



Annual Report of Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City Inc. (CLASSIC) 2010-11

123 20th Street West, Saskatoon, SK, S7M 0W7, Tel. 657-6100, Fax. 384-0520

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of CLASSIC is to provide free legal assistance to low-income members of the community, with particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal people, through a legal clinic that meets their needs. CLASSIC also provides law students with clinical experience, new insights into the social reality of the law, and fosters ethics of social justice and cultural understanding.

PROGRAMMING

CLASSIC fulfills its mandate primarily through the **Walk-In Advocacy Clinic (WAC)**. Under the supervision of a staff lawyer, students from the College of Law, University of Saskatchewan assist low-income clients with legal matters that affect them, such as landlord-tenant, income support, criminal, immigration and refugee, Small Claims Court, Indian Residential School matters, and more. Since the WAC opened in February 2007, its services have assisted **1,443 low-income clients** and their families.

I am very grateful for the respect I was shown and the outcome of the hearing has renewed my outlook about the justice system.

- CLASSIC Client

During 2010-11, the WAC served **365 low-income clients**. While this is not an increase from the previous year, the quality of work and supervision of files has greatly increased with having two full-time Supervising Lawyers. This is reflected in the number of successes, as well as in hard numbers monetarily. The demand for CLASSIC's services is constant, so CLASSIC applies a prioritising method to determine those most in need are assisted. At April 1, 2009, the WAC was serving 134 clients at a time; by March 31, 2011, the WAC was serving approximately 235 clients.



Left: Student Manager David Zeggelaar, and Associate Student Manager Chris Davison

During 2010-11 WAC student advocates and legal staff made **400 appearances in courts** (313 in Provincial Court civil and criminal divisions, traffic and bylaw court, as well as appeals in the Court of Queen's Bench) and **in tribunals** (87 in Office of the Residential Tenancies, Board of Referees, Office of the Commissioner of Review Tribunals, Workers Compensation Board, and more). CLASSIC students appeared an average of 33.25 times a month!

WAC clients are diverse in age, gender and ethnicity. The WAC project is meeting its goal of prioritizing the legal needs of Aboriginal people (51% of the WAC's clientele are of Aboriginal ancestry). Below is statistical information about the WAC's clientele for 2010-11:

Ethnic Background		Gender		Age Range	
Status	34.25%	Female	49.59%	Under 20	6.03%
Non-Status	7.87%	Male	51.41%	20-29	22.74%
Métis	8.77%			30-39	20.55%
Immigrant/	12.33%			40-49	22.19%
Non-Native	36.71%			50-59	16.44%
Unknown	.27%			60-69	7.4%
				70 & Over	4.11%

WAC advocacy has **improved clients' lives in very tangible ways**. In 2010-11, WAC student advocates saved tenancies, obtained compensation for poor living conditions, drafted wills and healthcare directives, obtained rehabilitative sentences, and much more. In civil claims and income support matters, WAC advocacy helped clients **obtain** \$51,106.87 in compensation and income support. Further, WAC clients **retained** \$61,525.11 in compensation they would have had to pay or income support they would lose, but for the WAC's advocacy. This is a total of **\$112,631.98** into the pockets of low-income community members! This is over \$26,000 more than the previous year – numbers which show the quality of work staff and students have put into the files and lives of clients.

CLASSIC enjoys tremendous support from the **legal community**. This year, **19 lawyers** volunteered to **mentor law students** placed in the WAC. CLASSIC receives particular support from firms such as McKercher LLP which is not only well-represented among our mentor lawyers, but also placed offered their articling student **Tim Froese**, with the WAC during 2010-11 exam periods. As well, Miller Thompson (formerly Balfour Moss LLP) showed support in their articling student **Troy Baril**.

*Approachability, thoroughness and clarity – an unbeatable combination.
Professional and discreet. Thank you for your stellar service.*

- CLASSIC Client

CLASSIC also facilitates the **Legal Advice Clinic (LAC)** through which low-income clients receive free legal advice and guidance from practicing lawyers in the areas of criminal, family and civil law.

