

Annual Report

2009



**Edmonton
Community
Legal Centre**

It is my pleasure and honour to provide this message in my capacity as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Centre. Last year marked a significant milestone in the development of our Centre. We now occupy wonderful space in the core of downtown giving ready and visible access to our clients, our staff and volunteer lawyers. Our new premises do much to increase the profile of the Centre's importance for people in need in Edmonton and surrounding areas.

We have an excellent Executive Director in Debbie Klein, and equally excellent staff. On behalf of the Board of Director I extend our sincere appreciation to all of our staff for their commitment and service. It certainly makes our job easier as volunteer Board members!

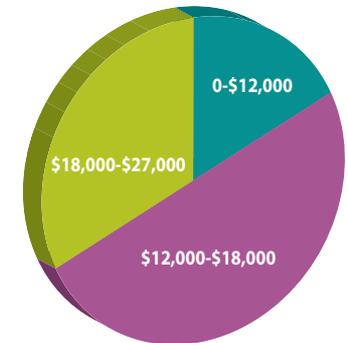
The past year was also marked by important support from all of our funders, and especially the Alberta Law Foundation. Without their support, the work of the Centre would simply not be possible. Access to justice extends beyond mere words and into action evidenced by the support of our funders and our many volunteers. As a member of the legal profession, I am proud that many law firms in Edmonton have made significant financial contributions to support the Centre.

The Board of Directors of the Centre has begun an advocacy program. We are conscious that advocacy activities must be balanced, and focused on contributing in a constructive way to considerations of access to justice for persons in need through our unique experience in serving that population.

I would like to close by saying that we are fortunate to have an excellent board of directors which is broad-based, and includes strong non-lawyer representation. I look forward to the Centre's continuing development over the next year.

our financial supporters

- Alberta Law Foundation
- Alberta Employment and Immigration (STEP)
- Alberta Solicitor General
- Alberta Culture and Community Spirit
- Alumni and Friends of the Faculty of Law Association
- Bennett Jones LLP
- Bishop & McKenzie LLP
- Brownlee LLP
- City of Edmonton
- Corbenfield Investments
- Davis LLP
- Douglas Mah
- Duncan & Craig LLP
- Edmonton Community Foundation
- Emery Jamieson LLP
- Field LLP
- Fraser Milner Casgrain LLP
- Joanne Pawluk
- John Henderson
- Kim Wakefield
- Lyle Brookes
- McLennan Ross LLP
- Miller Thompson LLP
- Ogilvie LLP
- Parlee McLaws LLP
- Penny Frederiksen
- Union 52 Benevolent Society
- Witten LLP



Client Annual Income

It was very reassuring and comforting to meet the volunteer lawyer. My heartfelt appreciation to the lawyer and the organization.

A group of temporary foreign workers was recruited in the Philippines to work in the Canadian restaurant industry. The night before they left for Canada, the workers were required to sign a series of documents: "Indemnification Agreement," "Authorized Payroll Deduction," "Declaration and Undertaking" and "Lease Agreement". The recruiter would not release the workers' passports and airline tickets to them until they had signed these documents.

Upon arrival in Canada, the workers were settled in premises provided by the recruiter through a numbered Alberta company. Shortly thereafter, they were required to sign documents that authorized specific monthly rental amounts to be deducted from their wages. This was the first time that the workers were made aware of the actual amount of the monthly rent payable to the landlord.

Although they signed the payroll deduction documents, they protested the amounts as being higher than what they had been told. Further, the workers soon discovered that the premises were located in an area of the city that made it difficult to commute to their place of employment due to the lack of regular public transit, which was available only during peak hours. On several occasions, the workers had to walk over an hour to or from work for early morning or late night shifts. After approximately four months at these premises, the workers found alternative accommodations that were less expensive, more accessible and closer to their place of employment. They moved out of the premises after giving approximately one month's notice to the landlord.

The landlord sued the workers for the remainder of the rent under the two-year term.

