down a pensioner’s missing GIS payment, signing up people for special programs, doing various types of intake, and sometimes even reassuring a distressed person that we will, as the name says, help.

Over the past year, I have become acutely aware of the “little skill-set” of the Help Centre volunteers, as distinct from our vocations – like bookkeeping, health care, or legal work. Your little skill-set is what enables you to calmly

figure out what the heck to fill-in on Form T85623, the best way to clarify a passport problem to Big Government Agent, how to problem-solve in a linear way, and even to quickly elucidate instructions or directions via the handy-dandy Internet.

In case you thought – as I did until volunteering at the Help Centre – that most people have this little skill-set – think again. Plenty don’t. Lots of very good people – many Help Centre clients -- are challenged, even crushed, by what to others are the tossed-off occurrences of daily living. Among the challenged include cohorts of the elderly, the young, those who are intellectually or educationally disadvantaged, newcomers to Canada, and many more. So, not only do clients bene-

fit from the career skills of the volunteers, but also very much from our little skill-set.

For many years after he retired, my 97-year-old father did free tax work (for low-income, working people) as well as community-care driving. He was a great proponent of volunteerism, professing that eventually, if not now, then later, everyone needs help. He urged his kids to volunteer “while you can because you’ll be glad someone else is doing it the day you really need it.” But he also stressed the enjoyment and fulfillment derived from freely helping others, and that is how we volunteers experience the Help Centre.

vast majority of rental ads are posted online on sites such as Kijiji. This sets up a barrier for many people who do not have access to the internet, the housing program sets out to break down those barriers by taking the online ads and posting them in our weekly housing listing.

Breaking down barriers is what The Help Centre strives to do every day, by making initial contact with landlords, setting up viewings, and completing rental applications the housing program is breaking down those barriers that our clients face. The Help Centre has always been involved with housing, in more recent years we have been pleased to offer our services in a more supportive environment for our clients.

Intensive Housing- Mary Beth McNulty

Shelter is one of the most basic needs a person or family can have. So where do they turn when that need is jeopardized? The Help Centre has been pleased to offer our services to clients who find themselves faced with the prospect of relocating. Proper housing must be; safe, accessible, and sustainable, if these requirements are not met individuals and families may find themselves without shelter.

Many of our clients find themselves in our office not knowing where to start; others come in after months of searching for themselves with no luck. Regardless, we are here to help. Every person we met with comes with their own needs

and requirements from a house, whether it’s an issue with stairs, the need for a pet friendly unit, or accessibility to amenities such as groceries and health care, finding a home that accommodates all requirements takes time and determination but it can be done.

With Northumberland County’s senior population almost 10% higher than the rest of Ontario we find ourselves working with many seniors who are on a fixed income and who carry many requirements. These clients rely on the housing program primarily to find appropriate housing, greatly due to the way in which housing ads are posted these days. The

Precarious Employment by Peter Vance

It is well recognized that there is low access to justice for workers in all types of precarious employment (defined as any employment that is non-standard, poorly paid, insecure, unprotected, part-time employment, self-employment, fixed-term work, temporary work, on-call work, home-based workers, and telecommuting"), and especially for migrant agricultural workers and temporary foreign workers such as live in caregivers. Precarious/migrant/temporary foreign workers are particularly vulnerable because of their sta-

tus as employees and of their status within Canada. Such workers form a distinct subset of workers with employment problems. As such, they have specific legal needs in relation to their employment and require a specialized approach for outreach that is not caught by the ordinary employment law context, as due to barriers, including language and cultural barriers to providing legal service to this population, the vulnerability of clients and the fear of reprisal for exercising their legal rights.

Being precariously employed, which by its very nature entails a lack of predictable, consistent and sufficient income, brings a host of legal problems, ranging from difficulty enforcing employment rights to the inability to remain housed.

