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**United Way**  
Northumberland

# THE HELP & LEGAL CENTRE OF NORTHUMBERLAND

SEPTEMBER 2022

## REPORT FROM THE CHAIR— BETH BELLAIRE

### Awards and Milestones; Endings and New Beginnings

This year, 2022, has been another of those “pandemic” years that we all are getting too used to. As expected, our staff and volunteers have continued to be proactive and innovative in order to meet the growing demands of our community. However, I will leave reports on programs and changes to legislation for others to highlight. Instead, there are several events that I would like to reflect on that took place this year. Some are accomplishments, awards, or milestones reached by staff and volunteers; another is a loss that deeply saddened our community; and a final one is an opening which we are excitedly looking forward to.

Lois Cromarty, our Executive Director of the Northumberland Community Legal Centre, was the recipient of the Sidney B. Linden Award for 2021! This recognition is given by Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) to exceptional individuals who help low-income Ontarians in the pursuit of access to justice. “Lois Cromarty exemplifies the best qualities of the legal aid system in Ontario,” said Legal Aid Ontario Chair Charles Harnick. “She is a tireless advocate for the work of community legal clinics and has worked hard to increase the profile and funding of clinics. Most importantly, Lois has worked hard for three decades to ensure that low-

income clients in Northumberland County, and injured workers across the province, receive the best legal advice and the most zealous advocacy. Access to justice is important. Lois makes that happen every day.” Lois also reached a significant milestone this past year – as the first and only ED for our legal clinic, opened in 1991, she has now served over thirty years. Always thinking of the needs of others, Lois asked that we donate to the Northumberland Labour Council as her recognition. We are finally fulfilling that wish at our upcoming AGM where we will present Dan Tobin with a cheque in Lois’s name.

Another staff member who has reached a significant milestone is Sarah Cooling who is celebrating twenty years as our senior lawyer. Recently, Sarah has devoted a lot of her time and energy to help Indian Day School survivors complete their claims to the federal government. We really appreciate Sarah’s commitment to this issue and her commitment to the Legal Centre.

On a more somber note, I want to recognize the passing of Doug Lloyd. Doug was a founding board member of our organization, and since 1984, he was a tireless champion of our cause, helping out in many ways including committee work and

fund raising. In particular, he was the driving force behind our annual golf tournament. This year’s event, slated for Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, at the Shelter Valley Pines Golf Course, will be held in his honour.

As usual, our Board has been busy this year too. Tiffany Christie, our Vice-Chair, has led our Communications sub-committee to achieve its goal of refreshing our message to the community, helping us better focus on our various audiences. We are well underway to revamping our webpage and expanding our use of social media platforms. And elsewhere in this newsletter, you will read about the work of our Fundraising Committee under the leadership of Ashley Bouman. This spring saw us return to an in-person Empty Bowls event that was a smashing success. Thanks to all who volunteered.

Finally, I am very excited to announce a new beginning: with the generous support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, The Help and Legal Centre will be expanding its office space in the Fleming Building. Renovations are scheduled to begin in September and we hope to be fully in the new space by February. We will be living with construction for a few months, but it will be well worth it to be able to offer our clients better room for confidential meetings as well as expanded space for group sessions. A special thanks to John Bell, one of our board members, who has taken on leadership of this project.

## The Help Centre Report – Patricia Orantes, - Executive Director

Even when COVID played an active role in 2021, THC was able to increase the number of services thanks to extra funding received throughout the year. We are so grateful that Northumberland United Way continues to believe in our agency and in addition to providing our annual core funding; they allocated 2 additional grants that allow us to provide grocery cards to 30 seniors who otherwise would have had to choose between paying its rent, purchasing medication or getting nutritious food. THC was also the recipient of a generous donation from 100+ Men Who Care that allow us to support our senior clients.

Clients who are at risk of homelessness or homeless are suffering the consequences of a rental market that is in crisis and lacks affordable housing. However, thanks to Northumberland County and the Reaching Home project our agency was able to assist 94 new housing clients and

successfully housed 30. We were also able to provide financial housing aid to 46 clients valued at \$31,800.

Reaching Home has trusted us for the past 10 years. Thanks to their funding we have been able to provide our Senior, Money Management and Outreach programs. Over 200 seniors were assisted with advocacy, housing, connection to community resources and preparation of taxes, among others. Two Hundred and Seventy Two (272) clients learned how to create their own budget and received tips to make living on a low income a little easier. Our outreach program facilitated information, referrals, assessments, advocacy and completion of forms through phone calls, emails and meetings with clients in open areas.