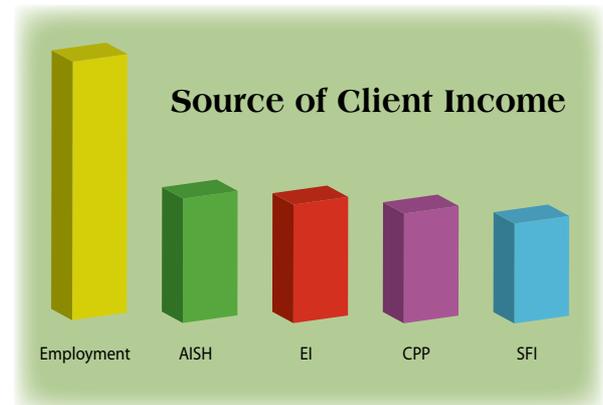
The landlord argued that although there was not one document establishing the terms of the lease with the workers, taken together, the documents the workers signed evidenced an agreement for a two-year lease of the premises.

At trial, the ECLC argued that the documents the workers signed did not constitute a valid lease, either separately or together, and that at no time did the workers agree to all of the basic terms required of all residential tenancies leases (the premises, the rent, and the duration).

The Trial Judge found that the documents the workers signed, even when considered together, did not constitute a valid lease. The case against the workers was dismissed with costs.

Over the past six or so years, I have been involved with the Edmonton Community Legal Centre in various capacities - as a law student, volunteer, and summer staff member. Over that time, I have seen the ECLC grow before my eyes into a social and legal pillar of the Edmonton community. I have been uniquely privileged to see how the immense dedication of the ECLC staff to low-income Edmontonians has provided those who would not otherwise be able to access much needed social and legal assistance a warm, welcoming, and highly competent environment in which to do so. I have seen how the law impacts people's lives and I have learnt valuable lessons that will inevitably shape my future professional and personal life. I am truly indebted to the ECLC for each and every opportunity it has afforded me - past, present, and future.

Alex Rozmus



What an exciting year 2009 has been! As a result of increases in funding, office space, and personnel, combined with the dedicated service of our board, volunteers, and staff, the ECLC experienced significant growth in 2009, enabling us to provide free legal services and access to justice to twice as many people than in 2008.

We were gratified by the confidence and support demonstrated by the Alberta Law Foundation in funding a move to new premises in the spring of 2009. Our new office is located in the heart of downtown Edmonton, with convenient access and transportation for our clients, and in close proximity to the offices of most of our volunteer lawyers and to the Law Courts Building.

We anticipated a gradual expansion of services and personnel in office space over twice as large as in our previous location. Instead, we were able to capitalize on offers of daytime volunteer assistance, and our offices were quickly occupied. 43 daytime volunteers, most of them law students, helped with ECLC service delivery in 2009, triple the number in 2008. Our new location provided double the number of clinic offices, and with 30% more volunteer lawyers, the ECLC evening clinics assisted 119% more clients than in 2008.

We employed our first articling student for a two-month articling rotation beginning in July; a new satellite legal clinic opened in Millwoods in September; we were grateful for the financial support received from 14 law firms, eight community and government agencies, and six individuals in 2009.

We said farewell to three long-time staff and board members in 2009: Dianne Henderson retired in June of 2009 after a long association with the ECLC, most recently as the Volunteer/Program Coordinator. Marcel Labbe and Penny Frederiksen, both original ECLC board members, concluded their service to the board. Thanks to all of you for your commitment and dedication, and for your foresight in helping to establish the ECLC as the vibrant agency it is today.

volunteer contribution

Volunteers are essential to the successful operation of the Edmonton Community Legal Centre. Volunteers are involved in all aspects of service delivery, both behind the scenes and directly with clients. 151 volunteers were part of the ECLC team in 2009, contributing in excess of 4000 hours. 103 lawyers volunteered with the ECLC in 2009, a 30% increase over 2008 numbers. Evening clinic lawyers provided summary legal advice to over 1400 low-income Edmontonians, and resource lawyers provided support and expertise to ECLC staff lawyers in their work with clients. We would like to offer a special thanks to those lawyers and firms who took on pro bono files, providing follow-up advice and representation beyond the evening clinics. We were especially fortunate this year to have a number of non-practicing lawyers working alongside our staff team during the day, providing assistance to clients.

