

# LEAFlet

PROVOCATIVE • OPINIONATED • PERSUASIVE



JOHNNY LIU PHOTO

**THANK YOU** for supporting the 2014 Equality Breakfast / page 4



Sign up for news alerts on our website



facebook.com/WestCoastLEAF



@WestCoast\_LEAF



WEST COAST  
LEAF

555-409 Granville Street  
Vancouver, BC V6C 1T2  
t: 604-684-8772  
t: 1-866-737-7716  
e: info@westcoastleaf.org

[westcoastleaf.org](http://westcoastleaf.org)

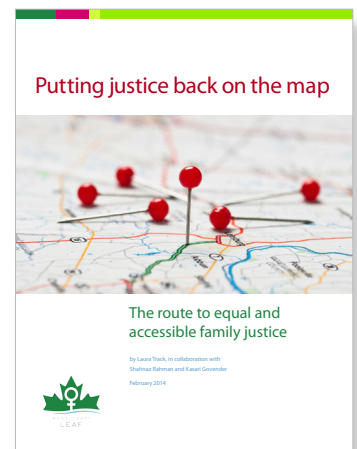
## REPORT PUTS JUSTICE BACK ON THE MAP IN FAMILY LAW

Sandrine works full-time as an administrative assistant at \$15 an hour. She and her husband split up a year ago. They have two children.

Sandrine has been trying to settle custody arrangements through the Courts, but couldn't afford a lawyer for very long. She does not qualify for legal aid. As a result, Sandrine has had to appear in Court by herself. She's had to draft and file her own legal documents, cross-examine witnesses, research family law, and make submissions in Court. Sandrine is worried she will lose custody of her children; the long hours spent trying to navigate the legal system are taking a toll on her job. With balancing child care, housework, her paid work, and the legal case, often the only time she has to prepare for Court is late at night. Her health is suffering from stress and lack of sleep.

Sandrine's story is just one of many. People across the province — predominantly women — are struggling to navigate the complex system of family justice, without representation or advice from a lawyer.

Family law is the most significant unmet legal need in the province. A poorly funded legal aid system, coupled with the cost and complexity of obtaining legal representation, makes it all but impossible for many British Columbians to assert their legal rights in family law cases. Women are less likely to be able to afford a lawyer after separation and are more likely to face violence and abuse and to be the primary caregiver for their children.



Our new report, *Putting Justice Back on the Map: The route to equal and accessible family justice*, proposes concrete solutions for the massive shortage in BC's public legal services and, most important, new delivery models for family law services. The recommendations set forward in the report are based on consultations with over 200 participants from 70 different service-delivery agencies from around the province.

*continued on page 2*

## DONOR PROFILE

# JANE SHACKELL



Jane Shackell served as a director of West Coast LEAF for its first 10 years and is a past member of the Canadian and BC Human Rights Tribunals. She is currently practising business law in Vancouver.

### Please tell us about the early years of West Coast LEAF

It was 1985; the *Charter of Rights* had been adopted a few years earlier but implementation of the equality section of the *Charter* was delayed to April 1985. It became clear that implementation was not going to create meaningful changes in law unless women took action.

I was a very recent graduate of law school; it was a very exciting time. I heard about a group being organized by Lynn Smith, who had taught me in law school, and I wanted to be part of it. That was the motivation — to take part in the process of deciding what changes were needed to bring section 15 of the *Charter* to life — and making it happen.

### Describe West Coast LEAF during your term as Director

It was really fun! We thought it was important for women to take charge of section 15 to ensure the law developed in the most helpful ways for women. There were so many choices about what our priorities should be. Our ideas were generally well received by the public and eventually by the Courts, as well.

### Do you have stories to share with us?

Our first case was a challenge to the provisions of the *Change of Name Act* in the Yukon — at that time, a married woman could not give her own surname to her child. We found a plaintiff and we found counsel to take the case and we went to Court and we won. We were absolutely thrilled. We thought it was a good start because the discrimination was so plain in the legislation. It was a message to “sit up and take notice that we are here.”

*Interview by Sally Chang*

## Our first case was a challenge to the provisions of the *Change of Name Act* in the Yukon — at that time, a married woman could not give her own surname to her child.

*continued from page 1*

The two suggested delivery models are:

- The strategic placement of staff lawyers “in house” in community-based women-serving agencies; and
- The development of a student-driven women’s clinic providing free and low-cost family law services.

Both models would help Sandrine access the advice and support of a lawyer. Both models are founded

on a collaborative approach for lawyers, advocates, interpreters, and other service-providers.

Integrating legal and nonlegal support services sets the groundwork for lasting and comprehensive solutions to women’s legal problems and the many other issues that often accompany them. It means existing resources would be used efficiently and that Sandrine and so many others would get the services that they desperately need.

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE

# SALLY CHANG

Communications volunteer Sally Chang is graduating this Spring from UBC with an Honours degree in English. She has been accepted to several law schools.

### **Why did you gravitate toward West Coast LEAF?**

I've always been very passionate about equality. Growing up as a woman of colour in Canada, I've faced everyday discrimination and witnessed family and friends feel isolated from the community. It made me want to address those issues in some way. For me, that was through the law. Volunteering at West Coast LEAF has been a great step to learning about how equality is upheld — or not — by the law . . . and what action we can take.

