

DECEMBER 2021

# NEWSLETTER

Waterloo Region Community Legal Services

## Welcome!

Waterloo Region Community Legal Services is a non-profit organization funded by Legal Aid Ontario. We provide legal assistance, community advocacy and public legal education to residents of the Waterloo region living with low income. Our mission is to ensure that everyone in our community has equal access to justice and the legal supports necessary to improve their quality of life. We serve the entire Waterloo Region including the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, and the townships of Wilmot, Wellesley, Woolwich, and North Dumfries. We provide services in English, French, and Spanish. We can also arrange for an interpreter in other languages as needed.

We are thankful to all of our community partners for supporting us throughout this pandemic as we strive to ensure accessibility for all community members. We continue to offer free, virtual workshops and training sessions on legal topics such as: Employment law, Housing Law, Social Assistance, Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, Estates, Immigration Law and more. We also post the recordings of our public legal education workshops on our Youtube Channel.



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# Keeping Safe During the Pandemic

BY NANCY SINGER, SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER

Life certainly is different since March 2020 when Covid-19 swept into our region and turned the way we operate upside down. Our own offices have been closed to the public for over eighteen months now, and most staff are working remotely from home, but we still want to make it as easy as possible to access our services. One way is through a very handy Web Contact Form on our website. Phone messages can still be left in our general voice mailbox, which is regularly monitored. We have also added a locked box in the front foyer of our office, where documents and correspondence can safely be left and is checked on a daily basis.



In some very special circumstances when a person absolutely must be seen in person to overcome barriers due to lack of access to technology, or lack of familiarity with how to use the available technology, we make every effort to do this in the safest way possible. First, we ask people to complete a self-screening questionnaire. Without exception, all visitors must be masked and maintain social distance. There are plexi-glass barriers on the desks, and interview rooms are cleaned between clients.

Our newest intervention has been the participation in the “Stop the Spread and Stay Safe” program. Staff who are working on site are tested for Covid twice a week in order to limit any possible exposures to the virus and keep our staff and clients safe. We are proud to say that 100% of our staff are double-vaccinated and we have not had a single positive Covid test result since the implementation of the testing protocols.

“Staff who are working on site are tested for Covid twice a week in order to limit any possible exposures to the virus and keep our staff and clients safe.”

NANCY SINGER





## INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST PROGRAM

# SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE (SHIW) PROJECT

WATERLOO REGION COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES



Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Project

Projet sur L'harcèlement Sexuel au Travail

ALL WORKERS HAVE A RIGHT TO A SAFE WORKPLACE

We are thrilled to launch the Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (SHIW) Project with funding from the Department of Justice Canada. Our staff lawyer, Ashley Schuitema, will be coordinating the Project for both our clinic and the Community Legal Clinic of Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk.

The ultimate goal of the SHIW Project is to improve access to justice and reduce sexual harassment in the workplace – which remains a prevalent issue particularly for precarious and vulnerable workers. The three main initiatives of the Project include increasing public awareness through social media campaigns, providing public legal education and training to workers and community organizations, and providing advice and representation to survivors of workplace sexual harassment.

The SHIW Project aims to focus on precarious workers, young workers, newcomers, women working in non-traditional fields, vulnerable employees, and low income workers – including workers in fields where harassment is common such as the service and hospitality industry.



In the coming months Ashley will be presenting to high school co-op classes throughout the Waterloo Region District School Board, providing workshops to youth attending the *In Her Shoes* employment training program through the *YWKW*, and partnering with *Women's Crisis Services* for a Lunch & Learn. We would like to invite everyone to spread the word about the SHIW Project, follow us on social media and contact Ashley if you are connected with an organization that could benefit from this training.

