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probono
law of bc

A PRO BONO UPDATE

**Pro Bono Law of BC
Western Canada Society to Access Justice**

probononet.bc.ca

www.accessjustice.ca



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Q: What have we been up to?

A: Quite a lot

- In 2008 Access Justice operated 70 clinics around BC with 320 volunteer lawyers serving over 4250 clients
- In 2008 Pro Bono Law of BC served several hundred clients through its roster programs, its Supreme Court chambers project, and its disbursements program



Q: What else?

- PBLBC hosted the 2008 National Pro Bono Conference
- AJ held its first annual Ride for Justice in 2008
- We have worked jointly on projects with other pro bono providers including the Salvation Army and Pro Bono Students Canada



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Q: What have we done together?

- Since 2007 we have participated in a number of joint projects to promote closer organizational ties, including:
 - Pro Bono Practice CLE Courses
 - Pro bono enhancement research project
 - Joint presentations to Law Society committees and other organizations
 - The recent Pro Bono Goes Public outdoor clinics in Vancouver, Kelowna, and Victoria



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Q: So why aren't you merging?

A: We are.

- In the fall of 2008 our boards agreed in principle to explore a formal merger
- In March 2009 we received an initial grant from the Law Foundation of BC for the capital costs of a merger
- In April 2009 a joint Transition Committee began preparations for merger



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And ...

- In June 2009 we received a LF commitment for 2 year operating grant effective April 1, 2010
- In July 2009 both boards formally resolved to implement a merger by April 1, 2010
- We will be co-locating to a downtown office on December 1, 2009



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And ...

- We are aiming for full integration of governance and operations by April 1, 2010



Q: What are the benefits?

- Seamless delivery of pro bono summary advice, brief services, and representation services
- Efficiencies in management and administration, fundraising, and lawyer recruiting
- Stronger voice for pro bono and access to justice issues to government and the public



Q: What can the bar do?

A: Volunteer

- Pro bono service is a tradition *and* an obligation
- We have something for everyone:
 - Clinics, rosters, duty counsel services
 - PLEI projects
 - Special events
 - Board and committee service



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And ...

A: Donate

- The LF grant will only cover about 2/3 of our projected annual budget
- Continued generous donations from the individual lawyers, firms, and bar groups will be vital



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Q: What about PST and legal aid?

A: Not forgotten

➤ Our vision is

“A justice system in which limited means is not a barrier to obtaining quality legal services”

➤ A core principle continues that pro bono is not a substitute for a properly funded legal aid system



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Q: Any questions?

Thanks.

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