Thanks to funding from Legal Aid Ontario's under the Ministry of the Attorney General's Financial Eligibility Guideline increases, a new model of service has now been established to reach this population across 5 legal clinic catchment areas from Orillia to Kingston. As the new Precarious Employment Outreach Legal Worker, I am developing strategies and delivering services to this vulnerable population. If you fit this category of worker, or if you know someone who does, please have them contact the Legal Centre for assistance.

THE HELP AND LEGAL CENTRE OF NORTHUMBERLAND IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE LAUNCH OF OUR NEW WEBSITE. PLEASE CHECK US OUT AT: WWW.THEHELPANDLEGALCENTRE.CA

"Riding the Airwaves to Spread the Word" by Dawood Nasir

Here at the Legal Centre, we're always trying to reach out to as many people in Northumberland who need our help as possible. To do this, we have to have a multifaceted approach that utilizes many channels of communication.

This year, we've added one more: radio. Readers might be surprised to learn that the technology for radio communication has been around since 1864! Nonetheless, it's an integral part of the lives of almost all of us, whether we listen at

home or in our vehicles.

For that reason, the Legal Centre has been a regular guest on UCB Canada 90.7 FM's morning radio show with Dr. Rus Jeffrey. Although on temporary hiatus, the recordings have touched on legal issues which are central to the concerns of low-income residents of Northumberland.

So far, Rus and I have talked about the rights of tenants, payday loans, workplace injuries and compensation for the victims of violent crime, among other matters. Each episode, we have tried to shed light on the law, and offer assis-

tance to residents of Northumberland.

The Legal Centre is grateful to Dr. Jeffrey and UCB Canada 90.7 FM for the opportunity to spread the word about our services. We are working to continue making similar appearances throughout Northumberland so that every low-income resident of Northumberland knows about what we do, and how they can reach us.

To listen to recorded versions of the radio shows, please visit our website at <http://thehelpandlegalcentre.ca/legal/our-podcasts/> for all of the episodes.

The Help and Legal Centre of Northumberland Social Justice Award by Beth Bellaire

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of The Northumberland Community Legal Centre, the Board has established a new award: **The Help and Legal Centre of Northumberland Social Justice Award** to be presented at our AGM. Each year, we will consider recognizing a youth or youth group (25 years of age or under) in Northumberland County who:

- Has dedicated time and energy to making positive social change and building a more just and equal society and/or
- has worked effectively to change those social situations, public attitudes, structures or policies which cause people to be excluded, impoverished or disempowered and/or
- has served as a leader, innovator, or supporter of social justice-related work, locally or beyond (provincially, nationally)

and/or

- Has advocated for the rights and needs of low-income populations and/or
- Has demonstrated a commitment to improving the lives of low-income residents of Northumberland.

Successful candidates will be presented with a cheque for \$500.00 by an adult who has also made a significant contribution to the cause of social justice - one generation passing on the torch to the next.

This year, we have chosen Jane Dukes as our youth. During her years at Port Hope High School, Jane demonstrated her belief in social justice as a steadfast advocate for equality and inclusivity in the group, Equity and Diversity, and through her work on the Student Council. In the community, she expanded her influence through the YMCA's Strong Kids

Campaign,

working to improve the lives of less privileged kids. Jane is continuing her commitment to social justice at University of Ottawa where she will begin her studies in Political Science and Women's Issues this fall.

Although there are many people who have committed much energy to bringing more equity to our community, it was not difficult to choose our first presenter: Wilf Day was a founding member of The Help Centre of Northumberland was instrumental in getting our legal clinic established in Northumberland. For so many years, his voice has provided knowledge and guidance to our Board as we work to meet our mandate. He has always spoken up for social justice in his professional and personal life; presently, he is working hard to bring a fairer voting system to Canada so all voices are heard.

We congratulate this year's winners and look forward to adding to this auspicious beginning of our new award in future years.

Tenant Duty Counsel Services by Sarah Cooling

It has been another busy year for the Northumberland Community Legal Centre Tenant Duty Counsel Program. Over the last fiscal year many staff and students have participated in the Tenant Duty Counsel Program, and we would give thanks to everyone who participated in the program.

