



LEGAL **HELP** CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT

2022/2023





Vision

All people have equal access to justice.

Mission

Improving access to legal and social service resources for socially and economically disadvantaged members of the community by providing legal support, education, and referrals in partnership with students and volunteers.

Guiding Principles

Accessibility

We will strive to be available to everyone. All programs and services, policy and procedures, and methods of operation aim to be as inclusive as possible.

Empowerment

We aim to empower those we work with by sharing knowledge and tools to navigate systems in a way that builds confidence and explains processes. We want all those we work with to have the support, tools, and information they need to address their concerns.

Team Approach

We find strength in our diversity and value the contributions of everyone on our team. We take an interdisciplinary approach, learning from each other's input and perspective. Our team approach is bolstered by strong communication, a supportive atmosphere, and diversity.

Flexibility

We will approach our work and the challenges we encounter with flexibility. Responding to the needs of our clients, we will start with openness, looking for where and how we can be helpful. Our responses can be "outside the box" creative, and draw on the resources around us.

WHO WE ARE

The Legal Help Centre (LHC) is a non-profit organization with charitable status that has been serving the community since 2011. LHC was developed to address a gap in providing access to justice for disadvantaged people and communities.

LHC is a source of legal information and guidance. We take the time to listen to clients, and to help them understand their situation. We identify options and potential solutions, and give people the right tools to address their legal issues and move forward with their lives. We emphasize creating an accessible, welcoming place for people to receive assistance, for students to learn skills, and for volunteers to participate in giving back to the community.

Our Collaborative Approach

At LHC, we recognize that legal problems often intersect with social and economic issues. We know that dealing with a legal issue can impact a person's life in many ways - legally, financially, emotionally and physically. That is why we use an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving. We host students from the faculties of law, social work and criminal justice and, if an individual has other concerns related to their legal problem, we work together to try to assist by providing information, support and helpful referrals to other resources.

We work together with a variety of community organizations to help individuals deal with the complex dilemmas they face. If we can refer a client to another agency that is better suited to help them with some part of their problem, we do! If we can cooperate with others to improve an individual's involvement in the legal process, enhance the information provided to the public and empower people to deal with their legal matters, we will and we have! If we can create opportunities for students to get practical experience and develop skills that will help them be successful in a career of helping others, we definitely do!

Legal Help Centre is honoured to work on Treaty One lands, the original territories of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Lakota, Dene peoples, and the homeland of the Red River Métis.

We acknowledge our role in the many relationships that make up our home and commit to a spirit of reconciliation for the future and actively seeking the truth for the past.

STRONGER WITH CHANGE

A message from the Board President

Friends of the Legal Help Centre,

Former Chief Justice Richard Scott, and now former LHC Board member, said at his last board meeting that “there is no greater honour than serving the public”. I could not agree more. This past year has been one of change and we have come through stronger than ever and are in a better position to serve the public. The evidence is in the number of people served over the past year - up from 3,300 in 2021/22 to over 4,400 in 2022/23. We were able to reach more people due to the incredible support we receive from our volunteers and donors which has allowed us to navigate significant change together.

CHANGE #1: When the COVID pandemic changed community service, LHC was compelled to change from in-person clinics to telephone & virtual appointments. This change, while allowing us to reach more people, also hindered legal access for those people who did not have access to telephone & virtual services. After careful deliberation by the staff & board, LHC adopted a hybrid service delivery model in January, combining in-person clinics with telephone appointments, allowing us to reach more people & increase access to justice.

CHANGE #2: Our lease & IT support have been generously donated by the University of Winnipeg for many years. We are so grateful for this support, but the donation will soon end and we are exploring options, including a possible move or to be a part of the redevelopment of Portage Place.

CHANGE #3: We were sad to see Executive Director, Paula Hamilton, leave the organization at the end of February. Her tenure at LHC saw the organization grow by leaps & bounds in spite of a worldwide pandemic that fundamentally changed the way we offered service.

CHANGE #4: We have grown as a team adding a 3rd lawyer, Danielle Magnifico, along with an administrative assistant, Ramatoulaye Ndiaye. Staff lawyer Doug Ripley left and was replaced by Daniel Hildebrand. We were also privileged to employ Aminat Anoba as our articling student and she was called to the bar on June 15th.

