



Neighbourhood Legal Services
London & Middlesex

**THIRTY-FIRST
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

OCTOBER 16, 2017

**MARKET TOWER
SUITE 507 – 151 DUNDAS STREET
LONDON, ONTARIO**

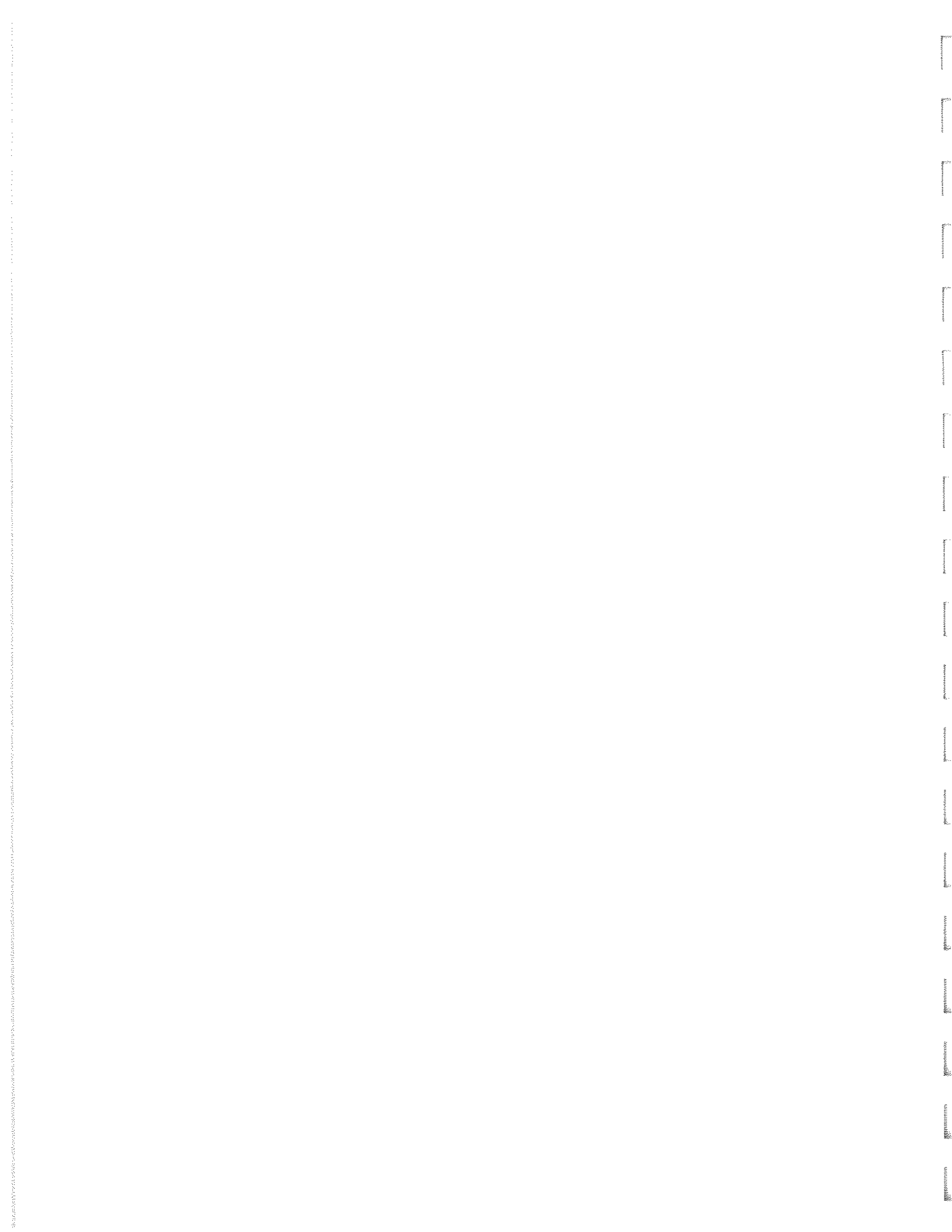
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Mike Laliberte, B.A., B Ed., LL.B.
Monica Wolf, B.A.(Hons.), LL.B.
Kristina Pagnello, M.A., LL.B.
Stephanie Dickson, B.A., LL.B./B.C.L.
Justin Chong, B.A. (Hons.), J.D.

Jeff Schlemmer, LL.B., *Executive Director*



Tasha Schmidt, B.A. (Hons.), LL.B./B.C.L.
Patty Gunness, C.L.W.
Micheal Joudrey, *Tenant Duty Counsel*
Betsy Esbaugh, B.A., *Licensed Paralegal*
Chelsea McMullan, *Licensed Paralegal*



NEIGHBOURHOOD LEGAL SERVICES (LONDON & MIDDLESEX) INC.

