

# Legal Help Centre of Winnipeg, Inc.

Annual Report to Members  
2018/19



LEGAL **HELP** CENTRE



## LEGAL **HELP** CENTRE

### **Vision**

**All people have equal access to justice.**

### **Mission Statement**

**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 procedure, and methods of operation will 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.

# Board President's Farewell Message

I will be leaving the Board of Directors in June 2019, so this is my last communication as Board President.

I am pleased to report that the LHC enjoyed another productive and fulfilling year. A highlight for me was the 2-day strategic planning session held in the fall. Under the capable facilitation of Jackie Hogue, the Board and staff worked together to update our vision and mission and determine our priorities for the next 3 years. We now have a clear and detailed work map for the future.

Turning to the LHC Board, this was another year of hellos and good-byes. In December we welcomed Phil Simon, a new representative for the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba. Social work students are an important aspect of the services offered by the LHC and Phil plays a key role in placing and supervising these students.

Last summer we said good-bye to Justice Colleen Suche. It was Justice Suche's vision, inspiration and tenacity which were largely responsible for the development of the LHC. Through hard work and determination Justice Suche succeeded in bringing together community, professionals and funders to create a much needed legal help service. Justice Suche served on the Board for 8 years as its President and as a Board advisor. Even though she has stepped away from the Board, she is always willing and ready to provide the LHC with the benefit of her advice and experience.

We have been advised that at our next AGM we will also be saying good-bye to another key LHC founder and advisor. Sarah Lugtig worked closely with Justice Suche in the development of LHC. During her 9 years on the Board Ms Lugtig served as President and Board Advisor. Her leadership, insight and wisdom have significantly impacted the success of the LHC.

I will conclude with an armful of thank yous. The glory and success of the LHC is due primarily to the many volunteers who give generously of their time and expertise. Students are the backbone of the LHC and enable us to provide comprehensive and quality services. I therefore wish to offer my sincere thanks to the law, social work and criminal justice students who are on the frontline in providing services to clients. We couldn't exist without you.

Many thanks to the 97 volunteer lawyers who provided guidance to the students. As well I would like to thank our hard working and talented staff. Your dedication and expertise are greatly appreciated and essential to the success of the LHC.

Without the generosity and strong support from our funders, we could not provide assistance to community members or learning opportunities for students interested in access to justice.

Finally, I wish to thank my fellow Board members for their commitment and wise guidance of the LHC. It has been a true pleasure to work with all of you.

Yvonne Peters, President

## 2018/19 Board of Directors

Yvonne Peters - Director (President)  
 Jennifer Goldenberg - Director (Vice-President)  
 Jo-Anne Findlay, FCPA, FCA - Director (Secretary/Treasurer)  
 The Honourable Richard Scott - Director  
 Michael Weinrath - Director

Lorna Turnbull - Director  
 Lynda Troup - Director  
 Robin Dwarka - Director  
 Neil Funk-Unrau - Director  
 Phil Simon - Director

## 2018/19 Board Advisors

Jim Shaw  
 Sarah Lugtig  
 The Honourable Justice Candace Grammond

## Message from the Executive Director

This year was another year of learning for me and everyone involved at the Legal Help Centre. It is very true that you learn by doing because I found that with every step and every interaction, we gained knowledge and understanding. The team of staff, students, volunteers, Board and Committee members regularly shared ideas, tried new things, and accomplished plenty.

We continued in our efforts to assist clients with their legal issues and to increase awareness of their rights. There was a consistent need for help with family law matters, a thirst for information about how to navigate the court process and questions from clients about how to access services that would help them manage social and legal problems.

Opening ourselves up and embracing change is another way to learn. When the Faculty of Law asked for proposals for “externships”, LHC jumped at the opportunity. Externships were something new being offered and designed to give third year law students the chance to be placed at an agency on a full time basis, for an entire term, so they could get practical experience to enhance their academic studies. We hosted 5 students in each term and at the end of the year, all the students raved about their experience. They were grateful for the chance to develop the skills they needed to be successful in their law careers. But mainly they were appreciative of the chance to meet and help real people solve the real problems they were facing. Having students with us every day allowed us to provide better service to the public, but also gave students the ability to follow the evolution of a file and be involved at various stages. Definitely learned that something new can be good!

As a result of a departure of a long term staff member, we were faced with more chances to learn. After over 6 years at LHC, Natasha Brown, Legal Director, left for the position of Director of Professional Practice & Externships at the University of Manitoba’s Faculty of Law where she will remain connected to LHC by overseeing student externships. Natasha started with LHC when it was just developing and was instrumental in helping it grow into a busy, productive legal clinic. She believes in the theory of experiential learning and created an environment where students could

**Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.**

**- John F. Kennedy**

develop essential skills needed for a successful career and reflect on their experience - all while addressing gaps in the provision of legal services.