CHANGE #5: LHC proudly announced that Nadia Rumore became Legal Director in April 2023. Nadia leads our legal clinic & oversees the experiential learning opportunities for students from a variety of disciplines. Nadia joined LHC in 2017, is inspired by the students’ enthusiasm to provide exceptional service to our clients and received the Manitoba Bar Association’s 2022 Access to Justice Award.

Thank you for all of your support making the law work for everyone!

Sincerely,
Kathy Bueti



FOND FAREWELL

A message from the outgoing Executive Director



This is my love letter to the Legal Help Centre (LHC).

It was a difficult decision to leave LHC after nearly 6 years as Executive Director, but it was time for something new for me and for LHC! I am forever grateful to the Board of Directors for taking a chance on me. They gave me the opportunity to lead, and to work alongside the most dedicated and caring group of individuals I have met in my career, and they provided support to me every step of the way.

I am fond of the fact that our organization helps deserving individuals and families navigate through their legal issues and that people trust us to provide guidance during a challenging time in their life. It is very meaningful work and the impact LHC makes is heard, seen and felt with every sigh of relief from a client when someone was willing to listen to their story; with every smile on a client's face when their questions were answered; and with every step taken by a client toward resolving their issue.

I cherished the opportunity to meet and collaborate with the people who do the important work. The staff, students and volunteers that choose to spend their time at LHC are exceptional. They want to teach and to learn, and not only are they ready and willing to assist clients, but they are enthusiastic about it! They are excited to share their time, energy, and ideas, which seemed endless. As a result, they taught me a great deal, and made my role as leader significantly easier and much more enjoyable. I am proud of what we as a team were able to accomplish. I also feel confident leaving knowing the strong position LHC is in to continue helping the community, and that together with other committed organizations, we can improve access to justice.

I still love the place and the people involved, and I cannot wait to see what else it can accomplish.

Paula Hamilton
Executive Director
2017-2023



OUR TEAM

LIST OF STAFF

As of March 31, 2023

Scott McFadyen, Executive Director

Nadia Rumore, Legal Director

Daniel Hildebrand, Staff Lawyer

Danielle Magnifico, Staff Lawyer

Aminat Anoba, Articling Student

Ramatoulaye Ndiaye, Administrative Assistant

Paula Hamilton, Executive Director (til Feb 2023)

Doug Ripley, Staff Lawyer (til May 2022)

Morgan Jackson, Articling Student (til June 2022)



2022/2023 Board of Directors and Advisors

Kathy Bueti (President)

Dr. Tracey Bone (Vice President)

Robin Dwarka, CPA, CMA (Treasurer)

Jennifer Goldenberg (Past President)

Richard J. Scott, O.C. O.M. Q.C.

Dr. Michael Weinrath

Nick Slonosky

Dr. Richard Jochelson

Dr. Shauna Labman

Stephanie Levene

Shasta Benaim

Kelly Gorkoff

Travis DeLaronde

Sandra Guevara-Holguin

Adonia Manaigre

Advisors

Jim Shaw

Candace Grammond

Jennifer Nembhard

Ken Champagne

David Silver

OUR CLIENTS

The Impact we Make

"I have nothing but good things to say about the Centre and their staff. Nadia is great and super knowledgeable and everyone is always willing to help, answer questions and get things done as soon as possible. Nothing but grateful for the Legal Help Centre."

CYNTHIA, Client

"Excellent experience. The student assigned to me went above and beyond to assist me. All expectations and scope of practice were clearly communicated and I felt confident that they were doing all they could to help me within their mandate. As a free service, it far exceeded my expectations."

CARIN, Client

NAVA'S STORY

Nava (not her real name) approached LHC shortly after being served with a Small Claim by her former employer. Nava had worked as a receptionist for a short stint with an employer in a healthcare field. At the end of her second day of work, Nava was presented with a document styled as a "Training Agreement" that purported to require Nava to pay \$10,000.00 in lieu of paid training if she ever opted to leave her employment and work in the same field.

Nava started to feel uncomfortable continuing in her job and found a position better suited to her in the same field. After starting her new job, Nava's first employer alleged that she had violated the agreement she had been compelled to sign (on her second day of work) that required her to pay \$10,000.00. Nava's employer was represented by experienced legal counsel at a large firm, and Nava felt very intimidated by the situation.

