



LEAF FAEJ

Women's Legal Education and Action Fund
Fonds d'action et d'éducation juridiques pour les femmes

LEAF ANNUAL REPORT 2014 - 2015

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LEAF is the leading voice for substantive equality across Canada.

MISSION

LEAF is a national, charitable, non-profit organization, founded in 1985. LEAF works to advance the substantive equality rights of women and girls in Canada through litigation, law reform and public education using the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

LEAF FACT

30 years of
commitment
to equality

The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) began in 1985 as a grassroots response to the adoption of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, specifically the equality rights in sections 15 and 28 of the *Charter*. From coast to coast, women organized speaking engagements, special events and projects to educate and participate in a collective response for women's equality.

Today, LEAF has volunteer branches across Canada and continues to focus on its goals of substantive equality for all women and girls through litigation, law reform and public education using the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. For 30 years, LEAF has been addressing injustices experienced by women who are disproportionately disadvantaged by such factors as poverty, racism, disability and sexism.

LEAF's work has helped to address violence against women, reduce discrimination in the workplace, defend

access to reproductive rights, and promote pay equity and women's economic empowerment.

The *Charter* has been tested and strengthened through the advocacy of LEAF. We welcome you to visit our extensive online resource library available at leaf.ca, which contains LEAF's intervener submissions before the appellate courts and the Supreme Court of Canada.

LEAF has dedicated itself for three decades to research, litigation, education and action, and has shown that it is possible to achieve greater equality and empowerment for women and girls. In spite of the progress that has been made, there is still much room for improvement. We can not do this without your ongoing support.

For more information about LEAF, its accomplishments and upcoming activities, please visit our website at leaf.ca.

Donate | Become a LEAF Member | Volunteer
Become a LEAF *pro bono* Lawyer | Partner



Michelle Bullas
Chair, LEAF



Diane O'Reggio
Executive Director, LEAF

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of our volunteers, *pro bono* lawyers, branches, sponsors, donors, and supporters for making a difference on issues of women's equality.

Over the past year, among many issues and concerns, women and girls across Canada encountered an ongoing epidemic of violence, sexual harassment, rape culture on university and college campuses, and the infringement of reproductive rights including lack of access to contraception and abortion services. This myriad of issues is one of the many reasons LEAF's litigation, law reform and public education work is needed more now than ever.

LEAF's litigation and law reform work continued at a steadfast pace this year. We greatly appreciate the support of the legal community across Canada, members of which donate their time and their research skills, serve on our Law Program Committee, and represent LEAF at appellate courts and at the Supreme Court of Canada. LEAF's interventions and feminist analysis on family status discrimination, homelessness and systemic discrimination demonstrate why LEAF's equality-seeking work continues to be critical.

Some of the key issues LEAF addressed this past year include: arguing that employers must not discriminate against

employees due to their childcare responsibilities; legal advocacy and research to urgently address the critical issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls; and helping develop a blueprint for a national action plan on violence against women. LEAF is committed to addressing all forms of oppression that hinder equality, particularly for women and girls.

Together with LEAF Branches, we continue to deliver important public education through our programs *Only Yes Means Yes* (formerly *No Means No*) and *LEAF at Work* that promote understanding of women's legal rights across Canada.

As we mark the 30th anniversary of the founding of LEAF and the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, we are reminded on a daily basis about how fragile equality rights can be here in Canada. We remain conscious that despite our successes in Canadian courts, women and girls in Canada continue to face disproportionate levels of violence, along with social and economic barriers to success in the workplace, at home, and in law.

We strongly believe that with your ongoing support, LEAF's work will continue to foster equality in Canada. To maintain our strong voice for women and girls across Canada, LEAF needs your help more than ever. **Please donate today at leaf.ca.**

Thank you for 30 years of working together towards equality!



Dr. Kim Stanton
Legal Director, LEAF

LEAF has had another busy and productive year pursuing litigation and law reform activities that fulfill our mandate to improve the lives of women and girls in Canada. We need your support. Please donate today at leaf.ca.

Johnstone v. Canada Border Services Agency

In March 2014, LEAF intervened in the case of *Johnstone v. Canada Border Services Agency* before the Federal Court of Appeal to argue that employees should be protected from discrimination related to their childcare responsibilities. Fiona Johnstone had asked her employer, the Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA), for a regular shift so that she could secure ongoing childcare for her two toddlers since she and her husband both worked unpredictable rotating shifts at CBSA. The CBSA refused to accommodate Ms. Johnstone's request, suggesting that her childcare decisions were merely based on "personal choice". Their solution was for her to change her employment status from full-time to part-time, which would result in less pay and the loss of her pension and other benefits. Both the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and the Federal Court determined that the CBSA had discriminated against Ms. Johnstone.