Thirty-First Annual General Meeting
Monday, October 16th, 2017, at 6:00 p.m.
151 Dundas Street
London, Ontario

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Guest Speaker: Henry Eastabrook – The Opioid Crisis in London
3. Approval of the October 24, 2016 AGM Minutes
4. Treasurer's Report (*Matt Bellia*)
5. Selection of Clinic Auditor
6. Executive Director's Report (*Jeff Schlemmer*)
7. Nominating Committee Report
 - Presentation of Slate of Nominees
8. Election of Directors
 - Nominations from the Floor
 - Appointment of Scrutineers to Count Ballots
 - Distribution and Collection of Ballots
 - Destruction of Ballots
 - Presentation of the New Board of Directors
9. Closing Remarks
10. Refreshments

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Neighbourhood Legal Services (London & Middlesex) Inc.
Meeting Minutes of the
Thirtieth Annual General Meeting
October 24th, 2016

The Board, Staff and Members of Neighbourhood Legal Services (London & Middlesex) Inc. met in the Board Room of Neighbourhood Legal Services (London & Middlesex) Inc. at Suite 507-151 Dundas Street, London, Ontario at approximately 6:00 p.m.

CLINIC MEMBERS/

GUESTS:

Lisa Birch, Ken Brooks, Maureen Clark, Veronica Elford, Janet Froud, Edna Hamilton, Sean Hunter, Metti Kebede, Brandon Lankester, Madeline McKinnon, Paul Morrissey, Ryan Parkington, Deb Peckham, Bonnie Quesnel, Pamela Quesnel, Marie Ross, Robert Sexsmith, Simon Srebernic, Louise VanWeeren, Ken Vigeant, Bruce Wright

STAFF PRESENT:

Jeffrey P. Schlemmer (Executive Director), Mike Laliberte (Staff Lawyer), Monica Wolf (Staff Lawyer), Kristie Pagniello (Staff Lawyer), Lawrence Burns (Staff Lawyer), Betsy Esbaugh (Paralegal), Chelsea McMullan (Paralegal), Micheal Joudrey (Tenant Duty Counsel), Patty Gunness (Community Legal Worker), Ewa Adamowicz (Support Staff), Erika Kiss (Office Manager)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION (by Bonnie Quesnel)
Bonnie Quesnel, Chair, Board of Directors, called the Thirtieth Annual General Meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. Ms. Quesnel welcomed the guests, staff and members present.

2. INDIGENOUS PRESENTATION
Jeff Schlemmer, Executive Director, introduced Ken Brooks, the Executive Director of the Elgin-Oxford Legal Clinic.

Mr. Brooks spoke about the presently hired Indigenous Justice Coordinator and the new program the Indigenous Justice Coordinator will be working on. The program is not new to the clinic system, as Hamilton and Sarnia already have it, but it is new to our counties.

Mr. Brooks mentioned that an application was put in with Legal Aid Ontario to get 3 more workers for the Windsor, Elgin-Oxford, Middlesex, Huron-Perth, and Kitchener areas, with funding for 3 years and anticipation that the funding will become permanent.

For the Indigenous Justice Coordinator program, Elgin-Oxford Legal Clinic asked to be the lead on it, and is co-ordinating with Neighbourhood Legal Services and Huron/Perth Community Legal Clinic. The primary component of the program is developing relationships with the indigenous community. An Advisory Committee was already developed and the Coordinator hired recently. The Coordinator will be primarily based at the Elgin-Oxford Legal Clinic but expected to be on the road a lot.

The program is fortunate as the candidate hired for the Indigenous Justice Coordinator position already knows the indigenous community and has many of the contacts in place. The program is meant to improve services to the indigenous community, coordinate services that may be appropriate, and provide intervention and support as needed. The Coordinator will facilitate services for the indigenous community. Some of those services are already in place in larger communities like London (N'Amerind Friendship Centre, At^lohsa), but are not readily available to residents of Elgin-Oxford or Huron-Perth Counties.

The Co-ordinator will work with Lyndon George, Indigenous Justice Coordinator for Hamilton, and Jeff Plain, Indigenous Justice Coordinator for Sarnia, and the other two new hires, with Lyndon and Jeff sharing their experiences. The indigenous community is very transient, there is a lot of movement within the community. The program's purpose is to learn and share information about the indigenous community's needs and culture. There is a plan to bring a training session about the indigenous community and the new program to the Southwest Region's Annual Training Conference.

3. APPROVAL OF PAST MEETING MINUTES

Madeline McKinnon/Pamela Quesnel

"that the October 26, 2015 Annual General Meeting Minutes be approved as presented".

-CARRIED-

4. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT (by Bonnie Quesnel)

Bonnie Quesnel, Chair, presented her farewell poem, a copy of which was included in the Annual General Meeting package.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT (by Ryan Parkington)

Ryan Parkington, Treasurer, presented to the membership the audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2015.