The Northumberland Community Legal Centre receives funding for the Tenant Duty Counsel Program (TDCP) from the Advocacy Centre for Tenants in Ontario. The TDCP offers free legal advice and representation to eligible tenants appearing before the Landlord & Tenant Board (LTB) in Northumber-

land County.

Our TDC statistics for the 2015-2016 fiscal year highlight the dedication and experience of our TDC workers.

In the 2015-2016 fiscal period TDC assisted in 143 Tenant cases managing to save these Tenants a total of \$76,590.00 in waived rent arrears, damages, filing fees, rent abatements etc. Likewise, TDC saved Tenants moving costs by preserving their tenancies, allowing them to remain in their rental units, in 49 instances, and delayed termination in 13 instances.

Over the past year, our Tenant Duty

Counsel have worked very hard to assist tenants in exercising their rights. We look forward to another interesting and productive year.

I would like to thank all of the inspiring students and staff who have assisted with TDC this fiscal year. NCLC was been fortunate enough to have many wonderful paralegal and articling students completing placements with us attend our LTB hearings to watch and take notes, gaining experience watching practiced counsel work. Thank you for all of your hard work. We appreciate it!

French Language Services by Danielle Colmenero

awareness of French Language Services.

The East and Central Region Ontario Community Legal Clinics are expanding their ability to provide French Language Services within their communities. The Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Legal Clinic is the lead clinic for the Transformative Action Group Initiative for increasing French Language Legal Services in the region. A lawyer fluent in French and trained in clinic law will be circulating through these clinics to provide legal services to Francophone clients in French. This initiative

will enable a greater number of Francophone clients to receive legal advice in French and be represented at Tribunal hearings in French.

In addition, this project will increase awareness about French language resources available at Tribunal and legal clinics, as well as provide Francophone clients with increased access to justice. Eastern region legal clinics will collaborate with one another in order to improve service, share costs and develop public education materials in the French language while increasing

This initiative assists NCLC in working towards meeting the requirements of the *French Language Services Act* as well as the LSUC rules of professional conduct. Ultimately in the long term, this programme would have all clinics in the region able to offer French Language Services and represent clients in French at all times by increasing focus on hiring and training bilingual staff.

HRSDC Funding for Articling Students by Danielle Colmenero

NCLC has a long history of hosting students in various college and university programs as part of the students' placements and summer employment. NCLC has the good fortune to continue this tradition thanks to funding HRSDC. This government sector has granted funding for 8 law school graduates to complete their articling placements in various legal clinics in the eastern

region of Ontario. NCLC serves proudly as the coordinator for this funding, which is being put to good use in Ontario legal clinics which have hired students-at-law for their 2016/2017 articling terms. These students have carriage of their own files and represent clients in legal matters, thereby enabling more people to be served by these legal clinics. In turn, this serves

the communities in which these legal clinics provide service by improving access to justice to marginalized individuals and fulfilling public legal education objectives that serve to promote confidence in the legal system.

This arrangement also serves to benefit the articling students as there is currently a shortage of articling positions in Ontario. These students now have the opportunity to complete the experiential training requirement of their licensing while honing crucial legal skills including client management, performing legal research and advocating at administrative tribunals.

Expanding Into Consumer Law by Dawood Nasir

Most of us would not call ourselves "consumers" but almost every day we enter into contracts with private businesses. Most of those contracts are simple and unwritten, like going into a grocery store to buy some eggs: the business offers products, and you accept when you pay your money. Sometimes, though, our dealings with businesses get more complicated and problematic.

Here at the Legal Centre, we routinely encounter individuals who have consumer law issues. For example, when individuals dispute an amount on their cell-phone bills, or when telecom providers refuse to honour a product insurance plan. Another very common example is people who have taken out a payday loan that they cannot repay, or who have a collection agency coming after them for an unpaid debt.