We saw her departure as an opportunity to diversify our expertise. In March of this year, we welcomed Doug Ripley to our staff as a supervising lawyer. With a practice that focused on civil litigation, he comes with skills that complement those of Nadia Rumore, LHC’s other staff lawyer. He has quickly familiarized himself with what we do and has become a valuable resource to both students and the staff team.

Earlier in the year we participated in a Strategic Planning session to ensure that our Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles were clear. The sessions were instructive, motivating and enjoyable! We learned that our goals remain the same as they were when Legal Help Centre was created in 2010. Although we have established an invaluable service to the public and helped many people navigate the legal and social systems along the way, there is still more work to be done to improve access to justice.

The results are set out in the inside cover of this annual report. As Executive Director I am learning over and over again that you do not have to be afraid of change. It can be an excellent opportunity to improve on what is already working well. I am grateful to the Board and staff for the open dialogue, a willingness to explore and their endless commitment. At the end of the process, everyone’s contributions were combined into a shared message. This will serve as a helpful guide to me as I lead the organization through our next phase. With the guiding principles as direction and the remarkable staff around me, we will continue to work towards our goals.

So many lessons learned. What a great year.

Paula Hamilton,  
Executive Director

# Learning Together and Moving Towards a Common Goal

Learning and broadening one's scope of understanding has definitely been one of the overarching themes at Legal Help Centre over the past year. Whether it was educating the public on important legal topics, or engaging in our own learning about other organizations and groups of individuals, the opportunity for continued growth was prevalent in everything we did.

Educating people on their legal rights is one of the first steps in helping those who are navigating a difficult and often convoluted system. We have therefore continued to run our free, educational workshops on different topics at a variety of locations. Our workshops on *Estate Administration* and *Small Claims* have been a staple over the lunch hour at our Portage Place location. We also took "our show on the road" and attended other organizations to present to their clients on topics they found informative. Our *Dealing with Police* workshop has continued to be in high demand, and our new workshop on *Child and Family Services Apprehensions* has also been helpful to those who may find themselves in the child welfare system and are unsure about how to proceed or what their rights are during a very difficult time in their lives. We also have continued to attend the Millennium Library on a monthly basis to provide one-on-one assistance to people who have questions on a variety of legal and social service issues.

Feedback received from workshop participants has been overwhelmingly positive and clearly indicative of there being a continuing need for public education:

"Great job! Very engaging."

"Thank you for what you do."

"Very helpful - gave good insight."

"Thank you for sharing, learned more about my rights."

"Great presentation - shined some light on some issues that were not quite understandable."

"Really liked the presenter in that he was user friendly...he wasn't egotistical or a "know it all" even if he does know it all!"

**Tell me and I forget.  
Teach me and I remember.  
Involve me and I learn.**  
- Benjamin Franklin

As a way of bridging connections and working collaboratively with other service providers, we also sought out opportunities to meet with other organizations to learn more about the types of services they offer as well as to share information about Legal Help Centre. Attending places like Age & Opportunity and the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development, as well as participating in a 'Lunch and Learn' at Sara Riel, which is a community resource supporting individuals living with mental health issues, are just a few of several examples of information-sharing sessions which took place over the past year. These sessions proved to be both insightful and necessary in order to ensure appropriate referrals are made for clients who are often facing not just one, but more commonly, a multitude of issues.

Here at Legal Help Centre, we also recognize that assisting clients is not only achieved by educating them on the law and processes, but also by staff, students, and volunteers learning more about the history, cultures and experiences of the clients we serve. This is why LHC's attendance at Turtle Lodge at Sagkeeng First Nation for the Law Society's CPD "Tebwetibajimowin - To Tell the Truth" was one of the more memorable and impactful moments of this past year. There, we learned about Indigenous law while Elders shared their experiences and stories, all in the midst of ceremonial drumming and participation in tobacco-offering. We also had the pleasure of hosting Elder Victoria McIntosh on a separate occasion, to share with our students and staff her experiences in the residential schooling system and the impact it has had on her life.

Another of our partners, the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM) visited LHC to enlighten us on the assistance IRCOM provides new Canadians and the needs of the population they serve, including legal support with immigration issues.

Overall, this past year has been one of greater insight and growth for all of us working towards improving access to justice, one step at a time.

Nadia Rumore, Supervising Lawyer

## Students - Learning by Doing

The 2018/2019 school year brought more progress. The University of Manitoba - Faculty of Law (Robson Hall) offered students the opportunity to enroll in an "Externship" program, which had students placed at Legal Help Centre full time for an entire term. This allowed for a more comprehensive experience for students and more consistent service for clients. Feedback was extremely positive and we plan to continue offering this intensive learning program. LHC was also able to offer placements to 18 first and second year students from Robson Hall through Pro Bono Students Canada, all of whom assisted at our Drop-In Clinic.