LHC students, assisted by staff lawyers, researched the contract and relevant caselaw and determined that Nava could provide a meritorious defence to the Court. LHC agreed to assist Nava with preparing a Book of Authorities for the trial and an LHC staff lawyer and articling student assisted Nava at the hearing. After a month of waiting, the decision came back in Nava's favour and the employer's lawsuit was dismissed. Nava was very grateful for the assistance she received from LHC.

OUR STUDENTS

Students play a central role in LHC's service to the public and in fact, without them, we would be unable to meet the growing need in the community for legal information, advice, and support.

So while students often say they found their learning opportunity at LHC to be the best part of their university experience, we feel that their contribution is equally invaluable for us. Their eagerness, diligence, and fresh outlook serve as reminders of our mission to help the vulnerable and constantly encourage us to approach clients, questions and issues with curiosity, openness and compassion.

Because of the variety of disciplines we host - law, social work, criminal justice - the students benefit from each other's perspectives when they approach problem solving and they are better equipped to assist a person who is attempting to address their legal and social issues.

Reflections

We asked some of our 3rd year law students to give their future selves some advice about their work experience at LHC. Here's what we heard:

"I would remind myself that this was the most beneficial experience of law school, it was where I learned the most, and it was where I developed my passion for the law and passion for advocating for other people." **Sarah**

"I would let my future self know that everyone has their own story. Don't judge anyone by face value because everyone has been through a lot that you don't know about." **Matt**

"Be patient with clients and remember all of the things we learned about trauma informed practice. Don't procrastinate!" **Sandra**

STUDENTS DURING 2022/23

ANDREW
CHRISTINE
HEATHER
JEFF
JEREMY
JOCELYN

JODI
MARKO
MASON
MATT
MIKAELA
PRACHI

RAMSAY
REBECCA
SANDRA
SARAH
TASHA



OUR VOLUNTEERS

Legal Help Centre has been able to consistently make an impact in the community because of the generosity of many individuals who donate their time, knowledge and collaborative spirit.

The commitment starts at the top. The Board of Directors consists of charitable people who share their expertise, whether legal, academic, financial or in community service, and provide valuable guidance to the organization.

A long list of practicing lawyers volunteer their time to supervise the students. Volunteers have been available throughout all the changes we have experienced over the years, but when we recommenced in-person services and a hybrid model of service in early 2023, their reliable presence made this transition very easy.

Because our panel of volunteers is diverse and span many areas of law, we are able to assist people in a wide array of matters, some obscure and specialized. Our students are well aware of how remarkable the volunteer lawyers are, and it helps make the LHC externship attractive to law students. They know they will get excellent learning opportunities and mentorship from many lawyers who are recognized as among the top in their areas and who will be colleagues in the legal community once they graduate.

Our volunteers uphold the best traditions of the profession in their generosity with their time and service to the community and we appreciate them.

MANY THANKS!



2022/2023 Volunteer Lawyers

Alex Bainov
Alica Sawka
Alistair Clarke
Andrew McDonald
Candray Mehkary
Clay Purves
Dean Scaletta
Eleanor Wiebe
Gerald Jewers
Gerritt Theule

Heather Wadsworth
Heidi Dyck
Hilary Taylor
Kara Hague
Kathy Bueti
Kelby Loeppky
Kelsey Brooks
Kelsey Schade
Kendra Goertzen
Kim Soul

Leah Klassen
Leiba Feldman
Lisa Fainstein
Lynda Troup
Mara Koven-Lapointe
Marvin Giesbrecht
Megan Spencer
Mel Labossiere
Menal Al-Fekih
Mercedes Ayala

Monica Adeler
Nicole Wilson
Nunziata Masi
Rhoni MacKenzie
Sandi Phillips
Sarah Gravelines
Sarah Thurmeier
Sharyne Hamm
Stacey Ennis
Tanya Keller

JO-ANNE M. FINDLAY MEMORIAL AWARD

Legal Help Centre was proud to present **Heather Hughes** with the 2023 Jo-Anne Findlay Memorial Award at the 2023 Robson Hall Graduation Ceremony.

ABOUT JO-ANNE FINDLAY: The lifeline of LHC is our volunteers, as it is with any charity. Our board consists of volunteers from across many disciplines and we were lucky to have Jo-Anne Findlay as our Treasurer for 5 years. Jo-Anne was what you wanted in a volunteer, enthusiastic, generous with time, dependable, supportive of others, and humble about her contribution. Beyond providing leadership on financial matters, it was her unwavering support of fellow volunteers, staff and students, and her awareness of the community need that set her apart. Jo-Anne's legacy extends beyond the people she knew. It extends to the thousands of Winnipeggers Jo-Anne never knew who benefited from the services of LHC. Sadly, Jo-Anne passed away in May of 2021. Needless to say, after her passing, donations flowed into LHC and the Jo-Anne M. Findlay Memorial Award was established.