In addition to volunteer lawyers, 48 volunteers from a variety of backgrounds assisted the ECLC in 2009. Evening clinic receptionists ensured that clients were prepared for their appointments with volunteer lawyers. A volunteer librarian organized our on-site legal library. Law students volunteered one half-day each week, providing legal research and administrative support to the staff lawyers, and representing clients at hearings. Social work and legal assistant practicum students assisted with casework support and file management. Administrative volunteers assisted with organizational management.

Behind the scenes, 13 ECLC board members worked to develop an ECLC advocacy plan, raise the profile of the ECLC within the legal community, generate new sources of funding, and represent the ECLC at community events.

The Edmonton Community Legal Centre, on behalf of the clients who seek access to justice, is deeply appreciative of the generous donation of time and service from all of our volunteers.

Helping people with low income to find solutions to their legal problems.

our volunteers

Asifa Akbar
 Rachael Anderson
 Rachel Bailie
 Helen Banks
 Samerah Barrett
 Laura Berezan
 Janelle Bonkowsky
 Donna Cadiente
 Melinda Chalifoux
 Devinn Connolly
 Alex Dimitroff
 Alexandra Gousseva
 Claudette Hargreaves
 Taha Hassan
 Lyndsey Henderson
 Nausheen Husain
 James Kadavil
 Kim Kapesi-Miller
 Kimberley Ketsa
 Anna Kuranicheva
 Matt LaFleche

Jennifer Locke
 Nitu Malhotra
 Amelia Martin
 Bilkis Mortuza
 Lelia Munoz
 Dev Nanda
 Holly Norwig
 Min Pei
 Catrinel Popescu
 Lumii Pungea Stanescu
 Alex Rozmus
 Vani Selvarajah
 Milan Sharma
 Andrea Simmonds
 Anna Sledziecka
 Jonathon Song
 Tiffany Stokes
 Brittney Thompson
 Robin Verughese
 Nancy Villegas
 Ariel Wiebe
 Keenan Woods

Volunteer Lawyers

Joanne Archibald
 Carl Argo
 Yoko Azumaya
 Andrew Bachelder
 Terri Badiou
 Chelsey Bailey
 Andreea Bandol
 David Barker
 Kelsey Becker Brookes
 Christine Bishop
 Jason Bodnar
 Doris Bonora
 Jeff Bone
 Laura Bowman
 Lyle Brookes
 Stewart Brownlee
 Yessy Byl
 Arman Chak
 Vanessa Cosco
 Donald Cranston
 Elise Currie-Roberts
 Wendy Danson
 Karen Davison
 Jose Delgado
 Mark Dolgoy
 Sarah Dolgoy
 Christine Enns
 Jon Faulds
 Nigel Forster
 D.K. Fraser
 Penny Frederiksen
 Kismet Fung
 Christina Gauk
 Bob Gillespie

Ron Haggett
 Greg Heinrichs
 Chris Holmes
 Ron Hopp
 Allyson Jeffs
 Michelle Kai
 Ritu Khullar
 Jeananne Kirwin
 Dale Knisely
 Brent Kornack
 Jeremiah Kowalchuck
 Bryan Kwan
 Julie Lee
 Julie Lloyd
 Brian Loewen
 Anne Magusin
 Douglas Mah
 Scott McAnsh
 Dave McCaughen
 Ross McLeod
 Carman McNary
 Sheila McNaughtan
 Naz Mellick
 Kim Melnyk
 Dan Morrow
 Christine Murray
 Jim Neilson
 Angus Ng
 Vince Ng
 Meagan Nieman
 Erika Norheim
 Omolara Oladipo
 Crista Osualdini
 Don Padgett

Janine Pajkowski
 Rakhi Pancholi
 Patricia Paradis
 Lynn Parish
 Bonnie Parker
 Dawn Pentelechuk
 Nicole Pfeifer
 Nathan Po
 Greg Pratch
 Christine Pratt
 Matt Pruski
 Michael Pucylo
 Dave Purewall
 Sharon Roberts
 Terryl Rostad
 Howard Samoilo
 Kari Sejr
 Keith Shustov
 Greg Sim
 Sean Smith
 Warren Smith
 Marc Song
 Eric Spink
 Shayna Staniloff
 Vivian Stevenson
 Brian Summers
 Michael Teeling
 Wendy Thiessen
 Michael Tilleard
 Alex Varela
 Hugh Willis
 Rod Wood
 Simon Yu

Clinic Services		
	2009	2002 to 2009
Volunteer Hours	3578	8841
Clients Served	1409	6263
Volunteers	144	543

Thank you for your prompt response to my legal problems. The information and time spent was very helpful and beneficial to me in sorting out the avenues I should pursue. The staff at ECLC should be complimented on the way they conduct service to the public. That, combined with all the volunteer efforts, make the ECLC a valuable part of Edmonton.