We also hosted two students from the University of Manitoba - Faculty of Social Work. They assisted at Drop-In and with research and outreach activities. Once again, the ability to have social work and law students work in collaboration added to the breadth of our services. The students learn from each other's perspectives and it ensures that clients' needs are better identified and addressed.

Finally, we placed three students from the University of Winnipeg's Criminal Justice Department. One assisted at Drop-In and with research and workshop development and the other two assisted with statistical analysis and conducting important client satisfaction surveys to determine if LHC is meeting the needs of the people it serves.

In June, 2018, LHC awarded Robson Hall law graduate, Jasmine Bissoon, with the Kim Clare Memorial Award which recognizes a student who demonstrates commitment to access to justice. Over her law school career, Jasmine participated in every way possible at LHC. She is a dedicated and compassionate individual who showed respect for everyone she encountered. Always full of positive energy, she told everyone she could about the positive impacts LHC makes on the community.

We also had a superb group of summer students who teamed up to meet client needs.

Thanks to the partnerships with the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba, and Canada Summer Jobs funding, we not only train students for their future careers, but also provide essential services to a deserving population.



Jasmine Bissoon receiving the Kim Clare Award from award sponsor Kathy Jones

### Keith McCullough

*Robson Hall Class of 2020*

My time at Legal Help Centre has been by far the most rewarding experience of my legal education.

While many people come to law school hoping to help people, Legal Help Centre provides law students with the invaluable opportunity to make a real difference in our community. By giving me the chance to assist the people who need it most, LHC has not only provided me with necessary skills; it has opened my eyes to the need for all lawyers to be understanding, empathetic and supportive when dealing with our clients. This is a lesson I will always remember, as I begin my own career in practice.

As access to justice continues to be the single most pressing issue facing the Canadian legal system, places like Legal Help Centre are more important than ever. I can't thank the amazing staff enough for their help and support and intend to continue to give back through volunteering.



2018 Summer Students: Kelly Kennedy, Stefanie Reece, Andrew Clark, Katelyn Williams, Keith McCullough, Danielle Magnifico (articling student)

# Student Voices

## Jamie Dupasquier

*Student Intern, Faculty of Social Work*

As a social work student, my placement at Legal Help Centre was unique and enriching. Working alongside law and criminal justice students, I quickly recognized the value of an interdisciplinary approach for its ability to bridge gaps and provide a more comprehensive service.

Interviewing clients at drop-in vastly improved my interpersonal skills and my capacity for problem-solving. These interactions also served as a window into the systemic barriers faced by so many individuals in our community. I am grateful to LHC staff, the volunteer social worker and the volunteer lawyers for their insight, knowledge, and compassion which makes LHC such a wonderful learning environment and a helpful community resource.

## Shantal Cottick

*Student Intern, Faculty of Social Work*

I considered my social work practicum at LHC as both a unique and valuable experience. The interdisciplinary approach of LHC was vital as individuals who utilized the services were often not facing a legal matter, but instead, underlying social and mental health issues presented which were intertwined with legal concerns. I worked with individuals of various backgrounds and provided support and referrals to a vast number of social services agencies in the community.

Overall my time at LHC was beneficial in both working with community members and learning about community resources; I consider the knowledge I learnt as important and applicable to wherever my career may take me.

## Mikaela Bauerlein

*Student Intern, Criminal Justice*

Legal Help Centre is a very positive and team-oriented environment. Everyone is willing to help with any client or case whenever needed.

LHC provides a great opportunity for those individuals who may not meet the stricter qualifications of other organizations but still cannot afford legal representation, with a more accessible way to legal information. Many of LHC's clients would have no resources to lean on if it was not for LHC.

## Melanie Labossiere

*Robson Hall Class of 2019*

I began my experience at LHC as a volunteer through Pro Bono Students Canada. When the opportunity to participate in the new Externship Program became available, I was thrilled.

LHC has provided me with practical experience and, above all else, taught me patience, empathy and understanding. The clients I have encountered have taught me that the students, lawyers and staff at LHC are often the first people to listen to them and help find a solution.

Access to justice is a real and pressing issue and the barriers present in many (and often unexpected) ways. LHC not only assists with navigating the justice system, but also provides access to resources that can help break down these barriers before any interaction with the justice system occurs.

As a young person entering the legal profession, the importance of the work that LHC does is not lost on me, nor could I possibly express my gratitude for the incredible mentorship provided, the dedication of LHC's volunteers, and the tireless efforts of all those involved. LHC has shaped the way I view my role in the legal profession, my capacity to serve clients, and my understanding of the legal community. I am eternally grateful for my experience at LHC.