LEAF argued that discriminating against employees with childcare responsibilities is family status discrimination

At the Federal Court of Appeal, LEAF argued that family status discrimination is intertwined with sex discrimination since childcare obligations primarily fall to women, a distinction which is compounded for racialized women, women living in poverty, women with disabilities, Indigenous women and women with other intersecting identities. LEAF also challenged the CBSA's assumptions around the matter of "choice" for women regarding employment and caregiving, and urged the Court to acknowledge how society benefits from accommodating the "choice" to have children.

In May 2014, the Federal Court of Appeal unanimously dismissed the CBSA's appeal (with the exception of some variations on the remedy). The Court firmly rejected a restrictive definition of "family status" that did not include parental obligations such as childcare, and held that protection from discrimination for childcare obligations flows from family status in the same way that protection against discrimination on the basis of pregnancy flows from the sex of the individual. The CBSA decided not to appeal the Federal Court of Appeal's decision, bringing Fiona Johnstone's long fight for justice to a close.

LEAF FACT

LEAF shapes
sections 15
& 28 of the
Charter

LEAF has called for a national housing strategy to address the disproportionate representation of marginalized groups among those living in poverty or without adequate housing. Access to adequate housing is a human right.

Tanudjaja et al v. Attorney General (Canada)

Four homeless individuals and the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation brought this *Charter* challenge against the Attorneys General of Ontario and Canada. The application asserted that government “decisions, programs, actions and failures to act” created conditions that led to and maintained homelessness, which ultimately violated the section 7 and section 15 *Charter* rights of the Applicants. The Applicants sought an order for Canada and Ontario to implement effective strategies to reduce and eliminate homelessness and inadequate housing in consultation with those affected by the policies. The Application was dismissed on a motion to strike.

In May 2014, LEAF made oral submissions in this case alongside a number of other interveners at the Ontario Court of Appeal. LEAF’s arguments focused on the Court’s interpretation of section 15(1) of the *Charter*, specifically on the issue of homelessness as an analogous ground for discrimination, the scope for positive obligations on the part of the government, and how to address complex forms of inequality. LEAF emphasized the Court’s need to remain open to novel arguments in *Charter* applications, especially in complex cases that require a full hearing on the merits rather than being struck on a preliminary motion.

Unfortunately, a majority of the Ontario Court of Appeal upheld the motion to strike, and the Supreme Court of Canada subsequently declined to hear an appeal of this ruling. LEAF has called for a national housing strategy since a comprehensive approach is crucial to address the disproportionate representation of particular groups among those living in poverty or without adequate housing, including Indigenous people, people with disabilities, sole parents (mostly women), and immigrants and refugees.

R. v. Kokopenace

On May 21, 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) released its decision in *R v. Kokopenace*, a case regarding the constitutionality of excluding on-reserve Indigenous residents from the jury roll. The main issue in the case was whether this exclusion during criminal proceedings violated section 11 fair trial rights and section 15 equality rights of the *Charter*.

LEAF intervened in the case along with the David Asper Centre for Constitutional Rights at the University of Toronto. LEAF and the Asper Centre argued that the Crown's discriminatory failure to take reasonable steps to include on-reserve residents in the jury roll perpetuates the historic disadvantage of Indigenous accused persons and prospective on-reserve jurors. We further argued that the larger context of systemic, persistent, pervasive discrimination against these populations cannot be ignored, and that the Crown's failure here must not be excused. Unfortunately, the majority of the Court found that the systemic exclusion of on-reserve jurors was not a *Charter* violation.

LEAF is concerned that the majority in *Kokopenace* acknowledged the existence of systemic discrimination against Indigenous peoples in the criminal justice system, yet did not find a violation of *Charter* rights in this case. To cast this systemic issue as one of individual rights is deeply problematic. Despite the extremely discouraging outcome of the case, LEAF's hope is that the government will acknowledge the obligation to take proactive steps to remedy the clear under-representation of Indigenous on-reserve residents on the jury roll.

LEAF argued that the Crown's discriminatory failure to include on-reserve residents in the jury roll perpetuates the historic disadvantage of Indigenous accused persons and prospective on-reserve jurors.

LEAF remains committed to protecting and promoting the equality rights of refugee claimants in Canada.