We prepared 1,449 income tax returns, bringing back into the com-

munity \$3.484 million dollars. We have also experienced an increase in people applying/renewing to OESP and requesting grants from the LEAP Program, 311 have been assisted to secure an energy credit in their bills and/or receive a grant to avoid electricity disconnection. Our newcomers continue attending our ESL classes, we welcomed 7 new clients in and recently we opened a new class twice per week in Port Hope for the Ukrainian families, helping 23 new learners develop their English language skills.

Our board members, staff and volunteers play an important role in our agency. I want to thank them for their valuable support, commitment and loyalty to our clients and agency. The Help Centre looks forward to another positive year ahead with the exciting news that in 2023 we will be opening new facilities to offer our programs and services in a much better environment and space.

## Housing Support Program – Debbie Wood, Housing Support Worker

Throughout 2021 we continued to see the effects of the pandemic and how it is affecting our community. Rental prices continue to soar and no new units to be had. We are continuing to see long-term tenants being evicted due to sales of homes thanks to the hot real estate market and real investors buying older buildings and renovating to “luxury suites” – thus pricing our community residents out of the market. Renters are being faced with bidding wars much like house sales. Unfortunately, our clients can’t compete in these bidding wars.

When a rental unit becomes availa-

ble, we have seen a meaningful increase in rental prices for new tenants. These increases are higher than what our clients can afford, putting them in a difficult situation and at risk of homelessness or homeless. The housing situation is very critical. If housing were a medical emergency, we would be flat lining.

However, we continue signing up clients for Rent Geared to Income Housing and the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit. For the clients who receive this benefit it has been a huge support when it comes to helping with rent costs.



This year we successfully housed 30 clients who were homeless or at risk of homelessness and worked with 94 new clients, providing 4,196 units of service. We were able to house most of our client in Northumberland County, but others were housed in other outside communities, where rentals are better priced. Throughout the year and always, clients are welcomed with empathy and compassion. We look forward to what the next year will bring.

## Legal Centre Report 2021-2022 Milestones- Lois Cromarty, ED

The Legal Centre turned 30 in April 2021, having started with just one staff member (me) back in 1991. We then grew to 3, then to 5 funded positions. Over those years, we fielded more than 100,000 requests for legal assistance, which is definitely a significant milestone!

Speaking of significant events, Sarah Cooling just celebrated 20 years of service at the clinic. Well done!

So, first things first: thank you to the staff for their hard work. For a second year, COVID required staff to work under lockdown or reduced staffing conditions for 10 months, but we still dealt with 4679 requests for assistance, a 50% increase from 2020-2021 and a level of demand not seen since 2016. We closed 113 files last year returning approximately \$613,000 to the community. This lower dollar amount is due in large part to delays at various Tribunals.

Despite the high demand for service, staff had many significant achievements: initiating a discussion of systemic racism at Northumberland County Housing; organ-

izing and presenting training sessions for the clinic system; filing and settling a Divisional Court case to reverse an SBT decision; collaborating with Alderville First Nations to complete Indian Day School Claims; creating a province-wide website for legal clinics on Workplace Sexual Harassment; doing a media interview for "Around Town" regarding our work with vulnerable workers; meeting with Community Research Lab for Social Change at Trent University to review the Lab's Eviction Tracker Data Sheet and discuss trends in rental housing. We are proud to provide so much more than just

legal advice and representation!

Another significant achievement is the re-starting of regular in-

person satellite office hours in Campbellford and Brighton. Contact our office for details.

Thanks to our Board of Directors and our funders, large and small, for supporting the work that we do and the clients that we serve. The Rotary Club of Cobourg funded phone money for clients. Two examples of this difference-maker: having a phone allowed a homeless man to get a place to live; by having a phone, a single mom found out that a family law proceeding had been started and was able to respond.

Thank you, Legal Aid Ontario, for your support. Thanks, Department of Justice, for funding two major multi-year projects on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and Independent Legal Advice for Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence.

On a sad note, we mourn the loss of our long-term volunteer, Sherry Pearce, who spent almost 20 years with us. We miss her a great deal.