AWARD ELIGIBILITY: This award is given each year to a graduating law student, who over the course of their academic career, demonstrated a strong commitment to volunteerism, access to justice and the values of LHC.

APPLICANTS: There were 4 applicants and each were deserving of recognition for their generous natures, belief in improving access to justice and contribution to LHC. We note that each volunteered their time with LHC after their course obligations ended. Jo-Anne would have been proud to have any of them associated with her legacy.

THE RECIPIENT: There can be only one recipient of the award. This year the award was given to **Heather Hughes**. We know Heather is a special individual and embodies what the award was intended to recognize. In true fashion, upon receiving the award she stated "I am honoured that you see some of Jo-Anne's qualities in me; she seemed like an incredible person with a giving heart, and I will strive to embody that same generosity and kindness throughout my practice and my life."

So deserving.



HEATHER HUGHES

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Organizations

IBEX Payroll Services
 IG Wealth Management
 Government of Canada - CSJ Program
 RBC (Bright Futures Award)
 The Law Society of Manitoba
 The Manitoba Bar Association
 The Manitoba Law Foundation
 The University of Manitoba - Faculty of Law
 The University of Winnipeg
 The Winnipeg Foundation

Law Firms

Bennet Waugh Corne
 D'Arcy & Deacon LLP
 Duboff Edwards Schachter LC
 Evans Family Law Corporation
 Fillmore Riley LLP
 Hill Sokalski Walsh LLP
 MLT Aikins LLP
 Pitblado LLP
 Tapper Cuddy LLP
 Taylor McCaffrey LLP
 Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP
 Wolseley Law LLP

Private Donors

Silvia DeSousa
 Michelle Falk
 Jennifer Goldenberg
 Devin Morrow
 Julia Negrea
 Colleen Suche
 Elizebeth Thorkelson

THANK YOU!

To donate to Legal Help Centre and support our efforts to improve access to justice, **click** the icon.
 Any contribution is appreciated!

Registered Charity No: 805783859 RR0001



HIGHLIGHTS

In 2022/2023, as the Legal Help Centre began to return to normal operations after the pandemic, the number of community members we were able to help increased. We continued to work as a team of staff, students and volunteers to identify the needs of our clients, and in response, provide legal support and valuable referrals.



3556 telephone & email inquiries



764 initial client appointments



655 referrals to community partners



325+ hours donated by volunteer lawyers

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2022/2023

Condensed Statement of Operations

| | 2023 | 2022 |
|--|----------------------|--------------|
| Revenue: | | |
| Donations | \$344,190 | \$339,614 |
| Donations in-kind | 60,000 | 60,000 |
| Grant revenue | 180,974 | 147,974 |
| Amortization of deferred contributions | 5,677 | 5,677 |
| Interest income | <u>10,108</u> | <u>1,974</u> |
| Total | \$600,949 | \$555,239 |
| Expenses: | | |
| Salaries and benefits | \$417,720 | \$409,358 |
| Administration | 15,000 | 15,000 |
| Amortization | 11,772 | 11,033 |
| Rent | 45,000 | 45,000 |
| Office | 54,327 | 54,333 |
| Other | <u>5,237</u> | <u>4,755</u> |
| Total | \$549,056 | \$539,479 |
| Excess of revenue over expenses | \$51,893 | \$15,760 |

These condensed financial statements do not contain all of the disclosures required by Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes. For more information on LHC's financial position, results of operations, changes in net assets and cash flows, reference should be made to the complete financial statements of LHC as at and for the year ended March 31, 2023 on which KPMG LLP expressed an opinion without reservation in their report dated June 15, 2023.

The background features large, overlapping geometric shapes in a warm color palette. On the left, there are shapes in shades of red, orange, and yellow. On the right, there are shapes in shades of orange and green. The shapes have rounded corners and are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement.

This publication is available in alternate formats upon request



LEGAL **HELP** CENTRE

202-393 PORTAGE AVENUE
WINNIPEG, MB R3B 3H6
Phone: 204-258-3096

Email: info@legalhelpcentre.ca

Web: www.legalhelpcentre.ca

