# 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

# **REFLECTING ON THE STEPS WE'VE TAKEN**



As my term as Board President comes to a close, I am reflecting on the steps we've taken on the road to advancing equality and justice in this beautiful province in which we live. There are so many pressing needs.

A particularly urgent need is access to justice. When I began my term as President, a decade and a half of chronic underfunding and devaluing of legal aid for family law had left a gaping hole for women seeking legal help. But today,

just two years later—and after many years of hard work and tenacity at West Coast LEAF —women in our province have Rise Women's Legal Centre, BC's only community legal clinic providing a wide range of services specifically for low-income women in the Lower Mainland. Launched in partnership with UBC's Allard School of Law, the wait lists are months long, which speaks to both the pressing need and the success of the services delivered.

We are addressing access to justice from all angles and with all available tools. In April 2017, we worked with our colleagues at BC Public Interest Advocacy Centre to launch our first constitutional challenge on behalf of Single Mothers Alliance and two individual women who are fleeing violence. We believe that it's past time for the provincial government to step up and fulfil its duty to the women in this province whose safety is being jeopardized and whose relationships with their children hang in the balance.

We have also been reflecting on the best ways to make change and to bring our vision of substantive equality into the future. What does equality and justice at home mean in the current context of global unrest and uncertainty? This year, West Coast LEAF renewed our calls for Canada to step up to meet its international obligations to address the current state of gender equality. We even traveled to Geneva to speak up at the United Nations for BC women's rights and to share our perspective on the ongoing crisis in child care and its wideranging implications for women's human rights.



555 – 409 Granville Street Vancouver, BC V6C 1T2 t: 604.684.8772 1.866.737.7716 e: info@westcoastleaf.org We are also actively working to resist the sexist myths and stereotypes around sexual assault. Last year, we intervened in the Canadian Judicial Council Inquiry that recommended a judge be removed from the bench for his egregious comments about a sexual assault complainant. This year, we've embarked on an ambitious three-year project to pursue justice system reform so that the rights of sexual assault survivors are protected, while respecting the constitutional and human rights of accused persons.

These are the highlights for last fiscal year, and the foundations that were laid have resulted in a strategic vision for the next few years. We are focused most intently on our work on access to justice, economic security, the right to parent, addressing violence against women, health and reproductive rights, and criminalization and incarceration of women.

I'd like to offer gratitude to our donors, funders, and the people that serve this organization as staff, on the board, and in countless volunteer positions, including those who serve as pro-bono counsel in our interventions and cases. Thank you for your sustaining commitment to advancing equality and towards building a more just and equal BC.

Robyn Trask

westcoastleaf.org

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# **PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION**

West Coast LEAF's public legal education program encourages people to think critically about the law and society, and to understand and exercise their legal rights.

1,598

Number of youth

workshops total:

60

**Faye Cooper** 

Kaity Cooper

# SPEAKERS BUREAU



## **YOUTH WORKSHOPS**

Number of youth who participated in all youth workshops:

- 19 Youth in the Workplace workshops with 411 participants
- 18 No Means No workshops with 384 participants
- 18 TrendShift workshops with 537 participants
- 5 Power Play workshops with 266 participants

## ADULT WORKSHOPS

14 workshops with 147 participants

## **MENTORSHIP**



youth facilitators trained, with 35 active facilitators

Clare Funston

## Annabelle Cameron Lee Campbell Rosalind Campbell Lynne Carmichael Jessie Caryl

Colleen Cattell Gail Chaddock-Costello **Erika Chan** May Chan Samantha Chang

Marilyn Chechik Kayla Cheek

#### Amanda Chiu

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## LITIGATION

We bring forward systemic challenges and intervene in cases that have an impact women's inequality. We worked on **9 cases**, including:

- Intervening in BCCLA and JHSC v Canada at the BC Supreme Court to make sure that the disproportionate effects of solitary confinement on women, particularly Indigenous women and women with mental health issues, are brought to attention.
- Intervening in Schrenk v BC Human Rights Tribunal at the Supreme Court of Canada to stand against the negative impacts of discrimination and harassment that go well beyond economic burdens to encompass psychological harms and the perpetuation of systemic inequality.
- Alongside BCPIAC, launching Single Mothers Alliance v BC, a constitutional challenge against the Province of BC and the Legal Services Society for their failure to provide adequate family law legal aid to women fleeing abusive relationships. The case will be heard in BC Supreme Court.
- Resisting unlawful and harmful myths and stereotypes about sexual assault complainants in urging the Canadian Judicial Council Inquiry to remove former judge Robin Camp from the bench.
- Standing up for workers' rights in *Denton v BC* at the BC Court of Appeal to protect and promote meaningful and equal access to justice by allowing courts to retain discretion to hear *Charter* claims against an administrative regime.