ECLC Client

our staff

Administrative Coordinator
Catherine Tan

Articling Student
Scott Hammond

*Foreign Worker
Program Coordinator*
Susan Wood

Intake Coordinator
Jackie L'Hirondelle

Legal Assistant
Sandra Gmeiner

Legal Researchers
Deborah Alessandro
Alex Rozmus
Andrea Simmonds

Outreach Worker
Shelley McGowan

Social Worker
Sonia Melgar

Staff Lawyers
Sarah Eadie
Scott Hammond
Tim Patterson

Volunteer Coordinators
Dianne Henshaw
Andrea Simmonds
Jordan Reiniger

Executive Director
Debbie Klein

our board

Donald Cranston, QC, *Chair* Bennett Jones LLP
Michael Phair, *Vice Chair* University of Alberta
Roger Rosychuk, *Treasurer* City of Edmonton
Christine Pratt, *Secretary* Field LLP
Yessy Byl, Pro Bono Lawyer
Lanny Der, Alberta Aboriginal Relations
Peter Faid, Community Services Consulting Ltd.
Jon Faulds, QC, Field LLP
Marie Gordon, QC, Gordon Zwaenepoel
Allyson Jeffs, Ackroyd LLP
James McGinnis, Parlee McLaws LLP
Joanne Pawluk, Consultant
Brian Summers, Fraser Milner Casgrain LLP

A pro bono legal clinic serving low income Edmontonians.

our process

The ECLC is unique in its holistic approach to legal problems, situating the individual and family within the broader picture of their financial, personal, and social circumstances.

All clients have an initial interview with a social worker who assists them to identify if they have a legal concern and provides appropriate referrals and information.

Clients receive legal information and advice at no cost from a volunteer lawyer at an evening legal clinic. Volunteer lawyers may refer clients with complex legal issues for further follow-up or free legal representation by an ECLC staff lawyer.

The volunteer lawyers and staff lawyers work in partnership with staff client support professionals and daytime volunteers to identify and address social and personal factors that may have contributed to the legal problem. This multi-disciplinary approach facilitates client access to community resources and service providers, expands opportunities for the negotiation of non-legal remedies, and ensures skilled guidance in the handling of disputes.

Statement of financial position

Assets	2009	2008
Current	258,859	311,348
Equipment	129,385	10,863
	388,244	322,211
Liabilities		
Current	88,536	193,570
Deferred contributions (equipment)	116,084	4,614
	204,620	198,184
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	170,323	117,778
Invested in equipment	13,301	6,249
	183,624	124,027
	388,244	322,211

year ended December 31, 2009

Statement of operations

Revenue	2009	2008
Grants, fundraising, donations	1,058,877	755,996
Interest	2,214	1,965
	1,061,091	757,961
Expenses		
Consulting fees	13,158	48,274
Facility costs	179,037	71,820
Office supplies and equipment	66,898	44,966
Program costs	49,635	44,632
Salaries and benefits	692,766	528,790
	1,001,494	738,482
Revenue over expenses	59,597	19,479

year ended December 31, 2009

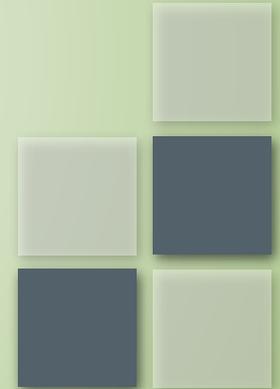
65% of ECLC clients had legal problems relating to employment, immigration or landlord-tenant matters in 2009.

15 staff, 15 Board members, and 144 volunteers provided service to 7547 low-income Edmontonians.

ECLC staff provided follow-up support, advice, or representation on 1097 files in 2009.

our mission

The Edmonton Community Legal Centre provides effective advocacy and access to justice in a supportive environment to persons living with low income.



Edmonton
Community
Legal Centre

our office

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