



A Word for Justice

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www.accessjustice.ca

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Family Clinic Development Project Clinic Report Changes

Great news! After a long and grueling process that was aided by the hard work of volunteers, the Law Foundation has granted our funding application, which proposes to develop and improve our family clinics.

We are currently attempting to recruit new family lawyers, improve our administrative services and inform our clients

of this new and improved service which is now available.

Lawyers, if you have any colleagues who you believe might be interested, please contact our office (604-482-3195). Additionally, if you have suggestions for how we might be able to best accomplish these goals, please contact our clinic coordinator, Ashleigh de Soto (ashleigh@accessjustice.ca).

Those of you who have been working in the clinics may have noticed the changes we have made to the clinic reports. We have accordingly attempted to simplify the form to condense the administrative work that our volunteer lawyers were previously required to partake in. As a result, instead of writing in the approved service number, the lawyer is now simply required to indicate whether the client was seen or not, and sign the bottom to verify that the information contained in the body of the report is correct, according to their knowledge.

Lawyers, please remember that the clinic reports are an important element of our free insurance program! When we comply with the Law Society's reporting requirements, by having you accurately complete your clinic reports, lawyers will have the insurance privilege of having no deductible. Furthermore, the clinic report also serves as a monitoring tool which helps us ensure that our clinics are run smoothly and efficiently.

If you have questions about clinic reports, please contact Jason Harman (jason@accessjustice.ca) or Ashleigh de Soto (ashleigh@accessjustice.ca).

A Word About 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 various matters including speeding tickets, assault charges, custody and access, maintenance, immigration, contracts, and insurance. In 2005, approximately 5,000 people used an Access Justice Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic because they were not able to afford a lawyer.

Please forward your donation to: Access Justice, 1440 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V6H 1M8 or donate online by going to www.accessjustice.ca and clicking on "Donate Now."

Volunteers of the Month

Access Justice has hundreds of volunteers who come from diverse academic and professional backgrounds. Every month we pay tribute to 2 volunteers of whom we have randomly selected from our volunteer database. We value each and every person who has dedicated themselves to Access Justice and hope to eventually honour everyone. Please take a moment to learn about two dedicated individuals whose hard work has contributed to our success.

Mr. Cecil F. Ash has been volunteering his valuable time and expertise to Access Justice every month since February 2001! His preferred areas of practice include: Family Law; Criminal Law; Personal Injury and Administrative Law.



Above: Mr. Cecil F. Ash

AJ: What compelled you to volunteer with Access Justice?

CFA: It was quite evident to me that there were many people in the community who could not afford to retain a lawyer and were at the same time ineligible for legal aid. These people needed at least legal advice and guidance to pursue some modicum of (continued next page)

(“Volunteers” continued) justice particularly in the area of Family Law.

AJ: What has been the most rewarding aspect of volunteering with Access Justice?

CFA: The genuine gratitude of clients after receiving legal advice and the knowledge that I have assisted persons in need.

AJ: Why is Access Justice important to the community as a whole?

CFA: Without the free legal advice that Access Justice provides to the needy, in many cases only the “well off” or the rich would be in a position to pursue their legal rights and obtain some justice. Having the principles of natural justice appropriately dispensed benefits the society as a whole.

AJ: What do you like to do in your spare time?

CFA: Read the classics and murder mysteries and watch sports on t.v. I believe myself to be quite an armchair quarterback and hockey coach.

Access Justice was lucky enough to make the acquaintance of Rita Amisano in Sep-

tember 2004. Since then Rita has been volunteering as a clinic chaperone, client call volunteer, research assistant



Above: Ms. Rita Amisano and an information booth representative.

AJ: What compelled you to volunteer with Access Justice?

RA: I knew people that could not afford lawyers, who utilized Access Justice pro bono clinics throughout the lower mainland. Since I was assisting these individuals with their respective legal matters, I had an opportunity to attend these clinics as well. The services that the lawyers provided were a great help to these individuals and I wanted

to give something back to the Society. I also wanted to assist others who were in need of legal advice and who could not afford it.

AJ: What has been the most rewarding aspect of volunteering with Access Justice?

RA: Getting positive feedback from clients who were able to apply the advice that was provided by Access Justice volunteer lawyers to their legal issues and cases. I also enjoyed assisting those in need of legal advice during what may have been a very stressful time in their life. This proved to be very beneficial in itself.

AJ: What do you like to do in your spare time?

RA: Aside from volunteering with Access Justice, I like to read, rollerblade, and spend time with family and friends. I also like to do research for people for both legal and non-legal issues.

AJ: Any words to live by?

RA: “You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing you think you cannot do.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

Dugald's Corner

Over the last year we at Access Justice have set our goals towards improving the quality of service provided by Access Justice. We are building the foundations for further expansion so that the dream of all BC lawyers helping the have-nots, becomes more of a reality.

These accomplishments include:

- Improvements to our reporting system – lawyers are now able to send clinic reports on every client they see
- Increasing the number of Clinic Assistants at clinics so that most of our clinics now have clinic assistants
- Growth in the number of Client Call Volunteers
- Improvements to our computer programming and our web site to assist volunteers and agencies in booking clients

This astonishing success is due to the dedication of our staff and many volunteers. It is extraordinary to me that over 700 lawyers and non-lawyer volunteers are devoting their valuable time, often at great personal sacrifice to help make Canada's justice system into something that can make us all proud!

I also want to take a moment to update you on the progress of the PST case. As you know, we are saying that charging a tax on legal services rendered is unconstitutional. Following the recent decision from the Court of Appeal, we are working to clarify the meaning and implication of the subsequent order. I also want to thank Chief Justice Donald Brenner, the current President of the Law Society of BC, Mr. Robert McDiarmid, Q.C., and the Benchers at the Law Society of BC for their support of Access Justice throughout 2005 and into 2006. -Dugald E. Christie

New Website Features on www.accessjustice.ca

Did you know that our website is constantly being updated to include new and improved features that pertain directly to you? Lawyers, you can easily access your Clinic Reports online! Find out how below:

1. Visit Access Justice online at: www.accessjustice.ca
2. Click on the “Member Login” tab located on the upper, left hand corner of the front page
3. Insert your “Username”

and “Password”. If you do not already have it, please obtain it from your clinic assistant or email our web architect, Jimmy Yan (jyan@accessjustice.ca)

4. Sign in
5. Click on the “Calendar” option
6. Select your clinic according to the date your clinic is scheduled for from the drop down menu
7. Click “Go”

8. Select your name and wait for the Clinic Report to load

Yes, that's right – it's that easy! Don't forget to check back in the next issue to learn about another website feature that will make your time spent with Access Justice all the more efficient and effective.