Canada v. Canadian Doctors for Refugee Care

In February 2013, Canadian Doctors for Refugee Care, the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers, two affected individuals (Daniel Garcia Rodriguez and Hanif Ayubi), and Justice for Children and Youth challenged the legality of federal government health care cuts to refugee claimants through the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) before the Federal Court.

In a July 2014 judgment, Federal Court Justice Anne Mactavish declared the 2012 Orders in Council creating the IFHP to be of no force or effect as of November 4, 2014. In granting the application, Justice Mactavish held that the 2012 changes to the IFHP violate both sections 12 and 15 of the *Charter*. Concerning the violation of section 12, the Court found that the “affected individuals are being subjected to ‘treatment’ as contemplated by section 12 of the *Charter*, and that this treatment is ‘cruel and unusual’”. The federal government unsuccessfully sought a stay against Justice Mactavish’s order while it appealed her judgment to the Federal Court of Appeal.

LEAF sought leave to intervene in the appeal because there is clearly a gendered impact to the 2012 IFHP cuts. LEAF planned to argue that refugee women are disproportionately affected by the IFHP cuts because of their gender – for example, the lack of coverage for prenatal and antenatal care severely affects refugee women. Unfortunately, LEAF was denied leave to intervene in this appeal. LEAF was deeply disappointed that the Court chose not to hear about the gendered impacts of the cuts to refugee health care in the appeal. LEAF remains committed to protecting and promoting the equality rights of refugee claimants in Canada.



In 2014-2015, LEAF continued our active engagement in pressing issues of public policy and law reform. Our work in this area included:

Legal Strategy Coalition on Violence Against Indigenous Women

LEAF is a member of the Legal Strategy Coalition on Violence Against Indigenous Women (LSC), a nation-wide *ad hoc* coalition of groups and individuals formed in 2014 following the murder of Inuk university student Loretta Saunders. The aim of the LSC is to engage in legal advocacy and research to urgently address the critical issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIW) in Canada. The LSC is comprised of individuals and civil society organizations with interdisciplinary expertise on issues that impact Indigenous women, including human rights, gender equality and constitutional law.

In addition to supporting the call for a public national inquiry on MMIW, the LSC collaborates on research and other activities in order to achieve appropriate government responses to the continuing violence and discrimination experienced by Indigenous women and girls in Canada. In February 2015, the LSC released a report to assess over two decades worth of reports with recommendations for stopping violence against Indigenous women and girls. This research addressed the contention that a national inquiry on MMIW is not necessary due to there being a list of existing reports on the subject. The LSC research showed the overwhelming failure to implement past recommendations. The LSC maintains that an inquiry is essential to combat violence against Indigenous women and girls.

National Action Plan on Violence Against Women

Representatives of thirty women's organizations from across Canada, including LEAF, participated in a workshop facilitated by the Canadian Network of Shelters and Transition Houses in Ottawa on April 3-4, 2014. Together, we have developed a blueprint for a national action plan (NAP) on violence against women.

The NAP calls on all governments to implement policies to prevent violence against women and girls by providing adequate funding to service responses (including for sexual assault), ensuring that women have sufficient access to legal services and justice, and establishing social supports for women to have financial independence and to fully participate in the work force. The NAP focuses on preventative and responsive measures to eliminate the disproportionate victimization of women and girls in Canada.

Religion & Equality Rights

On January 29, 2015, LEAF hosted a community panel entitled "What is Barbaric? Feminist Reflections on Religion and Equality", referring to federal Bill S-7, the "*Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act*." LEAF then hosted a full-day symposium on January 30, 2015 entitled "Reflections on Women, Equality, and Religion" with panels on family law, access to services/education, legal strategy, and constitutional law. These events formed part of a larger project initiated by LEAF to develop a nuanced feminist approach to the ongoing intersection of religion and equality rights in Canada.

Beijing +20

2015 marks the 20th year anniversary of the 1995 *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, the landmark outcome document of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. The Platform, commonly recognized as the blueprint for women's equality, outlines actions to be undertaken by states to end gender discrimination and achieve gender equality in twelve key areas, including education, health, participation in public and political life, access to media and telecommunications technologies, and state response to all forms of violence.

LEAF contributed to a Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives shadow report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration to date, "Progress on Women's Rights: Missing in Action". The report focuses on a number of areas where the state of gender equality can be improved for Canadian women, including economic and labour rights, childcare, violence against women, health care, affordable housing, and the role of women in the media. It is LEAF's hope that Canada will take a more proactive stance on these commitments moving forward.