## Guideline Rent Increase— Jayden Davies-Niera, Legal Worker

Each year, the Province of Ontario determines the rent increase guideline. This guideline sets out the maximum amount that a landlord can increase a tenants' rent without the approval of the Landlord Tenant Board (LTB). The rent increase guideline is determined based on the calculated rate of inflation from Ontario's Consumer Price Index. Following the 2021 rent freeze, the rent increase guideline for 2022 was set at 1.2 per cent. On June 29, 2022, the Ontario government announced that the rent increase guideline for 2023 has been set at 2.5 per cent. This is the largest rent increase guideline in Ontario since 2013. This guide-

line is concerning for many tenants in Northumberland County who are already struggling to make ends meet with the current inflation on basic necessities, sky-high rent rates and lack of housing options. A guideline of 2.5 percent increases the financial strain that tenants are already experiencing and places many tenants in a precarious situation in regards to housing.

The rent increase guideline applies to most rental units covered under the *Residential Tenancies Act, 2006* (RTA). Rent increases do not occur automatically and they are not mandatory. In order for a landlord to legally increase a tenant's rent, they must

provide proper notice and serve the correct form (such as an N1, N2 or N3). Landlords must provide tenants with 90 days written notice of the rent increase. In most circumstances a landlord may only increase rent once every 12 months and the amount of the increase may not exceed the rent increase guideline.

If you are a tenant who has received an above guideline rent increase or have any other housing related issues please contact the Legal Centre for free and confidential legal advice.

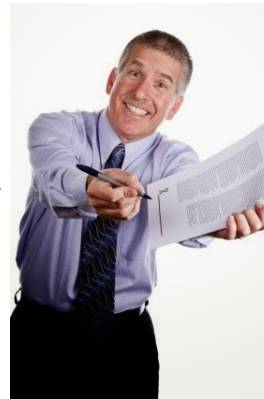
## New Door-to-door sales tactics and home service contracts- Jordan Tilley, Community Legal Worker

As everyone immerses themselves on the social media platform of their choice, it is important to be careful of new tactics businesses are using to target vulnerable consumers. Certain products and services can't be offered or sold at your home unless you initiate the transaction. These restricted products and services include: furnaces, air conditioners, air cleaners, air purifiers, water heaters, water treatment devices, water purifiers, water softeners and duct cleaning services. Businesses will be able to enter into a contract with you at your home if you made initial contact and invited them to your home for the purpose of buying or leasing one of the restricted products and services. The companies that sell these re-

stricted products and services are now marketing their company on your favourite social media platform. It's as simple as one click of a mouse to be directed to their webpage or for someone to private message you asking for your personal details. After they receive these details, they then come to your house to try and pressure you into entering into a contract with their business. While door-to-door sales still exist, these companies are now using the internet to poach vulnerable people a different way. The *Consumer Protection Act, 2002* gives you rights when you buy something from a salesperson either at your door or in your home that costs more than \$50.00. After entering into a

contract, you still have a 10-day cooling off period to cancel a contract, for the restricted products or services, for any reason. Remember to be cautious about who you give your personal details to over the internet and ensure you always do research on the company beforehand.

The companies that sell these restricted products and services are targeting the vulnerable population and they are using new ways to do so. Before signing a contract make sure to read the contract carefully or call us at (905) 373-4464 to receive free confidential summary legal advice.



## Senior Service Help Program - Shannon Basso, Senior Service Worker

2021-2022 continued to be a challenging year for our seniors through the COVID-19 pandemic. During this difficult time the Senior Service Help program has been there to provide services for low-income seniors in Northumberland County. Some of these

services are phone call wellness check-ins, booking COVID-19 vaccinations, grocery shopping support, forms completion assistance and referrals to other agencies and services.



During this difficult time, our vulnerable population has been experiencing isolation and loneliness. With phone call wellness check-ins the Seniors Service Help Program is able to offer clients with a connection and socialization.

Thanks to funding the program received, we were able to work with Community Care to assist our clients with transportation to medical appointments. We were also able to provide meals through Meals on

Wheels. The Senior Services Program received from Northumberland United Way another grant this year to purchase grocery gift cards. With the cost of living going up, these gift cards have been extremely helpful to low-income seniors who are struggling to afford their basics needs.

