

A Word For Justice



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Tel: 604.878.7400

1-877-762-6664

www.accessjustice.ca

*We've Been Helping People in
Western Canada Since 1990.*

ACCESS JUSTICE RECEIVES RECOGNITION AT NATIONAL PRO BONO CONFERENCE

Access Justice was pleased to be a full participant at the recent National Pro Bono Conference in Vancouver on September 15 to 19. We congratulate the Pro Bono Law of BC Society and its provincial counterparts from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario for a

very successful conference. We were also extremely gratified to have our work mentioned in the keynote opening address by the Right Honorable Chief Justice of Canada Beverley McLachlin.

The commendation is a nationwide recognition

of excellence for Access Justice, its host agencies, and hundreds of lawyer and non-lawyer volunteers.

On Monday, September 15, six Access Justice volunteer lawyers participated in an open-air legal advice clinic at Victory Square in Vancouver and provided legal help to

a total of 24 clients. Thanks to Carolyn Anderson, Vincent Pigeon, Bruce Fraser, Phil Dougan, Jamie McLaren and Allan Parker for participation.

On September 17, Access Justice Executive Director Allan Parker was



a presenter at the Pro Bono Practice 2008 CLE course that was put on in conjunction with the conference. The course included a number of breakout sessions on issues topical to pro bono practice including residential tenancy, debtor-creditor, and plain language writing.

Highlights of the two day conference itself included the keynote opening speech by Supreme Court of Canada Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin, and a very moving Friday luncheon address by lawyer Dennis Edney who has been counsel to Canadian Guantanamo detainee Omar Khadr. Allan Parker and Jimmy Yan from Access Justice were presenters at panels during the conference, and a number of Access Justice board members were conference attendees.

On the evening of September 18, 2008, conference organizers hosted a conference dinner and awards event at the Stanley Park Pavilion.

Continued on page 3

IN THIS ISSUE:

PAGE 2: Policy Changes & People
at Access Justice

PAGE 3: Community Outreach &
New Clinics

PAGE 4: Helpful Resources &
About Us



■ *Policy Changes & People at Access Justice*

MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ALLAN PARKER

Welcome to the Fall 2008 edition of A Word for Justice. Over the past several months, Access Justice has been working to refine its case and phone call data systems. The foundation for producing this data is a very robust database system which was developed over the past five years by Access Justice Project Manager and Web Architect Jimmy Yan. The ongoing challenge has been to provide a client booking system which is flexible enough to be used not only by our Access Justice office staff and volunteers, but by staff at the several dozen partner agencies that host our clinics. Changes to the database now allow us to record the source of client referrals to Access Justice, and to record issue type subcategories for our civil cases. We have held a number of information sessions for our partner agencies and expect these changes to be fully implemented by January 2009. Additional changes to the database now allow us to more efficiently track types of incoming and outgoing phone calls. These latter changes have provided data which show that in addition to the over 4,000 clinic clients that we are serving every year we are providing summary information and referral to over 2,000

POLICY CHANGES

We recently conducted a series of conference phone calls with our clinic partners to discuss Access Justice intake policy changes. We will be sending out a follow up email to all participants with a detailed summary. Here is a brief summary of the key changes:

FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY

Effective September 1, 2008 we have eliminated the client asset test, and we have increased our income guidelines:

Household size* (# of family members)	Net monthly income** (income after taxes)
4 or fewer	\$3,085
5	\$3,625
6	\$4,200
7 or more	\$4,750

OTHER CHANGES

1. We now record how a client heard about our services; and
2. For Civil cases, there is now a breakdown list of 19 Civil subcategories to identify the specific type of case.

CLIENT IDENTIFICATION

A reminder for clinic lawyers that as a result of new Law Society client identity guidelines it is now more important than ever to obtain clients'

addresses and phone numbers at the bottom of our Pro Bono Brief form.

MEET OUR STAFF

My name is Zulaikha Jooya, currently the Intake Coordinator for Access Justice. I just graduated from Simon Fraser University in the summer of 2008, with a major in Sociology and a minor in Criminology.



Before coming to Access Justice I volunteered with various other legal organizations. I worked at the Genesis House, which is a half way house, working with adult men whom have been released into the community from prison and are on parole. I did this through Vancouver Area Parole.

I am currently on the RCMP youth advisory committee, helping the RCMP develop programs and events to build a better networking system between the Muslim youth in the community and the RCMP. I was the Clinic Assistant for the Surrey Urban Mission Clinic prior to taking on the role of Intake Coordinator. I have also recently written the LSAT and plan on attending Law School in the near future. I hope to one day come back to Access Justice as a volunteer lawyer.

■ *Community Outreach & New Clinics*



NATIONAL PRO BONO CONFERENCE

Continued from page 1

Access Justice was honoured to be nominated in the community service category and we congratulate this year's award recipient the CLASSIC organization from Saskatoon. The award recognizes organizations that have provided distinguished service in the provision of pro bono legal aid to the disadvantaged.