For full descriptions, visit:

Cases: <http://www.leaf.ca/legal/search-cases/>

Reforms: <http://www.leaf.ca/legal/reform-and-analysis/>

Bill C-13

LEAF made a submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in support of section 12 of Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Canada Evidence Act, the Competition Act and the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act. We encouraged the government to have the hate propaganda protections in the *Criminal Code* mirror the protected groups under section 15(1) of the *Charter*. LEAF made no submission on and took no position on the rest of Bill C-13. Bill C-13, now S.C. 2014, c. 31, came into force on March 10, 2014 and with it came protection from hate speech for many groups who had previously been excluded from the hate propaganda provisions of the *Criminal Code* since they were first put in place in 1970. LEAF welcomes the inclusion of protections on the grounds of sex, age, national origin and mental and physical disability in the *Criminal Code* as an important and overdue measure.

Nonetheless, LEAF maintains that all groups protected under human rights legislation should be in the *Criminal Code* list of identifiable groups protected against hate propaganda. LEAF notes with disappointment that Bill C-13 did not correct the absence of “gender identity” in this list, an omission that was compounded by the failure to pass Bill C-279: An Act to Amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code (gender identity).

Bill C-43

In an open letter with a number of other public interest organizations, LEAF expressed alarm at the inclusion of sections 172 and 173 in the omnibus Budget Bill C-43. These sections amend the *Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act* and are essentially Private Members Bill C-585, introduced earlier in 2015. The change that would be made to the *Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act* as a result of these provisions would allow provinces to restrict access to social assistance for refugee claimants and others who have not yet been granted permanent residence in Canada. The open letter called on the federal government to withdraw sections 172 and 173 from Bill C-43.

The letter also noted that fleeing persecution places tremendous stress and burden on families seeking refugee status in Canada. Some refugees suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, which can make finding and holding a job difficult without appropriate health care. In the interim, access to social assistance is vital to sustain and rebuild lives. Without that source of support, many will be unable to feed, house, or clothe themselves and their families, putting further pressure on already overburdened charities and shelters. We know that poverty leads to poor health outcomes including higher rates of diabetes, heart disease, cancer and depression. Indeed, the Federal Court recently described the government’s denial of healthcare to refugee claimants as “cruel and unusual.”

Gendered Dissent

LEAF's Legal Director was a panelist at a symposium on "Advocacy, Procedure, Litigation: Dissent in the Courts" at Osgoode Hall Law School on May 12-13, 2014. The workshop brought together activists to discuss recent concerns about the role of civil society organizations with respect to gender equality in Canada. In the discussion, LEAF addressed the role of litigation as an equality-seeking tool for social justice advocates in the face of legal and other measures used to undermine the role of gender equality advocates. LEAF contributed to a report following the symposium.

Reproductive Justice in Atlantic Canada

LEAF welcomed the announcement by New Brunswick Government repealing one of the abortion restrictions in *Regulation 84-20 of the Medical Services Payment Act* as of January 1, 2015. New Brunswick's requirement that two doctors must certify in writing that an abortion is medically required acted as an unacceptable barrier to abortion access in a Canadian province, and we are glad to see it removed. LEAF also welcomed the New Brunswick government's commitment to improving access to "accurate and non-judgmental information for women seeking abortions". However, LEAF called upon the government of New Brunswick to immediately repeal the other barriers to women's equality in *Regulation 84-20*, including the provision that abortions will only be funded if performed in a hospital.

Moreover, LEAF remains very concerned that the situation for women in Prince Edward Island is even more acute. PEI women have no access to abortion in their province. They must go to an out-of-province hospital to obtain a funded procedure – their travel, accommodation and other costs are not covered. This means that low income women are disproportionately prevented from accessing a legal health service. Abortion has been a legal procedure in Canada since at least the 1988 Supreme Court of Canada decision in *R. v. Morgentaler*, yet both New Brunswick and PEI have refused to abide by the spirit of the decision. LEAF continues to call upon the government of PEI to immediately fund and provide access to abortion for women. Access to abortion (along with other elements of reproductive health care such as access to contraception, information and support for parenting) is critical for women's equality rights. LEAF is adamant that PEI and New Brunswick women deserve equality and reproductive justice along with every other woman in Canada.

Increasing Diversity on Boards

LEAF advocated for disclosure requirements and mentorship programs in a September 2014 submission to securities regulatory authorities in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Québec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories and Nunavut regarding increasing representation of women on boards and in executive officer positions.

The dedicated work of our volunteers across the country is central to LEAF's success. LEAF branches and volunteers support our mandate through public education and outreach activities, annual events and by raising funds. Each year, LEAF commemorates landmark events that have affected all Canadians. These important milestones underscore the continuing need for education, research and litigation that address all forms of discrimination.