Ryan Parkington/Ken Vigeant

"that the Audited Financial Statements for the year ending March 31, 2016, be accepted as presented".

-CARRIED-

6. SELECTION OF CLINIC AUDITOR

Ryan Parkington/Madeline McKinnon

"that Hilborn LLP be retained for the purposes of conducting an audit for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, for Neighbourhood Legal Services (London & Middlesex) Inc."

-CARRIED-

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT (by J. Schlemmer)

Mr. Schlemmer highlighted portions of his written report, a copy of which was included with the Annual General Meeting package.

Ryan Parkington/Madeline McKinnon

"that the Executive Director's Report be accepted as presented".

-CARRIED-

8. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Bonnie Quesnel presented the candidates running for election.

List of Nominees Running for Election

Alycia Engelmanas
Sean Hunter
Metasbiya (Metti) Kebede
Brandon Lankester
Deb Pekham
Simon Srebernic
Rob Walsh

9. ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

There were no nominations from the floor. The slate of nominees was elected.

Lisa Birch/Pamela Quesnel

"that the slate of nominees (Alycia Engelmanas, Sean Hunter, Metti Kebede, Brandon Lankester, Deb Peckham, Simon Srebernic and Robert Walsh) be elected to the Board of Directors of Neighbourhood Legal Services (London & Middlesex) Inc.

-CARRIED-

10. CLOSING REMARKS AND REFRESHMENTS

Bonnie Quesnel, Chair, wished the new Board good luck in the coming year. She said it was a pleasure to serve on the Board of Neighbourhood Legal Services and to witness all the work done by the clinic and Board. She then thanked all those that took the time to attend this year's AGM and invited everyone to refreshments.

Pamela Quesnel

"that the meeting be adjourned".

-CARRIED-

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Quesnel, Chair

Erika Kiss, Recorder

E:\Erika\AGM October 24 2016 Meeting Minutes

HILBORN LLP

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of Directors of
Neighbourhood Legal Services (London & Middlesex) Inc.

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Neighbourhood Legal Services (London & Middlesex) Inc., which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2017, and the statements of operations and funds balance and cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.


An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the organization's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the organization's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Neighbourhood Legal Services (London & Middlesex) Inc. as at March 31, 2017, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Toronto, Ontario
September 5, 2017



Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

NEIGHBOURHOOD LEGAL SERVICES (LONDON & MIDDLESEX) INC.

Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2017

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash 42,056
 HST recoverable 8,411
 Prepaid expenses 10,528

Capital assets (note 3) 60,995

Total assets 132,325

LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities

Accounts payable 29,199
 Inter-fund payable (receivable) 1,665

FUNDS BALANCE

Total liabilities and funds balance 103,126

	General Fund	Legal Disbursements Fund	Capital Fund	Duty Counsel Fund	LAO Project Fund	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Cash	42,056	2,855	-	10,749	-	55,660
HST recoverable	8,411	470	-	-	-	8,881
Prepaid expenses	10,528	-	-	-	-	10,528
Capital assets (note 3)	60,995	3,325	-	10,749	-	75,069
Total assets	<u>132,325</u>	<u>3,325</u>	<u>57,256</u>	<u>10,749</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>132,325</u>
Accounts payable	29,199	-	-	-	-	29,199
Inter-fund payable (receivable)	1,665	-	-	-	(1,665)	-
Total liabilities and funds balance	<u>30,864</u>	<u>3,325</u>	<u>57,256</u>	<u>10,749</u>	<u>1,665</u>	<u>103,126</u>
	<u>60,995</u>	<u>3,325</u>	<u>57,256</u>	<u>10,749</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>132,325</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

Approved on behalf of the Board:

Director
 Neighbourhood Legal Services (London & Middlesex) Inc.

NEIGHBOURHOOD LEGAL SERVICES (LONDON & MIDDLESEX) INC.

Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2016

	General Fund	Legal Disbursements Fund	Capital Fund	Duty Counsel Fund	LAO Project Fund	Non-LAO Project Fund	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
ASSETS							
Current Assets							
Cash	109,439	932	-	4,290	-	-	114,661
HST recoverable	19,593	83	-	-	-	-	19,676
Prepaid expenses	10,160	-	-	-	-	-	10,160
Capital assets (note 3)	139,192	1,015	-	4,290	-	-	144,497
Total assets	139,192	1,015	54,322	4,290	-	-	54,322
LIABILITIES							
Current Liabilities							
Accounts payable	22,666	-	-	-	-	-	22,666
Inter-fund payable (receivable)	6,560	-	-	-	(6,560)	-	-
	29,226	-	-	-	(6,560)	-	22,666
FUNDS BALANCE							
Total liabilities and funds balance	109,966	1,015	54,322	4,290	6,560	-	176,153
	139,192	1,015	54,322	4,290	-	-	198,819

