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The Themis Monthly Giving Club is our fastest-growing group of donors! Monthly giving is the best way to support West Coast LEAF. It provides sustainable revenue, reduces administrative costs, and helps us to plan for the future. Please contact Sara Gortari at 604.684.8772 ext. 123 for more details.

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West Coast LEAF
555 - 409 Granville Street,
Vancouver, BC V6C 1T2

T: 604.684.8772
T: 1.866.737.7716
F: 604.684.1543

www.westcoastleaf.org
info@westcoastleaf.org



LEAFlet

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**23rd ANNUAL
EQUALITY BREAKFAST**
Friday March 19, 2010
Fairmont Hotel Vancouver

Keynote Speaker:
Nobel Peace Prize winner
Jody Williams

JODY WILLIAMS AND HER PASSION FOR PEACE

By Joan Morris



"The rest of the time is up to the rest of us."

Once again, West Coast LEAF is thrilled to welcome a Nobel Peace Prize winner as the keynote speaker at the annual Equality Breakfast – this time, the tenth woman in the world to receive that prestigious title in its almost 100-year history.

Jody Williams and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997. Williams has been an advocate for freedom, self-determination, and human rights since the protests of the Vietnam War. She struggles to reclaim the real meaning of peace, stating:

"Peace is not just the absence of war. It's a world with justice and equality. It's a world where the basic needs of the majority of the people on our planet are met. If we stop spending money on war, we'd have more than enough to invest in these basics of long-term peace. People should have basic housing, access to medical care, education, and work. Everyone should have clean drinking water and food to eat every day."

From 1992, with two non-governmental organizations and a staff of one, Williams oversaw the International Campaign to Ban Landmine's growth to over 1,300 organizations in 95 countries working to eliminate antipersonnel landmines. She served as a chief strategist and spokesperson for the ICBL as it achieved its goal of an international treaty banning antipersonnel landmines, during a diplomatic conference in Oslo in 1997.

In January 2006, Williams and four sister Laureates established the Nobel Women's Initiative. Its mission is to use the prestige and access afforded by the Nobel Prize to spotlight and promote efforts of women's rights activists, researchers and organizations working to advance peace, justice and equality for women.

In 2007, Williams led a mission on Darfur for the UN's Human Rights Council and presented a hard-hitting report to the Council. She continues to be actively involved in work related to stopping the war in Darfur.

Jody Williams is the recipient of fifteen honorary degrees, among other recognitions. In 2004, she was named by Forbes Magazine as one of the 100 most powerful women in the world in its first such annual list.

**The 2010 Equality Breakfast will be held on March 19
at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver.**

KAMLOOPS BREAKFAST



Mary Eberts and Krystal Smith, a key organizer of the Kamloops Persons Day breakfast. Mary Eberts is a constitutional expert and human rights lawyer and co-founder of the Legal Education and Action Fund for women in 1985. She was a recipient of the Governor-General's Persons Day award in 1996.

October 2009 marked the 80th anniversary of "Persons Day", the victory that established many women as "persons" under the law and eligible for appointment to the Senate. West Coast LEAF celebrated with Persons Day Breakfasts in Kamloops and Victoria, featuring keynote speaker Mary Eberts. The Kamloops event was sponsored by the Kamloops and District Elizabeth Fry Society, TRU Students' Union and The Soroptomists.

LEGAL AID DENIED

On December 3, lawyers in Kamloops voted to protest against continuing cuts to legal aid services in BC by withdrawing some of their services starting in January.

The action is described as a "measured response" to Legal Services Society reductions and cutbacks. The lawyers will refuse family and criminal duty-counsel work starting January 11.

The Kamloops legal aid office is one of five regional offices being closed in March 2010. All but one of the regional offices will be eliminated, along with the LawLINE.

This announcement follows extensive service reductions introduced earlier this year – all in addition to a 40% funding reduction between 2002 and 2004 that particularly affected family law, the legal aid area most often accessed by women. Personal stories and case scenarios have illustrated the devastating impact this can have:

"A had no friend in the courtroom with her. She had to stand up alone, without legal representation, against her former abuser. During the trial A had to cross-examine M about the sexual and physical abuse she experienced in the relationship with him. She also had to cross examine his parents, his friend, his new partner and a child psychologist. The judge did not accept A's affidavit evidence because it was not signed. A did not realize that the Affidavit needed to be sworn and still wonders why the clerk at the courthouse didn't tell her that."

West Coast LEAF is currently working with British Columbia Public Interest Advocacy Centre (BCPIAC) to develop the idea of a legal "right to counsel in family law", and also anticipates an update of 2002's report Legal Aid Denied in April 2010.