There has seen a noticeable increase in the number of seniors facing homelessness throughout the last year. With the cost of housing being so high, many seniors are unable to afford the rental prices on a fixed pension. This is leaving them with little to no options for housing.

As the Senior Service Help Program continues to grow, we look forward to continuing providing support for seniors in Northumberland County.

## Gender Based Violence and legal needs project - Missy McLean

“First there’s the trauma of the abuse and then there’s the trauma of trying to get help and navigate the courts and systems, and survivors often tell me the second one is worse.”

– Service provider during interview with

Legal Centre staff

In April, the Northumberland Community Legal Centre launched the first phase of a five-year project focused on enhancing and increasing access to legal support, service and information for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), which includes intimate partner violence. The Legal Centre is working with eight other legal clinics across Ontario to explore the unmet needs of people experiencing GBV in each of their communities. Funded by the Department of Justice, these projects are also supported by the federal government’s Strategy to End Gender-based Violence. The Legal Centre’s project ultimately aims to see the clinic develop and implement a new holistic, trauma-informed service delivery model in collaboration with survivors and service providers from across Northumberland County. The first phase of the project comprises a community needs assessment. This includes extensive community outreach by clinic staff to introduce the project and connect

with private bar lawyers, frontline staff from social service organizations, healthcare providers, and members of the law enforcement and justice sectors. More than 25 semi-structured interviews are being held with service providers and community stakeholders to gain insight into the services and supports currently available to survivors and learn more about what’s working, where gaps exist, and to identify opportunities to improve and build upon existing systems.

Following service provider consultations, the project team will start the



critical work of engaging people with lived experience (PWLE) of GBV.

They will hear directly from survivors about their experiences accessing – or being unable to access – legal services and other supports related to their experiences of violence. Survivors have the choice of sharing their lived expertise in a group listening session, one-on-one conversation or via survey to uphold an ethical, trauma-informed approach. Results of the needs assessment will

be analyzed and shared in a preliminary report mid-fall and will inform the project’s next phase as the Legal Centre team keeps working with community members and stakeholders to envision a new model (or models) of service delivery that will be developed and piloted through to the project’s end in March 2026.

Gender-based violence, according to the Canadian Women’s Foundation, comprises the types of abuse that women, girls, and Two Spirit, trans and non-binary people are at highest risk of experiencing. GBV can take a wide variety of forms, both physical and emotional, such as name-calling, hitting, pushing, blocking, stalking/criminal harassment, rape, sexual assault, control, and manipulation. Many forms of this abuse are against the law, and while many survivors turn to shelters, counselling services, and other community service providers, few move into legal proceedings. Many survivors also face legal issues indirectly tied to their experiences of violence, such as housing, financial and employment instability, immigration concerns and contact with child welfare, to name just a few. Through this project, the Legal Centre will work towards truly holistic service provision that significantly reduces the risk of re-traumatization and referral fatigue for survivors and, instead, is both restorative and preventative in terms of clients’ legal and non-legal needs, and overall legal health and wellbeing.

**The Northumberland Community Legal Centre invites you to:  
The Annual Justice Forum: Date: Tuesday, October 18, 2022  
Time: 1:00 PM-4:00 PM**



**Topic: Housing Crisis: Impacts on Marginalized Groups and The Law**

**Time: Oct 18, 2022 01:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83168765944?pwd=TzNzaEFiM1pyK3V5bm45MXBxNXN3Zz09>**

**Meeting ID: 831 6876 5944**

**Passcode: 337598**

## The Landlord Liaison Program - Mirri Lawrence, Landlord Liaison & Housing Support Worker

The 2021 year was again difficult for assisting clients due to COVID restrictions. These restrictions found us still providing our services through telephone, email, and Zoom/Microsoft team's platforms.

The rental housing market has seen little to no movement with vacancies that would be affordable for most of our clients. Landlords that are within the Landlord Liaison program are not having much movement within their units. The Landlord Liaison is actively in contact with the landlords of the program, to access this hidden rental market. Landlords within the program are reaching out to the Landlord

Liaison when they have vacancies, which in turn, helps assist our clients in finding suitable housing in a much intense rental market. This strategy has been effective in housing 6 clients successfully through the Landlord Liaison Program.