LEAF CALGARY

In October 2014, LEAF Calgary had the honour of hosting Justice Patricia Rowbotham from the Alberta Court of Appeal at its annual Persons Day Breakfast. Justice Rowbotham spoke on the topic of women on the bench and Emily Murphy's legacy. In February, the branch screened an acclaimed documentary *Miss Representation*, followed by a panel discussion with experts from the University of Calgary. The topics included media literacy, popular culture and feminism.

The branch held a second panel discussion for International Women's Day in March with esteemed members of Calgary's legal community who spoke with law students about issues of gender representation and sexual harassment in the legal profession.

LEAF EDMONTON

Persons Day Breakfast and LEAF Edmonton Recognition Awards



Dr. Cindy Blackstock, keynote speaker, 2014 LEAF Edmonton Persons Day Breakfast

The LEAF Edmonton Persons Day Breakfast took place on October 30, 2014 and was an important and moving event, in addition to being a successful fundraiser for the work of LEAF. The speaker was Dr. Cindy Blackstock, a member of the Gitksan First Nation, who has worked in the field of child and family services for over 20 years. She is the Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada.



Recipients of the 2014 LEAF Edmonton Recognition Awards (l to r) Muriel Stanley Venne, Nellie Carlson, Jennifer Tomaszewski, Amy Hegstrom (Photo: Tracy Kolenchuk)

The event culminated with the presentation of the Recognition Awards by Kanchana Fernando. The recipients were Nellie Carlson, who dedicated many years to ending gender discrimination in the *Indian Act*; Jennifer Tomaszewski, past Chair of LEAF National and LEAF Edmonton; and ConsentEd, a group working to end sexual violence. Special thanks to our sponsors: Ackroyd LLP, the Legal Education Society of Alberta, and the Fath Group.

Panel presentation in commemoration of the 30th anniversaries of LEAF and of s. 15 of the *Charter*



Patricia Paradis, Executive Director of the Centre for Constitutional Studies and former Chair of LEAF National



Dr. Lise Gotell, Professor of Women's and Gender Studies and Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Arts

"Sexual Assault Law: Equality Gains through the *Charter*" a panel discussion to celebrate the 30th anniversaries of section 15 of the *Charter* and founding of LEAF, was held on March 22, 2015, at the University of Alberta Faculty of Law. The panel presenters were Ritu Khullar, QC, Mary Marshall, and Teresa Meadows, counsel who have used the concept of substantive equality to advance the rights of complainants in sexual assault law cases before the Supreme Court of Canada. The discussion was facilitated by Dr. Lise Gotell, Professor in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies and Vice-Dean of Arts at the University of Alberta. The event was co-sponsored by LEAF Edmonton and the Centre for Constitutional Studies at the University of Alberta, with the generous support of the Women's Committee of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Edmonton Local.



Teresa Meadows, co-counsel for the complainant in *R. v. Mills*.



Ritu Khullar, QC, co-counsel for LEAF in *R. v. Shearing* and in *R. v. Ewanchuk*.



Mary Marshall, co-counsel for the complainant in *R. v. Mills*.

LEAF HALIFAX

LEAF Halifax had another busy year. In May 2014, LEAF Halifax marked the first anniversary since Dr. Morgentaler passed away with a rally encouraging creating a platform for reproductive justice activism. The event received extensive media coverage and had powerful presentations by a number of speakers. LEAF representatives also attended an international conference in Charlottetown, PEI organized by Professor Colleen MacQuarrie called: *Abortion: The Unfinished Revolution*. The 2014 LEAF Halifax Persons Day Breakfast took place on October 31, 2014 at the Saint Mary's Boat Club in Halifax. Professor Jula Hughes from the University of New Brunswick Faculty of Law spoke about the history of legal disputes for abortion access in New Brunswick.

In November 2014, LEAF Halifax partnered with Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group (NSPIRG) and Dalhousie Feminist Legal Association (DFLA) to host a very well-attended premiere of the medical abortion film *Vessel*, documenting the work of Dutch physician Rebecca Gompers. The speakers included health law Professor Joanna Erdman and maritime law Professor Aldo Chircop.

On March 8, 2015, LEAF Halifax celebrated International Women's Day with a film screening of *Democracy On Trial: The Morgentaler Affair*. The panel discussion featured Kaleigh Trace, author of *Hot Wet and Shaking*, and Professor Archie Kaiser, who teaches criminal and mental disability law at Dalhousie University.