### CONTACT US

ASHLEY SCHUIITEMA  
Staff Lawyer

✉ schuita2@lao.on.ca  
☎ 519-743-0254

**Web Contact Form:**  
[www.wrcls.ca/web-contact-form/](http://www.wrcls.ca/web-contact-form/)

    
@shiwWR



## Reflections of the First National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

BY LU ROBERTS, INDIGENOUS JUSTICE COORDINATOR

September 30, 2021 was a bittersweet day. This day marked the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation a.k.a Orange Shirt Day. *Healing of the Seven Generations* hosted the “Remember Me, Remember Us Walk” to reflect on the tragedies inflicted by the Indian Residential School System. As I walked with colleagues and friends, I thought to myself that it was amazing to see how many people showed up. Some businesses got the day off, including WRCLS, and it was heartwarming to have so many of my non-Indigenous colleagues make the commitment to attend.

I walked near the back of the group and was surprised to see how many people there were. Later on, someone told me that the line of people stretched 2km long. The walk ended at Victoria Park with speeches. I saw and spoke with friends that I haven’t seen in a long time. It felt supportive, being in the company of those that have similar experiences my family and I. I am an intergenerational survivor of Residential Schools. My mom went to Cecelia Jeffrey Residential School in Kenora, Ontario. Speakers at the Clock Tower shared horrific stories that occurred at Residential Schools. This was followed by a symbolic gesture of burning the Indian Act, and a message of hope prevailed.

As of today there have been more than 5000 unmarked graves found on the grounds of Residential Schools in Canada. In May, when the news first broke of the 215 graves found in Kamloops, BC there were a lot of collective emotions ranging from shock, anger, and disgust. This media attention forced Canadians to face their brutal past. “How could this be?” “I had no idea!” were some common responses.

### Did You Know?

The Indian Act, created in 1876, has sought to govern and erase Indigenous identities for 140 years and is still in existence today.

Survivors and their families have been talking about the deaths and abuses since it began. As more searches are being announced and conducted, as well as more grave sites found, we need to keep talking about these stories and keep the findings in the spotlight. These children deserve to be remembered and honoured.

There needs to be more solid actions from settlers, organizations and governments to make the commitment of reconciliation to Indigenous peoples. Here are some things that can be done at different levels:

- **Individual** – Learn about racism and learn about your biases, learn how to be an ally. Support Indigenous organizations and Indigenous-run businesses.
- **Organizations** – Have Indigenous people in positions of power, do not create token positions that are set up to fail.
- **Government** – Honour Treaties, Abolish the *Indian Act*.







## THE EXPOSURE PROJECT

We are excited to introduce our newest initiative: *The Exposure Project* - a platform to share the stories of individuals with lived experiences of poverty and homelessness in the Waterloo Region.

The objective is to utilize photography and social media platforms to raise awareness of the realities that individuals living with low-income experience and to help break the stigma associated with poverty and homelessness.

Our intent is to work in collaboration with individuals who have lived experiences and inspire more empathy and understanding in the wider community to strive for change. Read the stories of lived experiences on our website at [www.wrcls.ca/theexposureproject](http://www.wrcls.ca/theexposureproject). You can also follow us on Instagram and Facebook @TheExposureProjectKW

If you or anyone you know has lived experience and would like to participate, contact us through our Web Contact form ([www.wrcls.ca/web-contact-form](http://www.wrcls.ca/web-contact-form)) or reach out to us through our social media pages.

## ACCESS TO JUSTICE WEEK

*The Law Society* is taking part in Access to Justice Week 2021 by holding virtual webinars from October 25 to 29, 2021.

Together with local and national partners, Access to Justice Week will include a series of awareness-building virtual programs, centered around the themes of community building and inclusive justice.

Check them out at: <https://bit.ly/3dvIVtY>



## BASIC INCOME NOW

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our Basic Income Now lunch & learn, hosted in partnership with *Basic Income Waterloo Region*. A huge thank you also goes out to the panelists: *WRCLS'* Staff Lawyer Kristen Thompson, Andrea Kauppinen, Carol Stalker and Caterina Lindman for sharing this important information about Basic Income and the federal parties' platforms for this program.

The video recording for this session can be found on Youtube at: <https://bit.ly/3EZDZdb>



# Events

Our team can provide public legal education, training, and attend staff meetings to share legal information. Public Legal Education is an essential component of social justice. We regularly offer legal education sessions on a variety of topics including tenants' rights, Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, Estates and Power of Attorney, and Employment Law that are tailored to meet your group's needs.