The Landlord Liaison continues to be the lead facilitator for RentSmart Northumberland. This program consists of certified facilitators from various community agencies, to provide RentSmart education in the areas of: Tenant rights and responsibilities, Landlord responsibilities and expectations, Living with roommates, housemates and neighbours, effective communication skills, budgeting and planning for housing affordability and sta-

bility, maintenance, do's and don'ts, crisis management, safety and pests. These sessions are held throughout the year, in different locations within Northumberland County. Recently, with the COVID restrictions receding, the first in-person session was held in July 2022, with more to come. The best part of the program is that it is free for participants.

Within the 2021 year of the RentSmart Northumberland, 19 participants completed the RentSmart Basic program, and 6 participants completed the RentSmart Certification program. All these participants had completed their programs virtually through the Zoom video platform.

## No Fault Evictions - Peter Vance

A lack of affordable rental housing continues to be a serious problem for prospective renters in Northumberland County as average monthly rents continue to skyrocket, making renting an apartment or house unaffordable for many.

The *Residential Tenancies Act (RTA)* is the law that governs most tenancy agreements in Ontario. While the RTA does offer some protection to renters against illegal rent increases and evictions during the course of their tenancy, it does not set any limits on how much a landlord can charge a new tenant to rent their place. What this means is that landlords can expect to rent out

their units to new tenants for a lot more money per month than the prior tenant paid, which has created a lucrative incentive for landlords to evict longer-term tenants.



Something that we have encountered at the Legal Centre over the past year has been an in-

crease in the number of Landlord's or Purchaser's Own Use evictions. Also known as an N12 Notice, the Landlord's or Purchaser's Own Use eviction process is one that can be used by unscrupulous and greedy landlords as a way to evict good tenants, only to turn around and raise the rent charged in a new tenancy by hundreds of dol-

lars per month.

Although there are some rules that govern the way a Landlord's or Purchaser's Own Use eviction must be conducted, it is a very difficult eviction to prevent.

If the landlord or purchaser does not move into the rental unit and occupy it for 12 months, then the former tenant does have the right to file an application with the LTB seeking monetary compensation; however, the LTB does not have the authority to reinstate the old tenancy.

If you, or someone you know, has been served with an N12 Notice from your landlord, you should keep track of any ads advertising the rental unit, watch to see who moves in etc. Please contact the Legal Centre for free and confidential legal advice about your situation.

## Steps in Reporting a Workplace Accident/Illness, - Jordan Tilley, Community Legal Worker

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) is an independent trust agency that administers compensation and no-fault insurance for Ontario workplaces. The WSIB provides wage-loss benefits, medical coverage and help getting back to work if an injured worker meets their eligibility criteria.

If you are injured or become ill at work, please do the following:

1. Get medical help: get first aid right away and if you need further treatment, go to a health professional. Tell whomever is treating you that you got hurt at work.
2. Document: Tell your employer asap about a) your injury and how it hap-



pened and b) any medical treatment you received. Let them know about any additional information you receive about your injury or illness. Keep in contact with your employer.

3. Keep a diary of what happened, who was there, conversations with your employer and Doctor's visits, lost time etc.

4. Report to WSIB: Report your injury if you need treatment from a health professional, you aren't able to go to work, or you are being paid less or receiving fewer hours. The Form 6 is on the WSIB website.

When an accident is reported quickly it allows the injured worker the opportunity to receive quick and proper treatment that may be needed.

Sometimes a worker may believe they have a "minor" injury and decide not to

report it or get the injury evaluated which may cause it to become worse. Quickly reporting injuries allows the employer the chance to provide options for proper treatment and a suitable return to work plan in a timely manner. Not following the reporting process can cause someone to miss out on receiving early treatment and may hinder a potential Workplace Safety and Insurance Board claim.

It's also important to note that due to the ongoing Coronavirus, if you have a diagnosis/positive test or symptoms of Covid-19 and you think you became ill because you were exposed at work, you should tell your employer about your illness. You should also let them know details of your exposure and you may consider filing a claim to determine if you are eligible for WSIB benefits. If you want to know more, or you require advice about a workplace injury, please call the Northumberland Community Legal Centre at 905-373-4464 or toll free at 1-800-850-7882.

## English as a Second Language Program – Rebecca Irwin, ESL Facilitator

Despite the continuation of the pandemic, the ESL Program was persistent throughout the year. The learners persevered during the challenges and continued to participate in classes. They exhibited great tenacity regardless of the interminable changes. Throughout the lockdowns, classes were held on zoom. However, during the warmer months, class was at Victoria Park where participants could remain socially distant. With that being said, August was a momentous time for everyone, because we were able to return to our classroom at Trinity United Church once again.