LEAF OTTAWA

Committees and Outreach

LEAF Ottawa had an active year of community outreach. LEAF Ottawa participated in the University of Ottawa Clubs Fair and Careers Day and raised awareness about LEAF and discussed careers in social justice.

In March 2015, LEAF Ottawa took part in Western University's Women in the House trip to Ottawa. The Chair, Amy Kishek,

gave a presentation about LEAF's advocacy efforts at a brunch panel alongside other public interest and advocacy groups. This was a great opportunity to reach out to young women from Western and engage with other like-minded organizations in the national capital.

LEAF Ottawa also took part in Ottawa's annual International Women's Day celebration at the National Archives.



Volunteers set up a table and photo booth at the event to promote some of the leading cases in which LEAF has intervened, as well as highlighting the female Supreme Court justices throughout Canada's history. This proved to be a great opportunity to interact with the social justice community, recruit new members, and promote LEAF educational programs.

Persons Day Breakfast



Dr. Cindy Blackstock and Qajaq Robinson with the LEAF Ottawa Executive at the 2014 Persons Day Breakfast.

On November 10, 2014, the Ottawa branch held its annual Person's Day Breakfast at the beautiful Lord Elgin Hotel in downtown Ottawa. The keynote speaker was Dr. Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, who spoke about their human rights case challenging the underfunding of children on reserves by the federal government. Qajaq Robinson, an associate at Borden Ladner Gervais LLP, led off the event by sharing her

experiences as an Indigenous woman in a settler law school and as a part of the Ottawa bar. Special thank you to the Shirley Greenberg Fund for the generous support of this sold out event.

Education Programs

The LEAF Ottawa outreach team continued to build on the success of previous years. The *LEAF at Work* program coordinated by Shiva Sepehr was very successful, providing 30 workshops at over 12 high schools in the Ottawa region. There were four full training sessions and several one-on-one training sessions. The outreach team for *LEAF at Work* consisted of approximately 50 trained facilitators including some members of the Ottawa legal community.

In November, LEAF Ottawa and the *LEAF at Work* team participated in the Department of Justice (DOJ) Persons Day celebrations. The DOJ held a full day of activities, including a keynote speech by Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Abella, and a career day for high school students. LEAF Ottawa volunteers participated in the day including holding a *LEAF at Work* seminar and helping lead a discussion together with the Ontario Justice and Education Network (OJEN) for the students. The students were then invited to present short speeches about what gender equality means to them for an audience of DOJ lawyers and participants. Thanks to the leadership of Kaely Whallins, the program saw a tremendous growth in its volunteer base, training and community outreach.



Silent Auction & Discussion on Rape Culture

On March 19th, the Ottawa branch held another successful annual Silent Auction at the University of Ottawa. This year, a panel discussion took place on what has been a very urgent and topical issue at the University of Ottawa and in the Ottawa community. The discussion theme was “How Can We #ChallengeRapeCulture on Campus”, which also spurred a robust online exchange as well. The diverse and insightful speakers included: Silmi Abdullah (METRAC), Karin Galldin (Galldin Robertson LLP, Canadian Bar Association), Julie Lalonde (founder Hollaback! Ottawa and founder of the Carleton Coalition for Sexual Assault Support Centre), and Professor Elizabeth Sheehy (Shirley Greenberg Chair and member of the University of Ottawa Task Force on Respect and Equality). The event was moderated by Concillia Muonde, a lawyer and social worker whose work centres on equity and LGBTI issues.

The event attracted over 100 students, community members and professors. Special thank you to the generous donors from the business community and the many private donors who provided over fifty donations for the silent auction. The funds have gone to support LEAF National’s outstanding litigation efforts.

**Special thank you to LEAF’s Branches for their tireless efforts
to raise awareness and funds for LEAF!**

**Calgary | Edmonton | Halifax | Ottawa | Prince Edward Island
Sudbury | Toronto | Windsor**

LEAF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (PEI)

Throughout the year LEAF PEI focused on the issue of access to abortion and reproductive rights legal research work.

PEI remains the only province in Canada with no in-province access to abortion care. This issue will remain at the forefront. In June 2015, the provincial government announced an agreement allowing women from PEI to self-refer for abortion care in a Moncton hospital, but this is an insufficient response and much remains to be done.

LEAF PEI joined activists Dr. Colleen MacQuarrie and Becka Viau and supported the work of organizations such as the PEI Action Rights Network (ARN) and the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women to work towards access to abortions in PEI hospitals.

LEAF PEI attended the April 2015 AGM of LEAF Halifax to network and discuss an increased collaboration working on LEAF issues regionally.