## Stefanie Reece

*Robson Hall Class of 2019*

My time at LHC has been the most rewarding part of law school. My involvement at LHC has prepared me for my legal career by providing me with an opportunity to gain legal experience and be mentored by highly qualified professionals. Also, being a part of LHC has taught me the importance of community involvement.

I started as a volunteer at the Drop-In Clinic through PBSC. I gained practical legal experience through client interviews. Then as a Summer Student I was able to assist clients at the Family and Consumer Protection Clinics under the supervision of talented and dedicated lawyers. LHC has provided me with a platform to learn and expand my legal knowledge, but more importantly helped me understand what social and legal challenges regular people face everyday.

## Client Experiences

*"I want to take this moment to thank all of you for all the help and support you have given me for the past years regarding my file.*

*The love, patience, kindness, and encouragement you always showed me will be forever appreciated. My words alone can never express my appreciation for everything you have done. I only pray that God in his merciful power, will bless all of you for all the great work you do for people like me...And I also wish you guys nothing but a win in your studies. You will make GREAT lawyers "*

- LHC Client

*"The judge also noted that the brief was very well put together, and said it "was better than most lawyers" ... Thanks again for all your help in resolving this, you played a crucial role in getting organized and prepared for the case conference."*

- LHC Client

### Madiah's Story

Madiah (not her real name) attended LHC for help with her divorce. It had been several years since she last saw her husband, who had disappeared one day while they were living in a war-torn country and never returned. Madiah had never learnt his fate and was seeking a divorce to help her move forward. Being a newcomer to Canada with limited English skills, the task of filing for divorce was overwhelming. To further complicate her case, since Madiah did not know her husband's whereabouts, under Manitoba Law, she had to ask for the Court's permission to allow her to proceed without serving her husband with the Petition for Divorce. This required various steps which meant she had to relive that traumatic time in her life over and over again.

After those steps were complete, LHC's articling student attended Court with Madiah and obtained an Order dismissing the normal service requirements. Then LHC helped Madiah prepare the necessary documents to finalize her divorce, which in the end was granted by the Court.

With LHC's help, Madiah was able to overcome the communication barriers she faced, both in completing the documentation and also in speaking to the Court. Upon getting her divorce, Madiah expressed heartfelt relief and gratitude for having had the support of LHC through this undeniably emotional and challenging process.

### Pete's Experience

Pete (not his real name) came to LHC with a problem related to the purchase of a vehicle from a used car dealership. Although it was clear that Pete went to the dealership to purchase a car, the dealership had him sign a lease agreement under the pretense that Pete was financing the vehicle as a loan. The difference meant that ownership of the vehicle stayed with the dealership. A dispute arose about how much remained owing on the vehicle when representatives from the dealership demanded an amount significantly more than he had originally agreed to pay. When Pete refused to pay, the dealership repossessed the vehicle and he was at a substantial loss for the money that he had already paid towards it.

Through the Consumer Protection Clinic, students assisted Pete with drafting a Small Claim and LHC's articling student attended Court with Pete to help present his claim. The claim was successful, and he received a judgment against the dealership for the entire amount of money that he had paid for the vehicle.

LHC's advocacy ensured that sufficient evidence was before the Court to show that there had been an attempt to take advantage of Pete not fully appreciating the implications of the documents he was signing. The Court had all that was necessary to inform its decision and concluded that the car dealership acted unconscionably. Pete was happy with the result and appreciative of the assistance provided by LHC's students throughout the process.

## Volunteer Lawyers - Importance of Mentoring

Legal Help Centre is always grateful to the legal profession for the generosity of their time and knowledge. This past year, nearly a hundred lawyers have donated time from their busy practices to mentor students and educate the public. Many make themselves available in person or by phone during our Drop-In clinics to help students identify legal issues and provide information that helps clients address the legal dilemmas they face. Others provide assistance by preparing and presenting workshops on legal topics of interest to the community.

Words from some of our volunteer lawyers demonstrate the value of volunteering, for all involved.