The program ensures that both tutors and learners are in a safe space, where they could access information, and ask questions.

The class remained up to date with the latest COVID -19 status, regulations and vaccine clinics in the Northumberland County. Learners and tutors continued to unite and support each other throughout these unprecedented times.

Within the ESL program we strive to build a strong and supportive community. Not only did we discuss popular holidays and traditions in Canada, but we also discussed festivals, holidays and traditions that are celebrated around the world. Learners were given an opportunity to share their knowledge, and traditions to others. Learners discovered more about Canada's history and geography as well.

The English as a Second Language Program provides learners with the skills they need to participate in the community, and be independent. When review-

ing grammatical tenses, they learned how to apply it in everyday conversations. In order to help the learners be an advocate for themselves, learners participated in a unit focusing on health. Learners expanded their vocabulary on illnesses, parts of the body, and medical professions. They also practiced common dialogues that one may have with a doctor, dentist or optometrist.

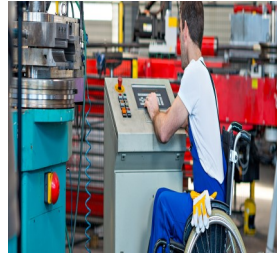
The program has undergone many changes throughout the year. In December 2021, the English as a Second Language program said goodbye to the past facilitator, Sarah Forrest, and welcomed a new facilitator into the program, Rebecca Irwin. Despite the sad goodbyes, we were fortunate that we could all come together and acknowledge the program's successes and celebrate in community different events that we missed during 2021.

## Helping Vulnerable Workers in our Community—Sharee Bhaduri

NCLC is pleased to continue helping precarious employed workers through the resolution of Wrongful Dismissal, Human Rights, Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (WSIA), Employment Standards Act, Employment Insurance, and Occupational Health and Safety Act issues. Precarious employment entails work that is part-time, on-call, agricultural/seasonal, temporary, or contract. This year we have seen an increase in requests for services by workers who have not only lost employment, but who are facing human rights issues within the workplace.

As workers continue to face challenging times there have been new legislative changes to the Employment Law world. The Ontario Government introduced *Bill 47, Making Ontario Open for Business Act, 2018*. Changes to Ontario labour and employment legislation took effect on January 1, 2019.

Some of the notable changes are the following: workers' will receive the following unpaid days: three days for "sick leave" (personal illness, injury or medical emergency); three days for family responsibility leave (illness, injury, medical emergency or other urgent matter concerning prescribed individuals); two days for bereavement leave" (related to the death of prescribed individuals). Another debatable change is that Employers may now also require employees to provide evidence for leaves, which includes providing a medical note.



Through the Temporary Foreign

workers Program, employers in Northumberland County are able to fill temporary labour and skill shortages with temporary foreign workers. These workers are often uneducated about their rights in Canada, and accept unfavorable working conditions for fear of repatriation. This is something the Legal Centre can assist with. In fact, in partnership with Horizons of Friendship, the Legal Centre has been involved in satellite clinics and monthly farm visits where we provide legal advice to migrant workers relating to Canadian Pension Plan, workers' rights, Employment Insurance etc.

Therefore, the goal at NCLC is not only provide better access to justice, but to continue in helping workers become better informed of their basic legal rights.

If you have a problem with your Employment, call the Legal Centre for assistance.

## Fundraising Report- Ashley Bouman

Fundraising has been an interesting endeavour throughout the scope of the pandemic. However, we were happy to be able to finally host an in-person Empty Bowls event on May 19, which was a great success. There was such great energy that night. Attendees were happy to be able to get out and about again, enjoy various soups and appetizers, the ambiance of the evening, a Silent Auction table with plenty of fun goodies, and of course the handcrafted bowls by local pottery artisans; Brenda Sullivan, John Bandurchin and Wendy Menary.

The event raised over \$13,000 and people are still talking about Empty Bowls several months later.