LEAF SUDBURY

On October 9th, 2014, over 150 people attended the LEAF Sudbury Persons Day film screening of *I Am A Girl*, an inspirational documentary that paints a clear picture of the reality of what it means to be a girl in the 21st century.

Prior to the film presentation, Diane O'Reggio, LEAF's Executive Director and Kim Stanton, LEAF's Legal Director, provided an update about the legal work undertaken by LEAF National and emphasized the continuing work being done to support women and girls' rights across Canada.

LEAF Sudbury is grateful for the support of many local businesses, the volunteer committee, and of course all the committed supporters. A copy of the film was purchased by LEAF Sudbury to distribute to the Greater Sudbury Public Library and a copy was given to Marymount Academy, a local all-girls school.

LEAF Sudbury also took part in a *Celebrate Women* event in March 2015. This collaborative event with the Canadian Federation of University Women and the Sudbury YW celebrated *International Women's Day* by welcoming Reva Seth, who spoke about her new book *The Mom Shift*, which describes the balancing act that women have between motherhood and career.

LEAF WINDSOR

LEAF Windsor had another busy and fulfilling year. The branch activities are scheduled to coincide with the academic school year of the University of Windsor Faculty of Law. The annual Person's Day Breakfast kicked off the school year in September. Guest speaker Mary Lou Fassel of the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic spoke to students about LEAF's work and the importance of recognizing women and their contributions in the community.

A number of fundraising events took place throughout the university community, including a very successful Thanksgiving Pie Bake Sale and a bottle drive to collect funds for LEAF National.

In addition to the fundraising activities, LEAF Windsor had a successful year organizing and executing the LEAF *Only Yes Means Yes* (formerly *No Means No*) and *LEAF at Work* workshops in the Windsor-Essex Region. LEAF Windsor workshop coordinators trained approximately sixty Windsor Law students as workshop facilitators and sent them to various schools across the region, engaging with students and spreading the word about LEAF's work.

Additionally, LEAF Windsor took part in Windsor Law's first annual "Sexual Assault Awareness Week" in partnership with fellow feminist Windsor Law groups, and took the lead in presenting an educational seminar and discussion on the topic of revenge porn.

LEAF continues litigation and law reform work regarding consent in sexual assault law, reproductive rights, violence against women, women's rights in the workplace, refugee health care, and religion and equality rights.



L to R: Deborah Gillis, President and Chief Executive Officer of Catalyst, Suhana Meharchand, Host of CBC News Now

LEAF National's Annual Persons Day Breakfast took place on September 24, 2014 at the Sheraton Centre in Toronto and featured Deborah Gillis, President and Chief Executive Officer of Catalyst, the leading research and advisory organization working to change workplaces and improve lives by advancing women into business leadership. Suhana Meharchand, Host of CBC News Now and a long-time community supporter, was the event MC.

LEAF brought together over 600 attendees from various backgrounds, including law, academia, education, human rights, labour and community activism. LEAF also partnered with the Ontario Justice Education Network (OJEN) and Law in Action Within Schools (LAWS) and welcomed 100 high school students for the breakfast followed by a day of workshops and seminars with legal groups and women in the legal profession.

“Gender equality under the law is important — but to achieve real gender equality in the workplace, it’s simply not enough. If it were enough then the statistical landscape in Canada, which has a world-class constitution, would not be so alarming. In Canada, women occupy just 18 percent of senior positions at the largest 500 companies. And, worse still, among recent MBA graduates, men earn \$8,000 more than their female counterparts. When there are board seats to fill, do more than recruit a diverse slate of candidates — promise to fill at least one of those seats with a well-qualified woman.”

Deborah Gillis, President and Chief Executive Officer of Catalyst

OJEN Students with Deborah Gillis at the LEAF National Annual Persons Day Breakfast, September 24, 2014



We value all our 2014 Toronto Persons Day Sponsors whose commitment and support allow us to continue our work!

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**Your generosity helps LEAF build a better and fairer Canada for women and girls!
Thank you!**



2014 Annual Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon

LEAF's team was a part of the annual Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon on October 19, 2014. Thank you to everyone who walked, ran and helped to raise over \$6000 for LEAF's efforts devoted to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across Canada. It was a memorable day and we look forward to seeing everyone again next year!

What is “Barbaric”? Feminist reflections on religion and equality

On January 29, 2015, LEAF hosted a community panel entitled “What is Barbaric? Feminist Reflections on Religion and Equality”, referring to federal Bill S-7, the “Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act.” Panelists were Shareen Gokal, Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID); Alia Hogben, Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW); Dawnis Kennedy, Anishinabe Law Scholar; Farrah Khan (Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic); and moderator Prof. Sonia Lawrence (Osgoode Hall Law School).