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

NEIGHBOURHOOD LEGAL SERVICES (LONDON & MIDDLESEX) INC.
Statement of Operations and Funds Balance

Year ended March 31, 2017

	General Fund	Legal Disbursements Fund	Capital Fund	Duty Counsel Fund	LAO Project Fund	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Revenues						
Legal Aid Ontario						
-direct receipts	1,321,584	24,670	-	-	-	1,346,254
-indirect receipts (note 4)	6,883	-	-	-	-	6,883
Tenant Duty Counsel Program	-	-	-	81,531	-	81,531
Recovered from clients	-	3,149	-	-	-	3,149
Other	1,439	-	-	-	-	1,439
	<u>1,329,906</u>	<u>27,819</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>81,531</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,439,256</u>
Expenses						
Salaries	1,042,253	-	-	-	-	1,042,253
Benefits	172,063	-	-	-	-	172,063
Professional dues	17,248	-	-	-	-	17,248
Travel	9,717	-	-	-	-	9,717
Communications	14,346	-	-	-	-	14,346
Accommodations	86,256	-	-	-	-	86,256
Equipment	11,090	-	-	-	-	11,090
Library	3,808	-	-	-	-	3,808
Supplies and services	21,297	-	-	-	4,895	26,192
Audit fees	3,716	-	-	-	-	3,716
Indirect payments (note 4)	6,883	-	-	-	-	6,883
Legal disbursements	-	25,509	-	-	-	25,509
Duty Counsel expense	-	-	-	75,072	-	75,072
Amortization	-	-	18,130	-	-	18,130
	<u>1,388,677</u>	<u>25,509</u>	<u>18,130</u>	<u>75,072</u>	<u>4,895</u>	<u>1,512,283</u>
Excess of revenues over expenses (expenses over revenues)	(58,771)	2,310	(18,130)	6,459	(4,895)	(73,027)
Transfer to Capital Fund	(21,064)	-	21,064	-	-	-
Funds balance, beginning of year	109,966	1,015	54,322	4,290	6,560	176,153
Funds balance, end of year	<u>30,131</u>	<u>3,325</u>	<u>57,256</u>	<u>10,749</u>	<u>1,665</u>	<u>103,126</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

**NEIGHBOURHOOD LEGAL SERVICES (LONDON & MIDDLESEX) INC.
Statement of Operations and Funds Balance**

Year ended March 31, 2016

Revenues	General Fund	Legal Disbursements Fund	Capital Fund	Duty Counsel Fund	LAO Project Fund	Non-LAO Project Fund	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Legal Aid Ontario							
-direct receipts	1,307,285	28,910	-	-	6,841	-	1,343,036
-indirect receipts (note 4)	4,369	-	-	-	-	-	4,369
Tenant Duty Counsel Program	-	-	-	73,561	-	-	73,561
Recovered from clients	-	3,545	-	-	-	-	3,545
Other	400	-	-	-	-	-	400
	<u>1,312,054</u>	<u>32,455</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>73,561</u>	<u>6,841</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,424,911</u>
Expenses							
Salaries	1,015,688	-	-	-	-	-	1,015,688
Benefits	154,033	-	-	-	-	-	154,033
Professional dues	13,784	-	-	-	-	-	13,784
Travel	9,446	-	-	-	-	-	9,446
Communications	12,400	-	-	-	-	-	12,400
Accommodations	87,084	-	-	-	-	-	87,084
Equipment	8,354	-	-	-	-	-	8,354
Library	4,142	-	-	-	-	-	4,142
Supplies and services	24,709	-	-	-	281	-	24,990
Audit fees	3,612	-	-	-	-	-	3,612
Indirect payments (note 4)	4,369	-	-	-	-	-	4,369
Legal disbursements	-	30,778	-	-	-	-	30,778
Duty Counsel expense	-	-	-	75,356	-	-	75,356
Project expenses	-	-	-	-	-	2,713	2,713
Amortization	-	-	18,326	-	-	-	18,326
	<u>1,337,621</u>	<u>30,778</u>	<u>18,326</u>	<u>75,356</u>	<u>281</u>	<u>2,713</u>	<u>1,465,075</u>
Excess of revenues over expenses (expenses over revenues)	(25,567)	1,677	(18,326)	(1,795)	6,560	(2,713)	(40,164)
Transfer to Capital Fund	(64,285)	-	64,285	-	-	-	-
Return of funding to City of London	-	-	-	-	-	(285)	(285)
Funds balance (deficit), beginning of year	199,818	(662)	8,363	6,085	-	2,998	216,602
Funds balance, end of year	<u>109,966</u>	<u>1,015</u>	<u>54,322</u>	<u>4,290</u>	<u>6,560</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>176,153</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

NEIGHBOURHOOD LEGAL SERVICES (LONDON & MIDDLESEX) INC.

Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended March 31	2017 \$	2016 \$
Cash flows from operating activities		
Excess of expenses over revenues for year	(73,027)	(40,164)
Item not affecting cash		
Amortization	18,130	18,326
	(54,897)	(21,838)
Changes in non-cash working capital		
Decrease (increase) in HST recoverable	10,795	(7,169)
Increase in prepaid expenses	(368)	(2,887)
Increase in accounts payable	6,533	13,751
Decrease in bank indebtedness	-	(731)
	(37,937)	(18,874)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of capital assets	(21,064)	(64,285)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Funds returned to City of London	-	(285)
Net change in cash	(59,001)	(83,444)
Cash, beginning of year	114,661	198,105
Cash, end of year	55,660	114,661

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

NEIGHBOURHOOD LEGAL SERVICES (LONDON & MIDDLESEX) INC.

Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2017

Neighbourhood Legal Services (London & Middlesex) Inc. (the "Organization"), is incorporated without share capital under the laws of the Province of Ontario. The Organization was formed to provide equal access to quality legal services for the citizens of London and Middlesex county and is primarily funded by Legal Aid Ontario.

The Organization qualifies as a not-for-profit organization under the Income Tax Act and is exempt from corporate income tax.

1. Significant accounting policies

a) Fund accounting

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations and are in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. The Organization follows the restricted fund method of accounting for contributions whereby all contributions are recognized as revenue of the applicable fund when received or receivable. All the funds described below, except as noted, are restricted as to use by various agreements between the Organization and Legal Aid Ontario ("LAO") and title to the Organization assets vests with the funder.

i) General Fund

These funds are used to provide a range of legal and paralegal services, including information, advice and representation, to low-income individuals and families.

ii) Legal Disbursements Fund

These funds are used to provide for certain direct expenses incurred in representing Organization clients in legal proceedings. Disbursements recovered from clients are recorded in revenue when received.

iii) Capital Fund

This fund holds the capital assets of the Organization that have been funded by Legal Aid Ontario.

iv) Duty Counsel Fund

These funds, received from the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, are used to pay for caseworkers' services in providing advice to tenants appearing at the Landlord and Tenant Board.

v) LAO Project Fund

These funds are received from LAO for specific projects including staff training and Legal Health Check-up's.

NEIGHBOURHOOD LEGAL SERVICES (LONDON & MIDDLESEX) INC.

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

March 31, 2017

1. Significant accounting policies (continued)

b) Capital assets

The costs of capital assets are capitalized upon meeting the criteria for recognition as capital assets, otherwise, costs are expensed as incurred. The cost of capital assets comprises its purchase price and any directly attributable cost of preparing the asset for its intended use.

Capital assets are presented at cost less accumulated amortization and accumulated impairment losses.

Capital assets are tested for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that its carrying amount may not be recoverable. If any potential impairment is identified, then the amount of the impairment is quantified by comparing the carrying value of the capital assets to its fair value. Any impairment of capital assets is charged to operations in the period in which the impairment occurs.

An impairment loss is not reversed if the fair value of the capital assets subsequently increases.

The Organization provides for amortization using methods at rates designed to amortize the cost of the capital assets over their estimated useful lives. Amortization is provided on a straight-line basis, over the following periods:

Computer equipment	- 3 years
Office equipment	- 5 years
Telephone equipment	- 8 years
Leasehold improvements	- over the term of the lease

c) Financial instruments

i) Measurement of financial instruments

The Organization initially measures its financial assets and financial liabilities at fair value adjusted by, in the case of a financial instrument that will not be measured subsequently at fair value, the amount of transaction costs directly attributable to the instrument.

The Organization subsequently measures its financial assets and financial liabilities at amortized cost.

Financial liabilities measured at amortized cost include accounts payable.

NEIGHBOURHOOD LEGAL SERVICES (LONDON & MIDDLESEX) INC.

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

March 31, 2017

1. Significant accounting policies (continued)

c) Financial Instruments (continued)

ii) Impairment

Financial assets measured at amortized cost are tested for impairment annually for indicators of possible impairment. When a significant adverse change has occurred during the period in the expected timing or amount of future cash flows from the financial asset or group of assets, a write-down is recognized in the statement of operations and funds balance. The write down reflects the difference between the carrying amount and the higher of:

- the present value of the cash flows expected to be generated by the asset or group of assets;
- the amount that could be realized by selling the assets or group of assets;

When the events occurring after the impairment confirm that a reversal is necessary, the reversal is recognized in the statement of operations and funds balance up to the amount of the previously recognized impairment.

2. Financial instrument risk management

The Organization may be exposed to various risks through its financial instruments including credit risk, liquidity risk and market risk (including interest rate risk, currency risk and other price risk):

Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that the counterpart to a financial instrument will fail to discharge an obligation that is entered into with the Organization. The Organization is not exposed to significant credit risk.

Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Organization will not be able to meet a demand for cash or fund its obligations as they come due. The Organization is not exposed to significant liquidity risk.

NEIGHBOURHOOD LEGAL SERVICES (LONDON & MIDDLESEX) INC.

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

March 31, 2017

2. Financial instrument risk management (continued)

Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. Market risk is comprised of interest rate risk, currency risk, and other price risk.

Interest rate risk arises from the possibility that changes in interest rates will affect the fair value of financial instruments.

Currency risk is the risk that the value of a financial instrument will fluctuate due to changes in foreign currencies.

Other price risk is the risk that the value of financial instruments will fluctuate as a result of changes in market prices, other than those arising from interest rate risk or currency risk, whether those changes are caused by factors specific to the individual financial instrument or its issuer, or factors affecting all similar financial instruments traded in a market.

The Organization is not exposed to significant market risk.

Changes in risk

There have been no changes in the Organization's risk exposures from the prior year.

3. Capital assets

	2017		
	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Net
	\$	\$	\$
Computer equipment	114,349	106,945	7,404
Office equipment	56,810	29,786	27,024
Telephone equipment	10,675	1,334	9,341
Leasehold improvements	26,975	13,488	13,487
	<u>208,809</u>	<u>151,553</u>	<u>57,256</u>

	2016		
	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Net
	\$	\$	\$
Computer equipment	114,349	104,570	9,779
Office equipment	46,421	22,109	24,312
Leasehold improvements	26,975	6,744	20,231
	<u>187,745</u>	<u>133,423</u>	<u>54,322</u>

NEIGHBOURHOOD LEGAL SERVICES (LONDON & MIDDLESEX) INC.
Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

March 31, 2017

4. Indirect payments

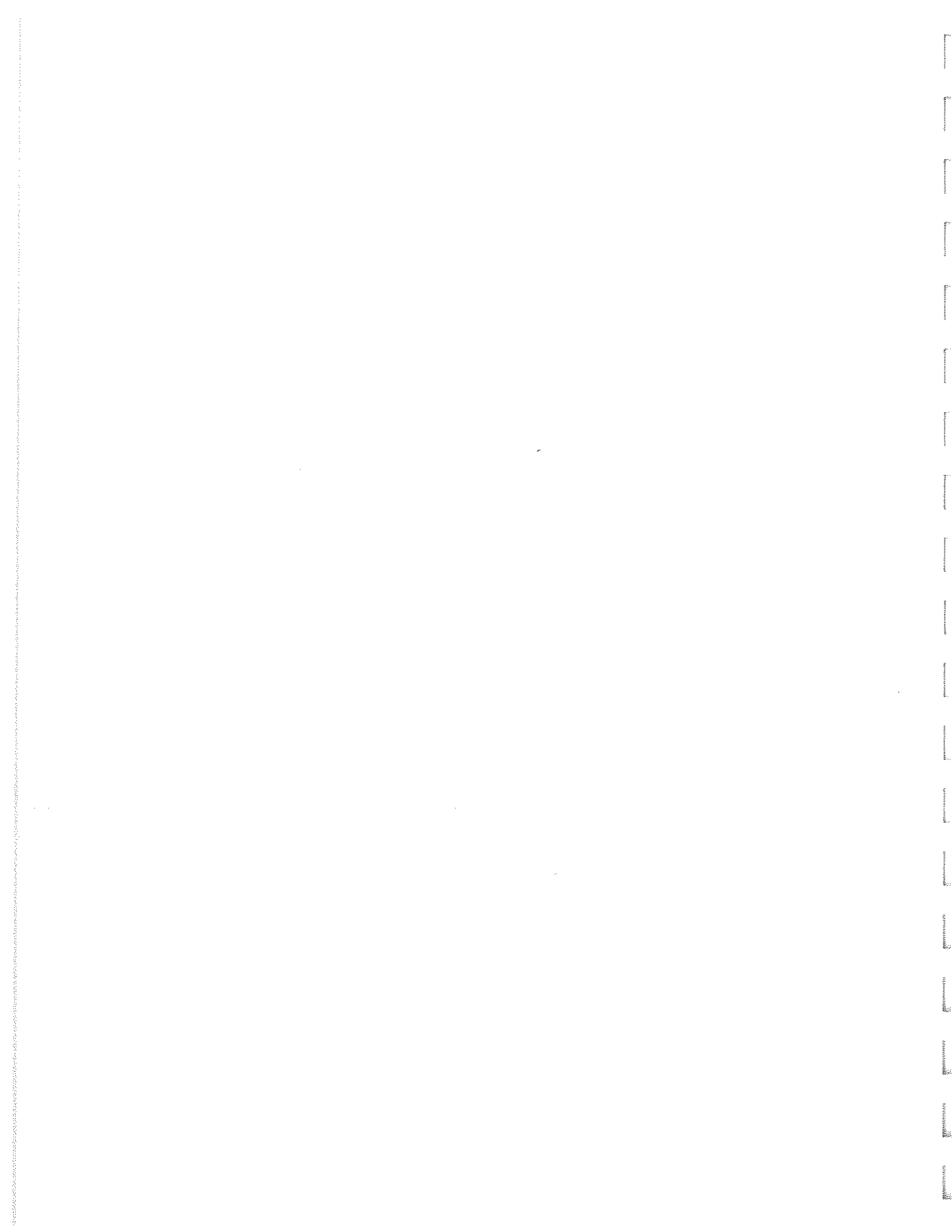
Legal Aid Ontario administers and makes payments on behalf of the Organization for the following expenditures:

General Fund	2017	2016
	\$	\$
Pension and group insurance	333	-
Supplies and services	5,402	3,915
Library expenses	1,148	454
	<u>6,883</u>	<u>4,369</u>

5. Lease commitments

The Organization is committed to lease its premises until April 30, 2019. Minimum lease payments are as follows:

2018	\$ 81,756
2019	81,756
2020	<u>6,813</u>
	<u>\$ 170,325</u>





Neighbourhood Legal Services

London & Middlesex

Executive Director's Report

October 2017

NLS continued to be busy in 2017. In fact, it provided more service to our client community than at any time in our past.

Our core business, ODSP appeals, continues to occupy a great deal of our caseworker staff time. While we have seen improvements in the quality of medical adjudication as it pertains to medical review cases recently, there continue to be far too many of these appeals. The Disability Adjudication Unit vigorously defends these appeals (sending a Case Presenting Officer to cross-examine, and continuing to raise legal arguments over technicalities of the legislation, arguments to exclude medical reports, questions of relevancy, and of course whether or not the appellant meets the disability threshold as set by the legislation, etc.). This issue is extremely important for the financial well-being of our clients, and an area within which we currently have significant impact, so we will continue to represent these clients until there are improvements that would reduce the need to appeal. The fact is that research has consistently shown that a client has a much greater chance of success if represented in these appeals as they are not otherwise able to deal with the challenges of working up the file and the hearing on their own.

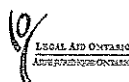
Our social assistance caseworkers also continue to spend a great deal of their time doing appeals outside of the ODSP/DAU matters noted above. These broader issues concern clients on ODSP and OW and include legal problems such as the calculation of benefits, "spouse in the house allegations", treatment of employment income, cancelled benefits for failure to provide information, overpayments – validity and collection – and ACSD and Child Tax Benefit denials or reductions, etc.). Because we continue to be successful on so many of these appeals, the outcomes of which greatly impact our clients' day to day lives, we will continue to fight the local OW and ODSP offices vigorously on their interpretation and application of social assistance law and policy.

In part due to lobbying by NLS, the Ontario government made a variety of legislative changes over the past year to improve the lives of our client community. These included important increases in permissible liquid asset and family help limits for disabled Ontarians, ceasing to deduct child support and CPPD child benefits from ODSP, significant new protections for Ontario tenants, including imposing rent control for buildings built post-1991 and narrowing the loophole by which bad landlords often evict tenants by falsely claiming that a relative will be moving in.

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And, as we all know, the minimum wage is to climb substantially - to \$15.00/hr. These are probably the best times we can hope for in terms of improving provincial laws for our client community, as the government has evidently decided to campaign from the left in next spring's election. (We will, nevertheless, miss Deb Matthews dearly.)

We begin to see the benefits of the considerable success we had with two long-standing issues: granny flats and unlicensed group homes. We had urged the City of London to legalize granny flats (single apartments in houses) since 1995 – when the Harris government repealed the Rae government's retroactive grandfathering of granny flats (which the City of London had sued in an attempt to defeat). Finally this year London City Council, over the objections of its Planning staff, voted to legalize all safe granny flats in the entire city. (Planning staff wanted to shut down all granny flats within several kilometres of Western and Fanshawe.) This result, achieved with a great deal of work, preserved the homes of many low-income Londoners.

The City passed by-law requirements that group homes be licensed, by meeting strict health and safety standards. Apparently some landlords have now sought licenses. This should result in much better housing for the most vulnerable Londoners.

We assisted a local law firm with a payday-loan class action settlement. Beneficiaries of the settlement who were on social assistance would have had their awards deducted dollar-for-dollar under existing law. We urged Deb Matthews to exempt these awards and the Ontario government agreed to do so. We recently heard from the firm that this has gone well.