The LAC is the only free legal clinic in Saskatoon; CLASSIC works in partnership with Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan (PBLs) to provide this program. Since its inception, the LAC has assisted over 1,300 low-income community members. During 2010-11, the LAC assisted **309 clients**: 57% of the clients received family law advice, 29% received civil law advice, and 13% received criminal law advice. 1% of clients needed assistance on Immigration issues. The LAC provides vital support to low-income individuals who are self-represented through justice systems.

The LAC is coordinated and supported by volunteer students from the College of Law. In 2010-11, **Léa Lapointe** and **Amanda Baron** served as coordinators and **fourteen law students** facilitated the clinic. **Seventeen lawyers** provided free legal advice at LAC clinics. CLASSIC deeply appreciated the work of

their volunteer lawyers, such as **Don McIver**, **Jeff Howe** and **Terry Zakreski**, some of the LAC's most dedicated and longest serving lawyers.

Thanks to the dedication of the LAC's volunteers, the LAC program expanded in 2010. CLASSIC increased its clinic hours to Tuesday and Thursday's and added the specialty clinics of employment law and immigration law. In April 2011, CLASSIC moved out of the WBYL after four amazing years, and to retain this partnership, WBYL agreed to retain the LAC out of their space.



Left to Right: Dorion Brady, Barb Fisher-Brass, Nicholas Blenkinsop, Amanda Dodge, Rebecca Wood, Kiera Neufeld, Lierin Mulder. **Front:** Deb Andrade and Merle Tanton

COMMUNITY

CLASSIC receives amazing support from the community. CLASSIC works in partnership with and receives considerable support from the College of Law and the White Buffalo Youth Lodge (WBYL).

During 2010-11, CLASSIC staff and students met with representatives from **over 30 community agencies** and represented CLASSIC at about **a dozen community events** to share information about CLASSIC. CLASSIC has received very positive feedback from its community partners about our services.

CLASSIC is grateful for the community agencies that refer clients to us, such as: the Saskatoon Open Door Society, SWITCH, the Friendship Inn, and Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI). Every time we are out in the community we hear how another agency has directed clients our way, or how they have just heard of us, and couldn't be happier there is a program like CLASSIC out there.

CLASSIC partnered with community organizations on **legal education projects**, including the Elizabeth Fry Society, Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre, AIDS Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre, and the Open Door Society to name a few. Students delivered presentations to community members in the areas of tenants' rights, human rights in the workplace, wills and powers of attorney, custody and access, youth criminal justice, social assistance recipients and appeal rights, and mental health warrants. CLASSIC very often relies on the Public Legal Education Association (PLEA) which provides accessible legal education materials in all of these topic areas.

People find CLASSIC's services valuable and see positive benefits.

CLASSIC is able to answer people's questions in an accessible manner.

– STC Urban Justice



Left: 2010-2011 CLASSIC summer students, hanging by the “freewall” behind the White Buffalo Youth Lodge.

Left to right: Gillian Gough, Chelsea Sutherland, Christopher Terepocki, David Zeggelaar, Ammy Murray, and Lana Morelli.

STUDENTS

CLASSIC is encouraged to see growing engagement of students at the College of Law. During 2010-11, CLASSIC welcomed its **highest number of law student volunteers ever, 75**. Students come to CLASSIC in two ways: participation in the College’s clinical law course and the Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC) program.

Sarah Buhler continued teaching the clinical and advanced clinical law courses, through which over 20 students examine issues and critical literature related to poverty law and work with clients of the WAC. For the 2010-11 academic year, Sarah was hired on by the College of Law as a dedicated full-time professor for the clinical program.

PBSC has continued to be an important partner for CLASSIC, recruiting and placing approximately 65 law student volunteers throughout CLASSIC’s WAC and LAC programs, as well as manual writing and legal education project work.