L to R: Diane O'Reggio, Executive Director, LEAF; Prof. Sonia Lawrence, Osgoode Hall Law School; Shareen Gokal, AWID; Farrah Khan, Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic; Alia Hogben, CCMW; Dawnis Kennedy, Anishinabe Law Scholar



Public education is a key pillar in LEAF's approach to achieving substantive equality in Canada. The goal of LEAF education programs like *Only Yes Means Yes* (formerly *No Means No*) and *LEAF at Work* is to promote the understanding of women's legal rights and the law reform that advances substantive equality.

LEAF's education programs educate and empower young women and men by teaching them about sexual rights, responsibilities, and the meaning of consent in law, so that they are less likely to become victims or perpetrators. This is achieved through dynamic workshops that discuss Supreme Court of Canada cases involving equality rights and challenge commonly held stereotypes about women.

The programs also analyze real-life scenarios to prepare youth for workplace equality issues they may encounter including: sexual harassment and discrimination, the gendered wage gap, the need to respect and embrace diversity and the role of the legal system in enforcing certain workplace behaviour.

Our public education workshops are delivered at the community level by passionate and skilled branch volunteers supported by the national Education Program Committee.

If you would like to become a sponsor or volunteer, please contact us at info@leaf.ca



The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund's financial statements provide our supporters with a summary and insights into the organization's financial well-being.

The Board of Directors are committed to investing in programs that will sustain the organization into the future. The dollars we raise, year after year, allow us to engage in litigation, law reform and public education.

Statements of Operations

Year ended March 31	2015 \$	2014 \$
Revenues		
Donations and fundraising	498,968	862,045
Grants	338,367	175,000
Investment income	4,996	2,345
	842,331	1,039,390
Expenditures		
Administrative	512,040	444,774
Fundraising	104,267	109,683
Legal cases and projects	254,109	233,565
Professional fees	32,709	32,782
	903,125	820,804
Excess of revenue over expenditures for year	(60,794)	218,586

*Independent Auditor's Report provided by HILBORN LLP.
Complete audited statements available on request.*

Statement of Financial Position

Year ended March 31	2015	2014
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Current assets	418,745	400,821
Investments	236,145	199,731
	654,890	600,552
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	106,396	31,906
Deferred revenue	53,842	13,200
	160,238	45,106
NET ASSETS		
Operating net assets	494,652	555,446
	494,652	555,446
	654,890	600,552

*Independent Auditor's Report provided by HILBORN LLP.
Complete audited statements available on request.*

A special thank you to LEAF's branches, volunteers, committees and subcommittees for their tireless efforts to raise awareness and funds for LEAF!

LEAF BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2014 - 2015

Under the guidance and stewardship of the Board of Directors, LEAF focuses its efforts on education, research and litigation – particularly on shaping the interpretation of sections 15 and 28 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Using these equality guarantees, LEAF works to eliminate discriminatory laws and practices across Canada. Thank you to our outgoing Directors: Bertha Cheung and Nancy Pridham

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LEAF Foundation

Established in 1989, the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund Foundation (LEAF Foundation) is an incorporated, registered charitable foundation, which operates independently through its own Board of Directors to build and maintain core financial support for our ongoing initiatives. The Foundation accepts bequests, endowed gifts or significant corporate donations from those who wish to leave a lasting legacy in support of LEAF's core operating and program needs.

For information on gifting to the LEAF Foundation call: 416.595.7170 or write to:
LEAF Foundation
1 King Street West
Toronto, ON, M5H 1A1



Women's Legal Education and Action Fund
Fonds d'action et d'éducation juridiques pour les femmes

The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) celebrates its **30th** anniversary in 2015.

Join us at various events across Canada and support LEAF to ensure women and girls continue receiving top quality litigation, law reform and public education work, which LEAF delivers with purpose and passion.

Join our conversation on social media and share your stories of how LEAF has affected your life with the hashtag #LEAF30

Your generosity helps LEAF, but more than that, it also helps to build a better and fairer Canada.

Donate | Become a LEAF Member | Volunteer | Become a LEAF *pro bono* Lawyer | Partner

LEAF Branches: Calgary | Edmonton | Halifax | Ottawa | Prince Edward Island | Sudbury | Toronto | Windsor

West Coast LEAF is a separately incorporated registered charity affiliated with LEAF. Visit www.westcoastleaf.org



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