Our residential tenancy caseworkers have been busy defending tenants from wrongful eviction – particularly from social housing by the vehicle of terminating housing subsidy, and of mentally-ill tenants who display symptoms. In the former case we have taken appeals to the City Housing Manager via the Housing Services Act. In the case of the latter we have argued for accommodation of the disability by arranging greater social work support for the tenant and relying upon the Ontario Human Rights Code. We work hard to resolve these cases both directly and with behind the scenes lobbying. This takes a great deal of time, but should lead to changes in procedures which result in fewer of these eviction applications going forward in future.

The Adjudicators at the Landlord & Tenant Board have resisted our work vigorously and peevishly. They are worked hard, with huge hearing loads, so they depend upon being able to evict tenants very quickly – ideally without legal representation. (We have repeatedly been threatened with personal costs awards for “delaying expeditious evictions” in cases where there were no legal grounds to evict the tenant. Much to their annoyance we remind them that justice is actually the first priority of their Board.) We are not popular with these Adjudicators (nor with the worst of London's social housing providers) as we compel them to follow Ontario law - which is intended to protect the

homes of these vulnerable tenants. That is good. That is what the Ontario government expects our role to be.

Our precarious employment lawyer continues to be very busy. We have, in fact, been forced to stop new intakes for a while. In addition to representing workers in cases of wrongful dismissal and breach of ESA, he has participated in community development - including organizing employment law training for caseworkers from the southwest region legal clinics, and working with the regional employment lawyers hired to serve SW legal clinics.

During what seemed like a decline in the number of ODSP appeals some of our professional staff took on Criminal Injury Compensation Board appeals. These appeals are important to victims of crime, and help them to recover and move forward with their lives. However, the ODSP appeals have increased again, so we may not be able to take on all CICB cases going forward.

We have made extensive submissions to all levels of government on a variety of issues, from urging that the Mayor's Anti-Poverty Panel recommendations be implemented (including letting children under 12 ride London Transit for free); improving transit subsidies, increasing OW benefits and the minimum wage, and a variety of other improvements in the laws which most impact our client community. We serve on a variety of organizations including, for example, the Homeless Coalition, the Child and Youth Network, the Housing Stability Bank and CMHA. We continue to provide leadership by chairing the London Advocates Group and with our annual social agency training day. Mike's extensive work in these areas won him a Canada 150 Medal for community service from M.P. Irene Mathysen.

We have continued to benefit greatly from our many student volunteers, who are expertly trained and supervised by Kristie and Mike. Our students come from Fanshawe, Kings, Western and Ryerson. They significantly increase our legal and social-support capacity, and we are greatly appreciative of them; although it also requires a great deal of time on the part of the supervisors/trainers.

In fact, there have been roughly 8 new paid staff over the past two years who have come and gone (some staying) on the social assistance side of the clinic. This has resulted in significant training hours by senior staff. Fortunately we are now at a point where we have continuity in caseworkers and this burden should gradually lift.

Our support staff have this year struggled with the implementation of LAO's new file management software, CIMS. Though this software promises to be useful and efficient eventually, it has so far added considerable work for staff, particularly support staff. ACLCO is holding meetings with LAO to try to mitigate the problems, and we are hopeful that LAO will get CIMS sorted out in 2018.

Our move continues to be delayed, not due to any reluctance on our part or on the part of LAO. It does appear, though, that we will move to the Royal Bank building in 2018. Our website, nlsim.com , continues to evolve and improve, with extensive development and maintenance by Betsy.

Our Board assisted us greatly this year by updating our policies and supporting NLS staff in lobbying initiatives. It would be fair to say that the Board faced some significant challenges, which it diligently and effectively rose to address and rectify. We are grateful for the extensive time and energy our Board members expended on our behalf this year. As always, they are an invaluable conduit into the lives of poor and vulnerable residents of London and Middlesex County.

Following the lead of the Medical Officer of Health for London/Middlesex we have taken steps to safeguard the health of our clients when at our office. Staff have been trained in emergency care should a client go into crisis, including the use of Naloxone and an Automated External Defibrillator. Hopefully we will never use these, but it's comforting to know we are prepared if necessary.

As always, I am very grateful for the dedication and hard work of all NLS staff. Vicarious burn-out is a big problem in legal clinics. I deeply appreciate that our staff go the extra mile to help our clients feel respected and supported (often despite difficult and stressful communication from our clients). Our staff work hard to see justice achieved for the weakest and most oppressed members of our community.

Finally, 2018 will mark the retirement of the last original staff member from NLS's first opening in 1986 as Patty Guinness retires. Patty and I have collaborated on our files for many years so this is a particularly tough loss for me. Patty has always been the heart and conscience of NLS. She has been our client community's strongest champion, and our most radical socialist and labour activist. She has always reminded me that despite our being professionalized over the years, with nice offices and stable funding, we began as, and should always remain, grass-roots and activist. We should be "the anti-bureaucracy". We will miss her greatly, but wish her the best in a well-earned retirement.



Jeff Schlemmer