The conference and recognition comes at a time when more British Columbians than ever are turning to our free Legal Advice Clinics for advice on small claims, civil, criminal, family, immigration, and contract law matters.

SUCCESS COQUITLAM KOREAN WORKSHOP

On the morning of June 13th, Access Justice and SUCCESS held a joint press conference at SUCCESS' Tri-Cities Service Centre. Allan Parker and Jimmy Yan, along with Tung Chan, SUCCESS' CEO, and Eileen Lao, SUCCESS' Publicity Officer, attended the conference to announce the launching of a new Korean pro-bono legal clinic based at SUCCESS' Tri-Cities Service Centre. The new clinic is designed to bring free legal service to the Korean community in metro Vancouver. Access Justice and SUCCESS have been working closely

to provide pro-bono legal clinic for qualified Chinese clients. The new service is an extension of the Chinatown operations and will further strengthen the cooperation between these two organizations who are proactively finding innovative ways in addressing client services.

After the press conference, Peter Chung, the President of the UBC Korean Journalism (UBCKJ) hosted a 60-minute presentation in Korean about free BC legal service providers, including Access Justice. Jimmy Yan, the Society's Project Coordinator, answered the audience's questions in English, and Peter helped with the interpretation. As a multicultural agency, SUCCESS has been dedicated to providing the Korean community with essential services in Family, Youth and Employment Assistance Services. The pro-bono legal clinic at the Tri-Cities Service Centre comprises of a Korean speaking clinic volunteer assistant referred by SUCCESS who was trained by Access Justice. A volunteer lawyer assigned by Access Justice is available on a monthly basis to address questions from clients on various topics.

NEW CLINICS

We are pleased to announce that Access Justice will be partnering with DIVERSECITY in the Newton area of Surrey. DIVERSECITY was formerly

known as Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society and is an accredited organization that has been serving immigrant newcomer communities in the Surrey Delta region for over 29 years. A new pro bono clinic will now be operating from this organization.

An additional Saturday pro bono clinic has opened at the CHIMO Agency in Richmond. This clinic is in addition to the two already being held by that Agency, and it will specialize in immigration and family law.

BC CEAS ELDER LAW CLINIC

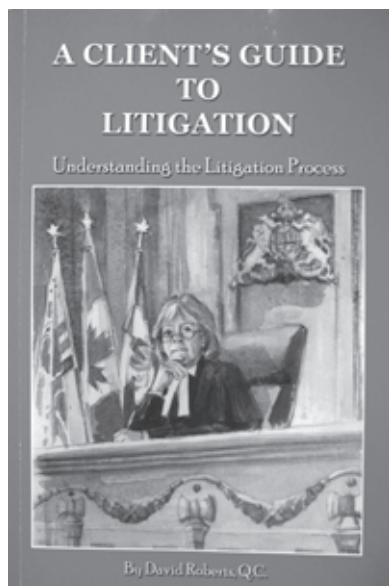
The BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support is now operating an Elder Law Clinic to provide summary advice and limited representation services for seniors. These services may be an additional support for seniors who attend Access Justice clinics. Potential clients must be over 55 years of age and unable to retain or instruct counsel due to financial or other disadvantage, and priority is given to serious legal matters involving personal safety, housing, financial abuse, or access to government benefits. The clinic can be contacted at 604-437-1940 (toll free at 1-866-437-1940). Their website is: <http://www.bcceas.ca/>.

■ *Helpful Resources & About Us*

HELPFUL RESOURCES

A Client's Guide to Litigation, by David Roberts, QC

Access Justice recommends this detailed guide to the litigation process. It is designed to be read by clients, but it would also be a help to lawyers in explaining the litigation process to clinic clients. The book (76 pages) covers a number of topics in the litigation process, ranging from the court structure, to discoveries, to the trial process itself. It is available for a small cost through the BC Branch of the Canadian Bar Association (604-687-3404).



DONATIONS

Every year, thousands of people on low and moderate income attend Access Justice's *pro bono* legal clinics. They receive one-on-one legal advice from qualified lawyers on a variety of matters including speeding tickets, assault charges, custody and access, maintenance, immigration, contracts and insurance. Between 2004 and 2008, over 16,500 people used an Access Justice Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic because they were not able to afford a lawyer.

Please consider a donation to support our work: Access Justice, 1440 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver BC V6H 1M8 or donate online at www.accessjustice.ca.

WITH THANKS

Access Justice would like to express its deepest gratitude to the Law Foundation of British Columbia, the Ministry of the Attorney General, social agencies, lawyers, volunteers and law firms for your continued and generous support.



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Access Justice
1440 West 12th Ave.
Vancouver BC V6H 1M8
Phone: 604-482-3195
Fax: 604-324-1515
Email: help@accessjustice.ca

Access Justice is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing legal advice to low income clients.
For clinic information call 604-878-7400, toll free 1-877-762-6664 or visit www.accessjustice.ca.