Dan Hildebrand, an employment lawyer, has been a regular volunteer at our Drop-In clinics since 2014:

*"I always look forward to volunteering at LHC. In addition to providing a vital service to the community, LHC is also a very dynamic place of education where everyone is a teacher and a learner. I'm very grateful to be able to support the work of LHC by volunteering."*

Shasta Benaim, a family law associate with Bennet Waugh Corne, volunteers regularly at the Drop-In clinics. Shasta was an intern with LHC while in law school and recognized the value that experienced lawyers play in mentoring students:

*"The first day of the LHC externship, students have questions, are inquisitive, and honestly, are a bit timid about interviewing clients. They have knowledge of the "law" but not its practical application. At the end of the externship there is a marked difference in the students' skills. Uncertainty is replaced by confidence. Discomfort replaced by ease. LHC provides students with a supportive environment which allows them to explore and develop a skill set that is highly transferable in the practice of law. They learn that the law helps real people. Practical solutions for real people with real problems have to be paramount."*

Marvin Geisbrecht has volunteered for several years as a supervising lawyer and delivers educational workshops:

*"I always look forward to my afternoons there. It's great to work with the students and see their interest and enthusiasm. I think I benefit as much from them as they do from me. The staff are all very helpful and having other professionals such as social workers present helps to provide a more complete service to the clients. So many of the issues that come up are not solely legal issues, so it's beneficial to be able to direct the clients to other resources that may be of help to them."*

*I have also had the privilege of presenting information on estate administration to groups of clients and students. I think that's a useful service to provide and helps to make that part of the justice system more accessible."*

Adriel Agpalza  
Alexandra Aquila  
Alex Bainov  
Shasta Benaim  
Alison Bennet  
Mitch Billinkoff  
Caitlin Bouche  
Trevor Brown  
Kathy Bueti  
Scott Cannon  
Alexa Cantor  
Svetlana Chechelnitsky  
Daniel Chornopyski  
Alastair Clarke  
Krista Clendenning  
David Cordingley  
Elizabeth Czynryj  
Travis De Laronde  
Heather Dixon  
Evan Edwards  
Stacey Ennis  
Susan Eros  
Lisa Fainstein  
Carolina Fridman

Marvin Giesbrecht  
Kendra Goertzen  
Kaitlyn Graham  
Maria Grande  
Sarah Gravelines  
Sharyne Hamm  
Laurelle Harris  
Rebecca Heller  
Amanda Heslop  
Paul Hesse  
Daniel Hildebrand  
Jeff Hirsch  
Annette Horst  
The Honourable Gerald Jewers  
Nihar Kaushal  
Tanya Keller  
Kate Kidder  
Leah Klassen  
Mara Koven-Lapointe  
Fiona Li  
Gordon Lillie  
Nunziata Masi  
Kelly MacWilliam  
Donald MacDonald

Ross McFadyen  
Kelsey McIntyre  
Jennifer McRae  
Alexandra Miles  
Elizabeth Mitchell  
Maria Mitousis  
Christian Monnin  
Laure Moody  
Kara Moore  
Laura Nagy  
Sharna Nelko  
Sacha Nelson  
Reis R. Pagtakhan  
Sacha Paul  
Sandi Phillips  
Nicole Philp  
Clay Purves  
Brodie Quinton  
Vivian Rachlis  
Nalini Reddy  
Kelly Reidiger  
Thomas Reimer  
Julia Ryckman  
Alicia Sawka

Dean Scaletta  
Cory Shangreaux  
Amrita Sidhu  
David Silver  
Nicholas Slonosky  
Tanci Smart-Carvalho  
Nicole Smith  
Megan Smith  
Stacey Soldier  
Deborah Son  
Kim Soul  
Megan Spencer  
Clay Stewart  
Myra Tait  
Sarah Thurmeier  
Lynda Troup  
Kosta Vartsakis  
Heather Wadsworth  
Grenville Waugh  
Eleanor Wiebe  
Lynne Wilson  
Rachel Wolfe  
Jon Woolley  
Michael Zacharias  
Erin Zorde