#### SUPPORTERS, CONTINUED

Betty Jane Grant Alison Gray Seamus Grayer Lorraine Greaves Lucy Greene

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Danielle Lewchuk

# LAW REFORM

We track legislation and respond to governments when it affects the legal rights of women.

#### **4 REPORTS**

- High Stakes: The impact of child care on the human rights of women and children
- 8th annual CEDAW Report Card
- Roads to Safety
- Is that Legal? (revised)

#### WE LAUNCHED RISE WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE

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#### To the Minister of Social Development to end clawbacks

**5 LETTERS** 

- to disability assistance for maternity and parental El benefits
- To the Premier in support of Bill M-222, recognizing the dignity and worth of trans people
- To the Burnaby Board of Education on sanctuary schools
- To Burnaby City Council on displacement from rental housing for vulnerable residents
- To BC post-secondary institutions on sexual misconduct guidelines

#### **8** SUBMISSIONS AND BRIEFING NOTES

- To the Committee on Children and Youth on the Representative for Children and Youth's statutory oversight
- To the United Nations on Canada's child care obligations under CEDAW
- To the UN on CEDAW's attention to areas of inequality of concern to BC women
- To the Federal Committee on Justice and Human Rights on funding for civil legal aid
- To the BC government on women's equality in BC's budget

- To the BC government on the definition of "spouse" and "dependent" in employment assistance legislation for income assistance and disability benefits
- To the BC Ministry of Justice on the Family Law Act regarding guardianship and property division rules
- To Status of Women Canada on a national strategy addressing gender-based violence

#### Jessica Lewis

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WEST COAST LEAF 5

# **AREAS OF FOCUS**

In 2016/17, we continued to work for women's equality on many fronts:

- ECONOMIC SECURITY: Fighting for women's economic security by actively supporting anti-poverty policy solutions, including an affordable, accessible, and high quality child care system.
- ACCESS TO JUSTICE: Fighting for women's access to justice by developing case law in support of increased access to family law legal aid and continuing to ensure that our equality and human rights laws, as well as our family laws, provide accessible and effective protections.

#### THE RIGHT TO PARENT: Fighting for equality in the child protection system by advocating for a fair and expedient process and by pushing for preventative services that will support women to parent.

- VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: Fighting for women's safety by challenging the systemic barriers that put women at an increased risk of violence and ensuring that every level of our criminal justice system is responsive to violence against all women, including the most marginalized.
- CRIMINALIZATION & INCARCERATION: Fighting for the human rights of criminalized women by bringing the voices of women to key public policy debates on the criminal justice system.
- HEALTH AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS: Promoting women's self-determination through safe, appropriate, accessible, and judgment-free healthcare services tailored to meet the needs of diverse women and that recognize women's autonomy.

#### SUPPORTERS, CONTINUED

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## WEST COAST LEAF IN THE MEDIA

articles, radio

and TV spots



VANCOUVER

SUN

26,54

unique website visitors



5,296

**6 6** *Is That Legal?* is flying off the shelves here. We've had 3,444 copies ordered so far this year, which is more than any of our other public legal education (PLE) materials. And many of the people ordering this booklet are placing multiple orders of 25 copies. So it would appear there's a lot of interest out there about PLE information around online harassment and cyberbullying. Our plans to translate the booklet into five languages other than English will help meet the needs of diverse communities.

> - Legal Services Society (partner in the new edition of Is that Legal?)

> > Robyn Worcester

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And thanks to our Youth Program Coordinators, Grace McDonell in Kamloops and Sarah Layla Robbie in Nanaimo



# **2016/2017 FINANCIALS**

#### **REVENUES**

Grants	\$ 445,404
Fundraising	319,939
Endowments & interest	7,592
Education fees & Other	<u>6,951</u>
Total	\$ 779,886

#### **EXPENSES**

Program costs: Staff and contractors	566,682
Program costs: other	65,791
Rent	53,532
Office & equipment	45,852
Fundraising	45,602
Accounting & audit	8,405
Governance	<u>2,811</u>
Total	\$788,675

Legal committees, legal volunteers, and pro-bono counsel: 2,157 hours, 42%

Admin & outreach: 284 hours, 6% 284 hours, 6% Sag hours, 11% Youth facilitators: 582 hours, 11% Breakfast volunteers + interns: 822 hours, 16% **5,079** VOLUNTEER HOURS IN 2016/2017