### **What would you say to people who view feminism as outdated and “over”?**

That makes me so mad! Many people have misguided views about feminism. Some people see it as hating men. Others see sexism as Mad Men shenanigans. But as our culture has changed and the forms of sexism have changed — sexism is when I feel uncomfortable to go outside wearing a skirt; it's when I'm walking at night and feel the need to clutch my cell phone. It's ridiculous when people say sexism no longer exists because it's everywhere. It might be subtle sometimes, but it's definitely there.

*Interview by Jane Young*



## MOTHERING WITH DISABILITIES

Women with disabilities face many barriers to their right to equal participation in Canadian society, including their rights as parents. Mothers may lose their children through custody disputes or child protection proceedings because of perceptions about their abilities, rather than the best interests of their children. Women seeking to be mothers also face greater difficulties than nondisabled women in exercising their reproductive rights or accessing reproductive technology.

The stigma — that parents with disabilities are less able to parent — shows up in the way law and policy are designed and implemented. Since we know that women disproportionately carry the burden of child care and single mothers head up the vast majority of lone-parent households, the stigma against parents with disabilities is particularly borne by women.

People with disabilities have a long tradition as advocates yet there is limited research in Canada around these issues. Our Mothering with Disabilities project seeks to remedy the gap. With project funding from the Notary Foundation, Vancouver Foundation, Law for the Future Fund, and the Health Sciences Association, West Coast LEAF has begun to identify systemic barriers facing mothers with disabilities in BC through community consultations with disabled mothers and the advocates and service-providers with whom they work.

In our project, we will analyze how existing laws and policies apply to women with disabilities and recommend changes to ensure greater respect for the rights of mothers with disabilities. We anticipate completing our report and submitting our recommendations to lawmakers and policymakers in September 2014.



CHRIS CHEUNG PHOTO  
SALLY CHANG (LEFT), INTERVIEWED BY JANE YOUNG (RIGHT), FOR LEAFlet



JOHNNY LIU PHOTO



CHRIS CHEUNG PHOTO



JOHNNY LIU PHOTO



JOHNNY LIU PHOTO

*"I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the Equality Breakfast this morning. The Razzmataps were great. The speech by Dr. Samantha Nutt was one of the best speeches I have ever heard." — Brenda Benham*

## THANK YOU TO OUR FABULOUS 2014 EQUALITY BREAKFAST SPONSORS

**DIAMOND SPONSOR**  FASKEN MARTINEAU

### GOLD SPONSORS

 Miller Thomson  bcgeu  Canadian Labour Congress  CUPE BC  GALL LEGGE GRANT & MUNROE LLP

**SILVER SPONSORS** Borden Ladner Gervais LLP / Health Sciences Association of BC / Hospital Employees Union / Mandell Pinder LLP / McCarthy Tétrault LLP / Moore Edgar Lyster / Stikeman Elliott LLP / Trial Lawyers Association of BC / UFCW Local 1518 / Vancity / Victory Square Law Office LLP

**BRONZE SPONSORS** Barbara Bell C.A. / Black Gropper / COPE 378 / Dye & Durham Corporation / Harper Grey LLP / Hastings Labour Law Office LLP / Jenkins Marzban Logan LLP / Public Service Alliance of Canada BC Region / Woodward & Company LLP



JOHNNY LIU PHOTO

**DR. SAMANTHA NUTT** signs books for tomorrow's leaders at the 2014 Equality Breakfast.

## INVESTING IN WOMEN'S EQUALITY

West Coast LEAF is grateful for the ongoing support we receive from our donors, our members, and the Law Foundation of British Columbia. We also thank the following project funders.



**THANK YOU TO OUR SILENT AUCTION DONORS:** Accent Cruises / Amber Prince / Baaad Anna's Yarn Store / Bard On The Beach Theatre Society / Bed / Best Buy Canada / Blume Lash & Nail Boutique / Charlie's Chocolate Factory / Chateau Victoria Hotel & Suites / Coast Hotels and Resorts / David's Tea / Deborah Urano / Della Optique Optometry & Eyewear / Ethical Bean Coffee / Forum of Women Entrepreneurs / G Adventures Vancouver Concept Store / Gallery Café & Catering / Harbour Dance Centre / Hilton Whistler / Innovative Fitness / Jeweliette Jewellery / L.A. Translations and Designs Ltd. / Laurel Point Inn / Maggie Bernet / Malene Grotrian Fashion Design / Marquis Wine Cellars / Momentum Fitness / Mt. Bucherie Winery / Muse Salon / Museum of Anthropology at UBC / Pacific Business and Law Institute / Pacific Cinémathèque / Pemberton Distillery / Penticton Lakeside Resort Convention Centre & Casino / People's Co-op Bookstore / Andrew Lai / Petra Mayer Consulting / Plum Clothing / PPP-Photography / Purdy's Chocolates / Redfish Kids / Rosedale on Robson Suite Hotel / Royal BC Museum / Science World B.C. / Semperviva Yoga / Shahnaz Rahman / Sikora's Classical Records / Starbucks (Dundarave) / Stephen K Lee Photography / Tea For You / The Cultch / Top Table Group / Trees Organic Coffee & Roasting House / Two of Hearts Clothing / Unique Gift Baskets / Urban Fare Bute Street / Vancouver Aquarium / Vancouver Opera / Vancouver Symphony Orchestra / VanDusen Botanical Garden / Magnolia Villalobos / Westcoast Hot Yoga / West Coast LEAF Board