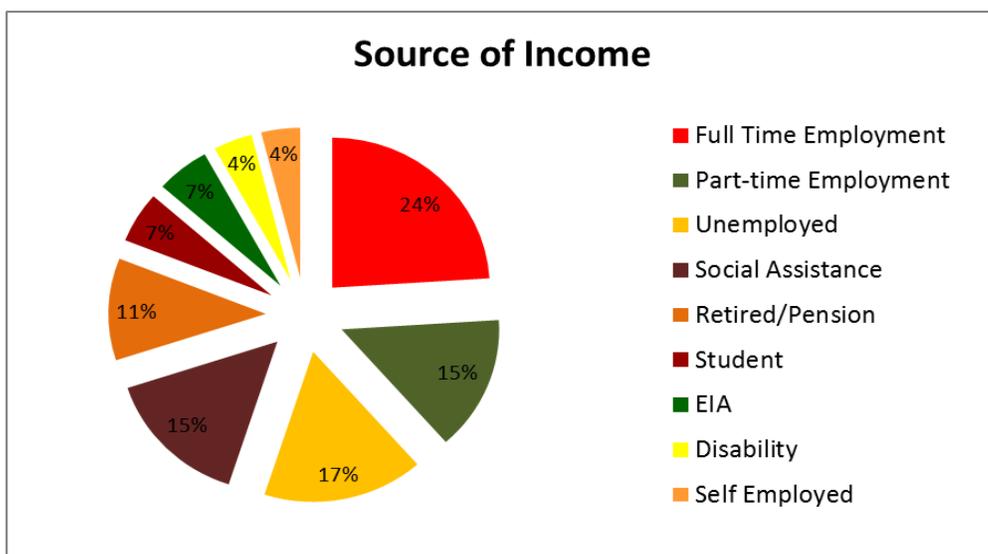
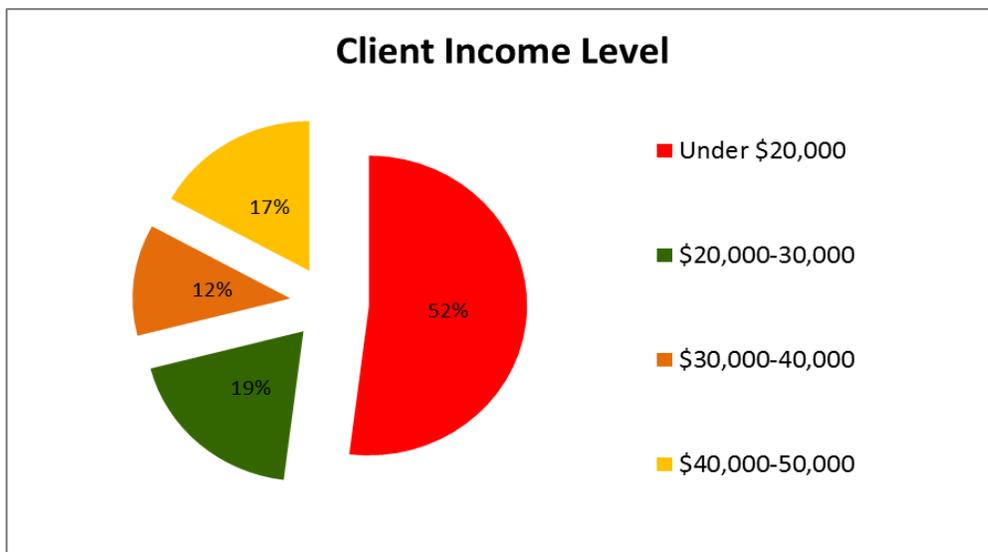
**Thank You!**

## Statistics - What we learn from the data

In this fiscal year we had 3310 client appointments which is a 15% increase over the previous year. On average, 276 individuals are assisted each month either at a drop-in clinic or a specialized clinic appointment.

Many come to LHC only once and leave with answers to their questions. Some are referred to another agency that may be better able to assist with the situation they face. Others get direction on the steps they need to take or the information they need to gather to move their matter forward and then return to LHC for more in-depth help in drafting documents they need for Court. The data shows that a large number of visitors are repeat clients, demonstrating that they feel the service is valuable. Many refer friends and family to LHC!

LHC limits its services to individuals with a household income of under \$50,000, but the statistics show that the majority (52%) of visitors reported an income under \$20,000, which is well under that threshold. The source of income of LHC clients was varied, including 24% working full-time, 17% unemployed, 15% working part-time, and another 15% on social assistance. Information collected shows that the range of people finding value in the service is diverse, but they share a similar need.