See our Events page for upcoming workshops at: [www.wrcls.ca/events](http://www.wrcls.ca/events)  
Check out our Youtube channel at <https://bit.ly/3lwTv2d>

Waterloo Region Community Legal Services

VIRTUAL LUNCH & LEARN

## HOUSING LAW UPDATES

FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

OCTOBER 20, 2021 | 12PM-1PM | FREE

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION: [WWW.WRCLS.CA/EVENTS](http://WWW.WRCLS.CA/EVENTS)

Let's Talk About It.

October 25, 2021

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Legal Information Workshops

Education for WRDSB students entering the workforce.

Waterloo Region Community Legal Services

HOUSING INFORMATION WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS

OCTOBER 27, 2021

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Legal Information Workshop

October 29, 2021

Let's Talk About It.

November 1, 2021

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Legal Information Workshop

Education for WRDSB students entering the workforce.

Waterloo Region Community Legal Services

Ray of Hope

## COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES INFORMATION SESSION

NOVEMBER 3, 2021 | 2PM | FREE

Ray of Hope:  
659 King St E #230, Kitchener, ON N2G 2M4

Contact Ray of Hope for more information: (519) 576-6008 | [www.rayofhope.net](http://www.rayofhope.net)

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Legal Information Session

NOV 3, 2021 | 12-1PM | FREE

To register visit: [www.wrcls.ca/events](http://www.wrcls.ca/events)

Waterloo Region Community Legal Services

Ray of Hope

## COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES INFORMATION SESSION

NOVEMBER 8, 2021 | FREE

DROP IN FROM 1PM TO 3PM

Ray of Hope Community Centre:  
659 King St E #230, Kitchener, ON N2G 2M4

Contact Ray of Hope for more information: (519) 576-6008 | [www.rayofhope.net](http://www.rayofhope.net)

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Legal Information Session

NOV 11, 2021 | 2-3 PM | FREE

ROOM # 228 - ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
170 WESTMOUNT RD. W. WATERLOO.

Waterloo Region Community Legal Services

VIRTUAL LUNCH & LEARN

## HOUSING LAW UPDATES

FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

NOVEMBER 25, 2021 | 12-1PM | FREE

FOR MORE INFORMATION & REGISTRATION: [WWW.WRCLS.CA/EVENTS](http://WWW.WRCLS.CA/EVENTS)

Wills and Powers of Attorney

An information workshop that will focus on estate planning and the concepts of legal capacity as well as health care consent.

Presented by Shannon Down, Waterloo Region Community Legal Services

Tuesday, December 7, 2021  
6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

This is a free and virtual event. Registration is required.  
To register, email Gebre at [gberhundu@wrcls.ca](mailto:gberhundu@wrcls.ca) or visit our website [www.wrcls.ca](http://www.wrcls.ca) and click on the register online tab.

Let's Talk About It.

December 10, 2021

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Legal Information Workshops

Education for students entering the workforce.

Let's Talk About It.

December 3, 2021

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Legal Information Workshops

Education for students entering the workforce.

We invite our community partners and friends to celebrate Ahwenehaode - Indigenous Justice Program's 5th Year Anniversary. Join us to celebrate in person with us and learn about the services provided by Ahwenehaode and WRCLS (our open house will run from 12pm to 5pm. Registration is required.)

We will also be hosting a free, virtual event at 5:30pm via Zoom. In partnership with SOAHAC Waterloo-Wellington, Qualia Counselling Services, and Crow Shield Lodge, this panel will host a session on Creating Indigenous Spaces: Indigenous Resources in the Waterloo Region. We will discuss the work our organizations are accomplishing as well as the needs of the Indigenous community and how we can work together with mainstream organizations as allies.

Ahwenehaode  
INDIGENOUS JUSTICE PROGRAM

## 5th YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

DECEMBER 8, 2021

- Open House from 12pm to 5pm (Registration Required)
- Virtual Event: Creating Indigenous Spaces begins at 5:30pm

REGISTER AT: [WWW.WRCLS.CA/EVENTS](http://WWW.WRCLS.CA/EVENTS)

