

OCTOBER 2022

Community Legal Education Association

Fall Newsletter



President's Message

Sarah Thurmeier

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Dear Friends of CLEA,

The Board, together with CLEA's staff, continues to further our work in providing timely information and resources to those who contact our organization.

After a short break over the summer months, CLEA's Board of Directors and committees are back at work. We held our strategic planning session on October 15, 2022, which will provide the Board and the organization as a whole with new goals and clear direction as we approach CLEA's 40th anniversary year in 2024.

We are excited to have several new directors on the board this year, who have brought with them a wealth of experience, ideas, and enthusiasm.

Special thanks must be extended to CLEA's staff, who on a daily basis ensure that our mandate is met. As well, we offer our deepest gratitude to the members of the legal community who volunteer their services and our funders who continue to support CLEA's endeavours.

I encourage you to continue to check our website for further details about our 40th anniversary year, as well as our available programs and resources.

**Unknown Rights
are
Not Rights
At All!**



Board of Directors

Sarah Thurmeier, *President*
Melissa Serbin, *Vice-President*
Mary-Ellen Wayne, *Secretary*
Alex Morton, *Treasurer*
Eldene Spencer
Gabriel Chung
Carson Chen
Katherine Olson
Karen Dyck
Brenlee Carrington Trepel, K.C.
Norman Yusim

Staff

Mary Troszko, *Executive Director*
Jennifer Dunik, *Law Phone-In Supervisor*
Charlene Thomas, *Law Phone-In Lawyer*
Brendon Yarish, *Legal Writer*
Victoria Weir, *WSH Program Coordinator*
Carlyn Sarna, *WSH Hotline Lawyer*
Nina Holatova, *Project Coordinator*
Lori Colquhoun, *VIPV Lawyer*

Project Updates

Law Phone-in and Lawyer Referral Update (Jan. 1, 2022 - Sept. 30, 2022)

We have received 6,955 inquiries to the end of September this year. We continue to receive more referrals from government offices, agencies, non-profit organizations, law enforcement, courts, and lawyers than ever before. Not all individuals inform us when they have been referred to our program from an outside source, but so far 2,303 callers this year have reported being referred to our program for assistance with their matter.

90 callers were referred from Employment Standards Branch, Manitoba Labour Board, and Workplace Safety and Health. Residential Tenancies Branch referred 38 callers and the Consumer Protection Office referred 35 callers. The Ombudsman referred an additional 21 callers. A notable increase is the number of referrals that we are receiving from law enforcement agencies, including the RCMP and Winnipeg Police Service. They have sent 30 individuals to the Law Phone-in Program for assistance with criminal matters.

While Family Law calls remain the majority of calls at 1,951 (28%), Civil Litigation calls, including Small Claims, have steadily increased to 823 (12%) so far this year. Calls about wills and estates remain frequent with 745 (11%) of callers having questions in this area of law. There have been some significant changes to the law in civil litigation and estates this year to explain to callers, including a new *Limitations Act* and new estate forms and Rules for probate and administration.

Inquiries from self-represented individuals are set to hit a new high with 403 contacts so far this year until the end of September.

Thank You to our Funders:

Core Funders:

Department of Justice Canada
Manitoba Law Foundation
Law Society of Manitoba

Project Funder:

Department of Justice Canada

Conversion therapy (CT) is the practice of trying to change someone's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. It means trying to turn a gay or bisexual person straight, or trying to force a person to identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.

CONVERSION THERAPY IS ILLEGAL IN CANADA.

Community Legal Education Association
Law Phone-In and Lawyer Referral Program
204-943-2305 or 1-800-262-8800 (toll-free outside Winnipeg)
communitylegal.mb.ca
Project funded by Justice Canada - Victims Fund

Publications

Since our last update, we have added five new videos to our YouTube page. These cover the family triage system, real estate law for first time home buyers, and rights upon detention, as well as two panel discussions: one about family law from this year's Annual Law Conference and one about law as a career.

We have added four new case summaries to our website. Three are recent criminal law cases. The fourth is a recent case about negligence liability for government bodies, and is the first in a new Civil Litigation case summaries category.

We have created a brochure, poster, fact sheet, and video for Justice Canada's conversion therapy project. All of these are currently undergoing review.

In response to misinformation we saw surrounding last year's vaccination and lockdown protests, we have added several new questions to our FAQ section. These can be found in two new categories, "Protests" and "Government". We now have 670 questions on our FAQ page.

Victims of Intimate Partner Violence Project

Our Victims of Intimate Partner Violence Project is in the midst of a busy fall season.

We continue our efforts to put information about IPV related legal topics into the hands of those who need it most. As our virtual sessions have rolled out, we are grateful to the people working with agencies throughout Manitoba for sharing details of their programming needs and for hosting our webinars.

We have been pleased to arrange presentations with open registration as well as in-house training for groups with specific needs. This would not be possible without the highly qualified professionals who have engaged with us and so generously offered their time to develop and present material within their fields of expertise.