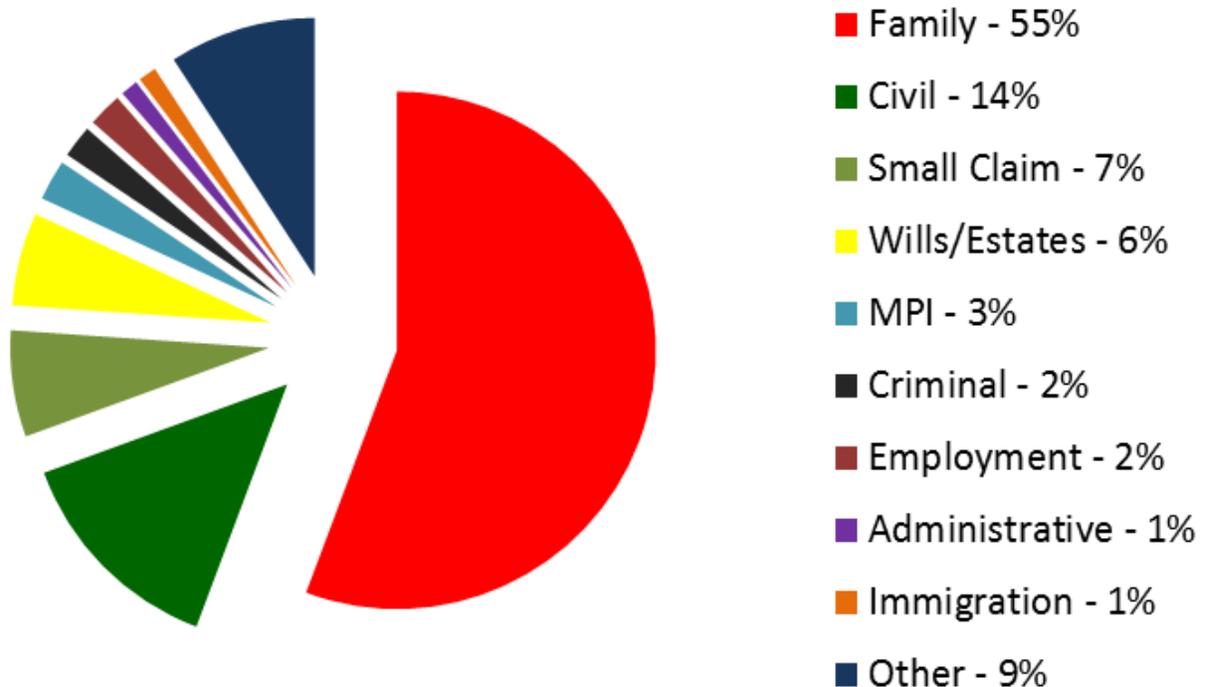
Drop-in Clinics are the main way the public can access LHC services. These clinics run on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and are the opportunity for clients to come describe their legal matter and get information and guidance. Students meet with clients, identify legal issues, make referrals, and if further assistance can be provided, appointments are scheduled in our more specialized Family Clinic and Consumer Protection Clinic. Drop-In Clinics remained busy where we saw 1738 clients. Family Law Clinic operated twice per week and at those meetings we assisted 309 clients with drafting documents and navigating the family court system. The Consumer Protection Clinic continued to grow in its second year of existence and 138 clients received help with small claims or other consumer protection issues.

Our Family Law Program also helped 91 self-representing individuals in Family Law Court, by explaining to them the next steps to be taken as well as speaking to judges on their behalf when possible.

Our educational workshops were in greater demand this past year and we delivered presentations to 170 members of the public, either at the LHC offices or upon request at partner organizations. We are happy to attend other agencies when large groups are seeking information on specific topics and in the upcoming year we will be trying to develop more workshops in areas of need and interest.

Consistently each year, the type of issue people most often seek our assistance with is related to family law. While civil and small claims questions increased to over 20% in 2018/19, 55% of clients were hoping for help with their family law issue. See below for the breakdown:

## 2018/19 Issues by Type



# Responding to What We've Learned

## FAMILY LAW WORKSHOP

In 2019 the Court of Queen's Bench introduced a new model for scheduling and case flow management in family law proceedings. The model was designed to allow all Manitobans better access to justice in the area of family law within a system that is less complex, less slow and less expensive. In addition, the Manitoba Government has introduced legislation that it hopes will minimize the social cost of conflict caused by divorce and separation and improve outcomes for families and children.

Managing these changes has been challenging for lawyers who practice family law, so undoubtedly self-represented litigants are finding the new processes difficult to navigate.

To assist LHC clients and the public in general, a workshop is being developed by staff and students which will explain the new processes in plain language. The workshop will be free to the public and will help people understand how to bring their family law matters forward and to work towards a conclusion in the quickest and most effective way.

As we at LHC learn and understand these and other changes to the law and procedure, we plan to share the knowledge with the people that matter.

## CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

In 2018/19, LHC conducted a client satisfaction survey, with the assistance of the University of Winnipeg's Criminal Justice Department, in an effort to evaluate the services it provides. The goal was to determine if the services were helpful, if the clients felt acknowledged and supported during their interactions with LHC students and staff, and to identify any opportunities for improvement. Over 240 clients completed the written survey and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Clients felt the person they met with was knowledgeable and helped them to better understand the law or the process they needed to follow. More importantly, they felt they were treated with respect when they attended LHC and would return in the future and/or recommend LHC to others as a helpful resource!

The results of this survey, along with other feedback we obtain throughout the year at workshops, presentations and in general, is reviewed annually and it helps guide the organization's decisions about programming. Efforts are continuously made to provide the best services we can and focus our resources where they are needed most.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION STUDENT

In 2019/20, LHC will be hosting a Conflict Resolution Student from The University of Winnipeg's Menno Simons College (MSC). MSC prepares student for participation in local and global communities with an education that addresses conflict, inequality and poverty. The student will be doing a practicum placement at LHC and will participate in efforts to engage clients in alternative ways to deal with conflict.