CLASSIC continues to place inter-disciplinary students who support and strengthen our programs in a myriad of ways. During 2010-11, CLASSIC placed social work practicum student, **Hayley Petrow**, and Political Studies intern **David Lychak**. City Centre Life Skills Aboriginal community outreach volunteer **Julie Paul** assisted in research, and recording CLASSIC success stories.

I cannot imagine who I would be as a law student and future lawyer without the clinic. CLASSIC has instilled in me a sense of responsibility to continue to fight for access to justice. - CLASSIC student

Right: Social Work practicum student Hayley Petrow



CLASSIC students report very positive experiences from their placements at CLASSIC. The students describe how their experiences teach them about the realities of those living in poverty, as well as the value of putting their legal training in action by helping others. Hayley noted working at CLASSIC gave her a chance to learn about various agencies, and learned to work outside of her comfort zone to assist those who needed information which she feels will greatly help her in her future career.

2010-2011 Board of Directors

Mike Tanton, *Chair and Community Representative*
Professor Glen Luther Q.C., *Vice-Chair and College of Law Representative*
Professor Tim Quigley, *Treasurer and College of Law Representative*
Micah Chartrand, *Secretary and Student Representative*

Haidah Amirzadeh, *Private Bar Representative*
Evelyn Anderson, *Legal Aid Saskatchewan Representative*
Maria Campbell, *Advising Elder*
Felix Chen, *Community Representative*
Lori Johnstone-Clarke, *Indigenous Bar Representative*
Louise Oelke, *CUMFI Representative*
Aaron Starr, *Aboriginal Student Representative*
Darlene Speidel, *Community Representative*

Professional and Community Advisory Board

Patricia Cook
Silas Halyk Q.C.
John Hampton
John Lagimodiere
Gary Merasty
Michelle Ouellette Q.C.
David Stack
Mary Tastad
F. Neil Turcotte
Donald Worme Q.C.



Left: 2010 CLASSIC Board of Directors.

Left to Right: Chair Mike Tanton, Lori Johnstone-Clarke, Louise Oelke, Aaron Staff, Haidah Amirzadeh.

Front: Darlene Speidel and Maria Campbell.

STAFF

During 2010-11, CLASSIC's student managers were **Gillian Gough** and **Christopher Terepocki**. They served on CLASSIC's 2010 summer staff with case workers **David Zeggelaar**, **Ammy Murray**, **Chelsea Sutherland** and **Lana Morelli**. In July 2010, CLASSIC welcomed new Executive Director **Dorion Brady** who took over from **Amanda Dodge** who stayed on with CLASSIC in her new position as CLASSIC's second Supervising Lawyer alongside **Nicholas Blenkinsop**. This year **Lierin Mulder** continued as Administrative Assistant and **Betty Beaton** as Office Manager.



Left: Supreme Court Justice Thomas Cromwell with Clinical Law Professor Sarah Buhler and Board Secretary Micah Chartrand, February 9th, 2011.

FUNDING

CLASSIC is grateful for the generous financial support it received during the 2010-11 fiscal year. Our funders included the Law Foundation of Saskatchewan, the University of Saskatchewan, the Ministry of Justice, the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, the Community Initiatives Fund, the City of Saskatoon, Student Summer Works, Canada Summer Jobs, and individual donors.

CLASSIC also received generous in kind donations and support, in particular from our partners the College of Law and the WBYL.

In January 2011, CLASSIC attended the second annual **Gown to Gown Annual Lawyers' Charity Gala**, held in Regina, Saskatchewan hosted by Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan. This fundraiser for PBLs was sponsored by the Canadian Bar Association, the Law Society of Saskatchewan and the College of Law. We were delighted to attend on behalf of CLASSIC, and to support Executive Director Kara-Dawn Jordan. CLASSIC and PBLs alternate hosting this event, and look forward to 2012 when CLASSIC hosts it in Saskatoon again.

The Board and staff are very grateful to the many individuals and organizations have supported CLASSIC and enabled us to meet the needs of our community. Thank you especially to our dedicated and hard working volunteers who are the hands and hearts of our service to the community.

June 2011