The planning for the upcoming annual Golf Tournament is underway, the event is taking place on September 13, 2022 and is honouring the memory of Doug Lloyd. While we did host

the event last year, this year's annual tournament will have a sit-down meal and Silent Auction table. Reminiscent of tournaments before the pandemic.



fundraising initiatives and making sure that donors are recognized, thanked and appreciated at regular intervals). This ties into the rebranding/communication that other committees and Board Members are working on and developing, creating a clear plan for the voice and image of the organization which will help with future fundraising initiatives. It

The Fundraising Committee currently meets once a month, and is working on a set schedule of fundraising and promotional events (such as developing a schedule for

is definitely a fun and creative process to be involved in and I am excited to see what transpires with so many gifted people involved.

There are several side projects in the work as well, such as collecting the history of The Help Centre (and later the Legal Centre) and everything that it has offered to our community in the last 25 years. We would like to make another video to see what has and has not changed since the last promotional video (from 1996). We endeavour to adhere to a schedule that promotes THLCN and information about virtual donations through our social media pages. I am honoured to have such an important role as the Fundraising and Marketing Committee Chair. I am constantly inspired and in awe of everyone who belongs to the committee and the volunteers that help with events. I want to thank everyone for their assistance as well as commitment and patience as many of our goals come to fruition.

## Energy Assistance and Money Management Programs – Karin Cummings, Senior Program Coordinator

Another busy year has passed, marking at least 10 years that we have been offering money management programs and helping to reduce energy costs. With interest rates rising, rental properties out of reach for many and the cost of living affecting everyone and making the purchase of food, fuel and everyday necessities a challenge, we have seen a vast increase in requests for financial help.

Although The Help Centre does not always have access to funds, we continue to be the Lead agency in Northumberland for Energy Assistance programs. This can take the form of a one-time LEAP grant on a past due utility bill, a monthly credit called OESP on an electricity account or advocacy with the utility company to have a deposit waived, set up an equal billing plan or a payment arrange-

ment plan. We try any measure to ensure our residents are not disconnected of life sustaining services for heating and electricity, therefore if the arrears are beyond the limits of any one program, we have been successful by collaborating with other social service agencies such as Northumberland County Social Services and Salvation Army.

As a result of the effects of Covid-19 on incomes, the Provincial Government enhanced the LEAP program to double the amount of grant given to any household and also created a grant program called CEAP (Covid Energy Assistance Program) to support residential customers who have overdue amounts on their energy bills as a result of the COVID-19 emergency. This program was effectively utilized by many Northumberland residents. In 2021/22 a total of 196 applications for assistance were completed

to make sure our low income residents continue to have uninterrupted service.

As part of the application process, a review of income and expenses is completed to identify areas that could change, to help maximize income and ensure sustainability of their households. This process naturally leads into the option to register for our Money Management program. This is a more in-depth review of spending habits and responsibilities, creating budgets, tips on how to save on expenses, debt management and how to keep within the personalized plan. Many that have taken advantage of this program feel they have a better grasp of what they are spending money on, where they can make changes and have more money left over at the end of the month. In 2021/22, a total of 272 Money Management appointments were completed.

## Seniors' Legal Needs - Marisa Conlin

The Legal Centre prioritizes helping seniors with their legal needs. We offer public legal education workshops for seniors and for people who work with seniors so that they have information about their rights and have the tools to protect themselves and their money. We assist seniors with income supports such as Ontario Disability Support Program, Canada Pension Plan Disability, Retirement and Survivor's Benefits, the Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement.



We are noticing an increased need for housing services among seniors as some landlords try to evict them in order to re-rent their homes for more money.

We also draft powers of attorney for finance and for personal care. This service is available to all of our clients, but the highest demand is from seniors.

Although we do not practice in the areas of wills and estates, we have developed partnerships so

that our clients can access services to draft their wills. We identified this as an unmet legal need, and we wanted to help seniors obtain the dignity and peace of mind that comes with having a legal will. If you or someone you know is low income and needs a will drafted, you are welcome to contact the Legal Centre to find out if you are eligible for one of our wills programs.

We would like to thank the Queen's University Elder Law Clinic, Renfrew County Legal Clinic, Alison Lester and Melanie Racine for their generous support of these programs., providing no-cost wills and powers of attorney for our clients.

## Tenant Duty Counsel Services - Sarah Cooling

Northumberland Community Legal Centre's Tenant Duty Counsel has faced their busiest year to date. NCLC's Tenant Duty Counsel Program staff assisted more tenants appearing before the Landlord and Tenant Board with their rights and responsibilities than ever before.