Our endeavours extend to organizing education for those members of the legal profession who assist survivors. This includes instruction surrounding trauma-informed practise and domestic violence awareness.

Workplace Sexual Harassment Hotline Update

The Workplace Sexual Harassment Hotline has been operating since January 2020. Between January 2022 and the end of September 2022 the hotline has received over 160 calls and emails from clients. The hotline provides callers the opportunity to speak directly to a lawyer about their legal matter. From there, clients are directed to the appropriate resource to help them with their legal matter. These resources range from government agencies, non-profit organizations or referrals to one of the lawyers on our Lawyer Referral panel. In addition to providing legal information and referrals about sexual harassment and employment law, many of the calls also include issues such as sexual violence, domestic violence and stalking.

In addition to the hotline, the sexual harassment staff lawyer has also participated in presentations to educate the public about employment law and workplace sexual harassment.

Family Law Project

In 2022, our Family Law Project funded by Justice Canada has continued. We have worked with numerous organizations across Manitoba, including public libraries, women's shelters, and settlement services agencies to deliver legal education webinars about family law. There have been 16 presentations so far in 2022, with hundreds of attendees from across the province. Through this project, we have been able to give both service providers and members of the public the information and tools necessary to support an understanding of family law in Manitoba.



Like & follow our new Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/CommunityLegalMB>

Workplace Sexual Harassment Project Update

2022 has continued to be a strong year for CLEA's Workplace Sexual Harassment Project. So far this year, we have delivered 23 workshops in collaboration with 10 partner organizations across the province, reaching around 350 participants. Another 6 workshops are planned between October and December.

We have also continued to distribute copies of our free educational materials, including a brochure and an informational bookmark. These materials are being used by organizations across Manitoba to raise awareness of the right to work in an environment free from harassment, and to promote CLEA's WSH hotline.

If you are interested in planning a free workshop for your community or organization, or in ordering free informational materials, please contact our Program Coordinator, Victoria, at vweir@communitylegal.mb.ca.

New Board Members

Karen Dyck

Karen Dyck was appointed the Chief Appeal Commissioner of The Appeal Commission in 2019. In that role, she leads a tribunal of 18 commissioners and adjudicates appeals under *The Workers Compensation Act* and *The Victims Bill of Rights*.

Karen has practiced law in Manitoba since 1993, after graduating from Robson Hall at the University of Manitoba. In her career, she has worked in a range of legal and non-governmental organizations, including with CLEA, the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, The Law Society of Manitoba, the Manitoba Law Foundation and the Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry and is the founding Executive Director of Legal Help Centre of Winnipeg.

Karen lives in rural Manitoba with her husband, daughter and two dogs.

Alex Morton

Alex is a Chartered Professional Accountant with a decade of experience, currently working as the Assistant Controller at Fillmore Riley LLP in Winnipeg. He has four years of previous board experience as the Treasurer of Alpha House Project, a not-for-profit organization and second-stage shelter for women and children leaving abusive relationships.

Katie Olson

Katie Olson is an Associate with Cochrane Saxberg LLP, practising in the areas of Labour and Employment law, Civil Litigation, and Indigenous law.

Katie has been involved with access to justice initiatives for over five years with organizations such as Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties and the Legal Help Centre. Katie joined the CLEA Board in January, 2022 and is an avid supporter of the Organization's mission.

Outside of work, Katie enjoys spending time with her dog, trying new restaurants or travelling.

Brenlee Carrington Trepel

Brenlee Carrington Trepel, K.C. is past Chairperson of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission. As the first Equity Ombudsperson for the Law Society of Manitoba, her mandate was to educate the legal profession and its clients on workplace human rights issues and to resolve individual cases. She also initiated the development of a boundaries education and training program for lawyers. In addition to being a frequent presenter, she has written and published more than 70 articles for the legal profession.

She has been recognized by LEAF National as one of 25 women lawyers in Canada who have made a positive difference through the law, through mentorship, their legal practice or the advancement of women's equality, and won both the Manitoba Bar Association's Equality Award and Community Involvement Award as well as the Law Society of Manitoba's A. Montague Israels Q.C. Prize.

Earlier this year, she was appointed a King's Counsel and in 2019 she was presented with the Volunteer Manitoba William Norrie Volunteer award, and she was a sessional instructor of the Legal Methods course for 9 years for the University of Manitoba Faculty of Law.

Norm Yusim

With over four decades of experience as a family law lawyer, Norm guides clients through all aspects of family transition, including separation and divorce, custody matters, child and spousal support and family property accountings and division. Norm sat on the Law Society of Manitoba President's Special Committee on Regulating Legal Entities and he is on the board of Family Arbitration and Mediation Institute Inc. (FAMLI). He regularly lectures for Community Legal Education Association (CLEA). He currently sits on the board of CLEA. Norm and a close-knit group of Robson Hall alumni who graduated in 1980 created a bursary for Indigenous law students attending the Faculty of Law at the University of Manitoba which will become available in the fall of 2023.