For that reason, the Legal Centre is expanding its services to help low-income residents of Northumberland who have

disputes with businesses. We are doing so by collaborating with the Community Advocacy & Legal Centre ("CALC"), a Legal Clinic based in Belleville.

Danielle Holbrough, a lawyer at CALC, will kindly offer her expertise to help us help our clients who experience consumer law issues for which we may not have expertise. Through this process, our clients will have their issues addressed and we will increase our capacity by continuing to be involved.

Injured Workers In Northumberland by Teresa Williams

Many communities in Ontario have injured worker groups who meet regularly to advance their concerns about rights to benefits, among other things.

In the fall of 2015 the Northumberland Community Legal Centre consulted with injured workers and found that there was a need for support and advocacy in Northumberland County.

We would like to invite injured workers in Northumberland County, and those affected by workplace injuries (i.e. family members

of injured workers) to join our group. We meet regularly to discuss how we can promote claims adjudication, rather than claims denial. Our focus is to advocate to have Workplace Safety and Insurance Board claims process based on workers' workplace injuries only. We believe that we have a great ability to get this work done.

We welcome injured workers to attend our next meeting:

Date: Thursday September 29, 2016

Time: 6pm-8pm (5:30-6:00 mingling)

Location: The Fleming Building, 1005 Elgin Street, West, Suite 203 , (Community Care Boardroom), Cobourg, Ontario

Our group is an open, welcoming group to: injured workers, their families, health care providers, labour representatives, community partners and advocates. While we encourage an open membership, injured workers should feel free to attend without the risk of solicitation.

We allow time prior to our meeting for workers to discuss their matters with each other. We do not provide legal advice, or discuss individual cases at IWIN meetings.

"Reaching Out to Our Community" by Dawood Nasir

The demand for the Legal Centre to coordinate and participate in community development activities has increased this year. Last year, the Legal Centre undertook 39 community development and outreach activities. This year, the number has already reached 48, and we are only in August!

These activities continued to focus on outreach and awareness regarding Legal Centre

services, advocacy regarding issues that affect low-income individuals and poverty reduction.

Our initiatives include our satellite clinics in Bewdley, Brighton, Campbellford, Colborne, Hastings, Port Hope and Warkworth. We attend satellites regularly in these communities to reduce the barriers to transportation (including cost and disability) and to continue meeting the needs of our most vulnerable clients.

We take our obligation to provide accessible services very seriously. We are acutely aware of the need to make our services as accessible as possible, and are prepared to offer our services through translation in almost every language on earth and in sign language for hearing impaired clients.

Law Reform By Teresa Williams

As always, the Northumberland Community Legal Centre has been busy with law reform activities. You may recall that in May 2015 the Changing Workplaces Review was established to review the *Employment Standards Act* and the *Labour Relations Act*.

The Special Advisors have now released an Interim Report inviting groups to make additional

submissions. The set of submissions provided, due by August 31, 2016, were about personal emergency leave for workers in Ontario. The second is due by October 14, 2016. The Legal Centre will be providing submissions to the Special Advisors about how vulnerable migrant workers are, among other preciously employed workers. Watch for news from the Legal Centre about a final report and its impact on vulnerable employees.

In addition, the Legal Centre staff

have been trying to bring about change in how recipients of Ontario Disability Support Program benefits receive their travel and transportation benefits. Many recipients do not receive their reimbursement cheques for many months. Often the cheques are an amount of money that is not explained and may combine more than one month. This makes it difficult for recipients to know what they have, and have not, received benefits for.

We have participated in several consultations regarding such things as affordable housing, consumer protection, workplace safety and insurance board matters among other areas of practice, and we will continue to.



Northumberland
Community Legal
Centre

(funded by Legal Aid
Ontario)

Tel: 905-373-4464

1-800-850-7882

Fax: 905-373-4467



The Help Centre

(A Proud United
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Tel: 905-372-2646

1-888-698-3382

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