The recent changes to the family law model put an emphasis on resolving matters as early as possible, so adding this resource is timely and will help us guide clients through these processes. The opportunity to address a legal dispute in a more conciliatory way also exists in other areas of law, such as civil and contract matters, and efforts to resolve issues in a way that is less lengthy, costly, and adversarial will benefit all involved.

## WEBSITE

In the year to come, LHC plans to update its website so it is more informative, useful and accessible. Knowledge is a powerful tool and if LHC can improve the quality and quantity of information provided to the public, individuals will be better able to understand their rights and responsibilities. Stay tuned for the improvements!

# Generosity and Partnership

In recognition of the fact that the Legal Help Centre is making a positive contribution to the legal community, we have been fortunate to receive financial support from many organizations and persons who also feel strongly about improving access to justice. In addition to acknowledging the importance of the unique service that LHC provides to lower income individuals in Winnipeg, we are also being rewarded for creating a learning environment where future lawyers, social workers and other community minded professionals can not only develop proficiencies that will serve them well in their careers, but also learn the value of compassion and time spent listening.

Each of the law firms, foundations, institutions and individuals listed below share our values and believe in making the law understandable and the processes for obtaining justice accessible. The financial support received has allowed us to improve our physical space and strengthen our staff resources, which in turn allows us to better serve our clients. In keeping with our updated Vision, Mission Statement and Guiding Principles, we undertake to utilize the contributions to enhance services and resources available to the public so that information is more readily available, more people are learning about and exercising their rights, and better connections are being made with other groups and agencies working towards the same goal.

**We gratefully acknowledge the following organizations/individuals for their generosity in the past fiscal year:**

## Organizations

The Government of Canada - Canada Summer Jobs Program  
 The Law Foundation of Ontario  
 The Manitoba Bar Association  
 The Manitoba Law Foundation  
 The Pollard Family Foundation  
 The University of Manitoba -Faculty of Law  
 The University of Winnipeg  
 The Winnipeg Foundation

## Private Donors

Robin Dwarka	Ami Kotler
Anthony Dyck	Sarah Lugtig
Jo-Anne Findlay	Cheryl McGibbon
Eli Goldenberg	Julia Negrea
Jennifer Goldenberg	Sivananthan Sivarouban
Mark Gray	Nick Slonosky
Barbara Hamilton	Colleen Suche
Paula Hamilton	Eleanor Wiebe
Annette Horst	

## Law Firms

Bennet Waugh Corne  
 Brodsky & Company  
 D'Arcy & Deacon LLP  
 Evans Family Law Corporation  
 Fillmore Riley  
 Hill Sokalski Walsh Olson LLP  
 Levene Tadman Golub Law Corporation  
 McRoberts Law Office LLP  
 MLT Aikins LLP  
 Pitblado LLP  
 Tapper Cuddy LLP  
 Taylor McCaffrey LLP  
 Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP  
 Wolseley Law LLP

**Thank You!**

# Auditor's Report

March 31, 2019, with comparative information for 2018

## Statement of Financial Position

### Assets

Current assets:	2019	2018
Cash	\$168,391	\$ 99,677
Accounts receivable	2,215	788
Prepaid expenses	10,551	9,312
	<u>\$181,157</u>	<u>\$ 109,777</u>
Capital Assets:	23,661	-
<b>TOTAL ASSETS:</b>	<b>\$204,818</b>	<b>\$109,777</b>

### Liabilities, Deferred Contributions and Unrestricted Net Assets

	2019	2018
Current Liabilities (Accounts payable/accrued liabilities)	\$ 19,427	\$ 21,300
Deferred contributions	16,277	48,843
Unrestricted net assets	169,114	39,634
	<u>\$ 204,818</u>	<u>\$ 109,777</u>

## Statement of Operations

Revenue:	2019	2018
Donations	\$ 521,635	\$ 292,760
Donations in-kind	60,000	60,000
	<u>\$581,635</u>	<u>\$352,760</u>
<b>Expenses:</b>		
Salaries and benefits	332,046	309,734
Administration	20,649	18,186
Amortization	2,816	-
Rent	45,000	45,600
Office	37,444	34,068
Other	14,200	4,130
	<u>452,155</u>	<u>411,718</u>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>\$ 129,480</b>	<b>\$ (58,958)</b>

This publication is available in alternate formats upon request.



LEGAL **HELP** CENTRE

***Making the law work for everyone***

***202-393 Portage Avenue,  
Winnipeg, MB R3B 3H6  
204-258-3096  
info@legalhelpcentre.ca  
www.legalhelpcentre.ca***

***Like our page on Facebook:  
www.facebook.com/  
LegalHelpCentre/***

***Follow us on Twitter:  
@legalhelpcentre***