The Northumberland Community Legal Centre receives funding from the Advocacy Centre for Tenants in Ontario (ACTO) to provide Tenant Duty Counsel Services at all Landlord and Tenant Board hearings held in Northumberland County.

As TDC we provide a variety of services to Tenants appearing before the LTB. We provide information and legal resources, we may also provide summary advice, docu-

ment preparation, referrals and in some cases representation. Likewise, TDC often assists with negotiation and LTB Mediation.

Northumberland County stats are impressive and highlight the dedication and experience of our TDC workers.



For the period of April 2021 to March 2022 we had 264 matters on our dockets, we assisted 90 different Tenants by providing them with 513 separate legal services, addressing 264 matters, in 104 different hearing blocks. Tenants are facing increasing

pressure in the number of eviction applications filed by Landlords and we have been extremely busy as a result.

To contextualize these numbers it is important to note that these statistics represent an increase of 256.8% over the prior fiscal period in the number of cases on Northumberland's dockets, they demonstrate a 76.5% increase in the number of Tenants assisted and finally an increase of 280% in the number of services provided by our staff.

This is a phenomenal increase in the number of Northumberland Tenants dealing with matters before the Landlord and Tenant Board. In most cases eviction applications make up the bulk of these Applications.

Tenants in Northumberland County have faced a difficult year, dealing with an extraordinary number of "No Fault" evictions, leaving many Tenants homeless thru no fault of their own.

Special thanks go out to Peter Vance and Jordan Tilley for all of their hard work in assisting with the Tenant Duty Counsel Program.

We have on average been dealing with at least 2 hearing blocks a week that often last several hours to an entire day each. This is intensive work and I appreciate your assistance with the provision of TDC services.

Clients and Services for the Fiscal 2021-2022 year

Clinic	Clients served		# of services provided	
	#	%	#	%
Northumberland Community Legal Centre	90	100.0	513	100.0
Total	90	100	513	100

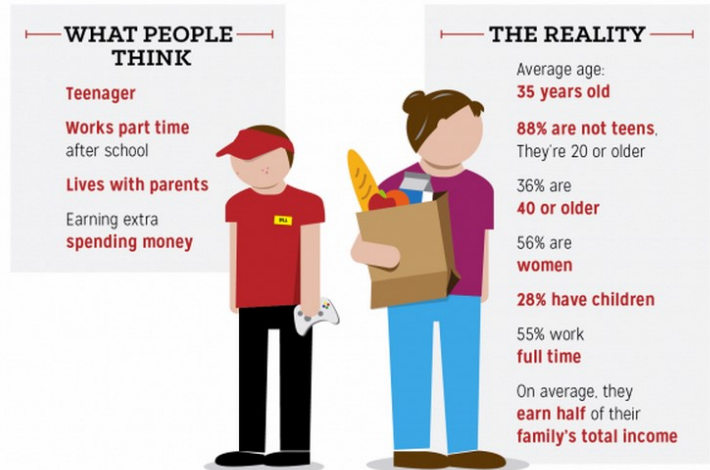
## Minimum wage increases October 1, 2022 - Sarah Cooling

On April 5, 2022, the Government of Ontario announced that the general minimum wage rate will increase to \$15.50 per hour on October 1, 2022. This increase will represent a \$0.50 increase from the \$15.00 per hour minimum wage which was implemented on January 1, 2022.

The general and specialized minimum wage rates that will take effect on October 1, 2022.

Should you have any questions regarding these new changes or any other employment related matters, please contact the Northumberland Community Legal Centre at 1-800-850-7882 or (905) 373-4464.

## WHO'S HELPED BY RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE?



The Help and Legal Centre of Northumberland invites you to our:

### Annual General Meeting

**When:** Tuesday September 20, 2022 at 5 pm  
**Where:** St. Peter's Church, 240 College Street,  
 Cobourg, Ontario

**\*\*FREE BBQ STARTING AT 5 P.M.AND GIVEAWAYS TOO!**

All are welcome – Light refreshments will be served  
 For more information please call the: Legal Centre at: 905-373-4464 or 1-800-850-7882 or the Help Centre at: 905-372-2646 or 1-888-698-3382



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**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  
Fax: 905-372-2205



**United Way**  
Northumberland



**Northumberland  
county**



**United Way**  
of Greater Simcoe County



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