To support the call for Access to Justice in BC, visit www.thepetitionsite.com/1/access-to-justice.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Kate Kovaleva and Tommy Chen

Kate and Tommy are volunteer youth facilitators for West Coast LEAF's No Means No and Youth in the Workplace programs.

The workshops are designed for youth between the ages of 11- 15 and delivered by facilitators between the ages of 17 – 24.



Kate Kovaleva began volunteering with West Coast LEAF in the spring of 2008. She is currently a student at UBC focusing on literature and political science.

"Initially, I was captivated by the mission of West Coast LEAF; achieving equality for women is something I'm proud to be a part of. I also respect the well thought out approach, focusing not only on law reform and rights litigation, but also on public education. When I facilitate education workshops for younger youth, I'm continuously reassured by their eagerness to learn, at the same time as being inspired by the integrity of the other facilitators and staff."

In addition to volunteering with West Coast LEAF, Kate sits on the Youth Advisory Council for The McCreary Centre Society, promoting youth health through research and involvement. She is also a resident committee member for the Neighbourhood Small Grants Project at Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House.



Tommy Chen completed our Youth Facilitator training this November. He is a Grade 12 student at Prince of Wales Secondary and enjoys the learning opportunities offered by West Coast LEAF.

"Volunteering with West Coast LEAF is such great experience for me. Throughout the facilitation training, I learned about consent, sexual assault, workplace rights, sexual harassment, and systemic discrimination. The guest speakers also taught me about Canada's legal system and legal rights. I understand more about facilitation and education, and I learned that being a facilitator or even a teacher is not an easy task. This experience will help me to improve my skills such as facilitation, public-speaking, critical thinking, and task-solving. "

Tommy also volunteers at organizations such as S.U.C.C.E.S.S, Dhalco Learning Centre Inc., and school libraries. In fact he volunteers so much he refers to it as one of his hobbies. He also has other hobbies such as street-dancing, soccer, skating and Chinese painting.

DONOR PROFILE

Allison Lepp

By Joan Morris

Allison Lepp is a bright, talented, and caring young woman. She is armed with three degrees, and has been called to the BC Bar.

During the term of articling for a litigation firm, Allison attended West Coast LEAF's 2008 Equality Breakfast and became a member of the Themis Monthly Giving Club. She also helped out with fundraiser mailings and assisted at events. Allison was inspired by her mother's human rights and environmental efforts and has followed her example. For the past decade, Allison has participated in charity fundraisers, assisted at community and university events, and she is currently training as a volunteer at a rape crisis center.

Her father is a civil litigator, and she shares the same passion for putting forth the strongest case possible. Allison graduated with Honours with Distinction after studying History and English at Queen's. She won scholarships to study law at UBC and at the University of Copenhagen. While working on her Master's Degree in Comparative Law at McGill, Allison's research project focused on forms of discrimination and Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and she won an essay prize for a paper on gender equality.

McGill's Law Women Caucus provided Allison with the unforgettable experience of attending the 51st Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York. All the countries were in attendance, even those with poor records for human rights, and it was great to hear those leaders acknowledge an ideal. Allison remains concerned about the attitudes or apathy that people in general have regarding the progress of women's issues.

Allison has enjoyed playing soccer and rugby, and she has kayaked and trekked in travels. A recent tour through south-east Asia deepened her understanding of the social and financial liberties Canadians enjoy.

SOCIAL JUSTICE LAW CONFERENCE 2009

On October 31, West Coast LEAF co-sponsored the Social Justice Law Conference 2009, along with the BC Civil Liberties Association and alumni of the Law Union of BC.

The conference was aimed at building a community of lawyers, advocates and law students committed to social justice principles, in order to engage in ongoing networking, professional development and advocacy opportunities. It was an exciting opportunity for practitioners to share and discuss their personal routes to social and environmental justice practice, social justice practice models, and progressive legal networking models in Canada and the U.S.

Feedback on the conference was overwhelmingly positive, and the momentum to build the community is still growing. On December 1, a group of lawyers and advocates met to organize further educational opportunities, social events and campaign strategies. A list-serv will soon be up and running so we can all stay in touch about upcoming events and issues. Keep an eye on our website for further information about how to get involved!

WEST COAST LEAF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY Breakfast Volunteer

Celebrate the achievements made in women's equality and be a part of an exciting event by volunteering for the 23rd Annual Equality Breakfast!

This year's breakfast will be held on Friday March 19, 2010 at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver from 7:00 – 9:30 am. We are honoured and thrilled to have Nobel Peace Prize winner Jody Williams as this year's guest speaker. The Equality Breakfast is an exciting event attracting about 800 guests from the legal, business and social service sectors.

We're looking for volunteers to help plan and organize the breakfast as well as volunteer on the day of the event. We will be hosting orientations in January. **Please contact Sharon Xia at 604.684.8772 ext.117 or by email at fundraiser@westcoastleaf.org.**

