



Creating and promoting pro bono opportunities for Alberta lawyers

Annual Report 2008-09



Our mission and objectives

Mission

PBLA's mission is to improve access to justice by increasing the scope and availability of pro bono legal services for Albertans of limited means. Pro bono legal services are intended to complement, not to replace a properly funded legal aid system.

Objectives

PBLA's objectives are to promote access to the justice system in Alberta by creating and promoting opportunities for lawyers to provide pro bono legal services to persons of limited means by:

1. creating opportunities for Alberta lawyers to discharge their professional responsibilities to provide pro bono legal services;
2. improving the overall delivery of pro bono legal services by facilitating the integration and coordination of services provided by pro bono organizations throughout the province of Alberta;
3. ensuring province-wide access to high-quality pro bono legal services to persons of limited means by:
 - (i) supporting and improving the quality of existing pro bono programs;
 - (ii) working with existing pro bono legal clinics to assist them in providing pro bono services; and
 - (iii) fostering the development of new pro bono programs where needed;
4. enhancing the growth of a pro bono culture within the Alberta bar;
5. raising general public awareness of pro bono legal services to community organizations and persons of limited means who require legal services; and
6. raising the awareness of Alberta lawyers of the need for pro bono services and of the resources available to lawyers who are prepared to provide pro bono services.



As a model, PBLA has worked collaboratively with other Canadian pro bono organizations to enhance the growth of a pro bono culture and raise the awareness in the community and of Alberta lawyers of the need for pro bono services and the resources available.

Message from the President

In 2008 Pro Bono Law Alberta (PBLA), now in its second year of operation, focused on development and expansion.

Internally, efforts continued to develop our administrative and organizational capacity. Consistent with the original design of PBLA, we have now achieved a full staffing complement, long term facilities, and a committed volunteer force on our Board of Directors and Advisory Board.

Functionally, the priority has been to construct and deliver pro bono programs to Albertans of limited means, thereby increasing the scope and availability of such services with the consequence of improving access to justice. Building on the success of the Child Advocacy Pro Bono Project, PBLA brokered a relationship between the Women's Centre and the Association of Women Lawyers, and a new pro bono clinic was developed and launched in Grande Prairie. Both projects expand the very successful pro bono clinic model working across the province.

Externally, PBLA continued to support other pro bono initiatives by hosting a conference of pro bono stakeholders, harvesting their ideas, and initiating the work of addressing ways to support the province-wide initiatives. Work is well under way to support the vital role of Alberta clinics with technology based resources. A pro bono best practice guide was developed and is now in use to enhance and direct the energies of the robust pro bono culture within the Alberta Bar, producing opportunities for new initiatives to expand pro bono service delivery.

As a model, PBLA has worked collaboratively with other Canadian pro bono organizations to enhance the growth of a pro bono culture and raise the awareness in the community and of Alberta lawyers of the need for pro bono services and the resources available. PBLA continues its mission of improving access to justice for Albertans of limited means.

None of this could be accomplished without the vision and commitment of our Board of Directors and Advisory Board, and the hard work, dedication, and creativity of our staff.

I would be remiss if I did not express heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to Susan Billington, QC, for serving so capably as our acting Executive Director, and to Gillian Marriott for taking the adventure on as permanent Executive Director. Yvonne Stanford, the Law Society's representative to PBLA, had this to say, "As I finish my tenure as a public representative (lay bencher), I reflect on how important and central this initiative is to our whole concept of, and work for, access to justice, and how important and central it is to the reputation of the legal profession and its privilege of self governance."

It has been my privilege to serve the profession and the public as President of Pro Bono Law Alberta.

Rodney A. Jerke, QC

President, Pro Bono Law Alberta



The highlight of the year was the establishment of Grande Prairie Legal Guidance (GPLG) in November 2008.

Executive Director's report

It has been a year of exciting changes for me and for PBLA, all of which have brought us to our next stage of development. I assumed the role of Executive Director in January 2009 and took on this new challenge with great anticipation and excitement.

Thank you to Susan Billington, QC, who was seconded from the Law Society in early 2007 to December 2008 as PBLA's first Executive Director and did an excellent job. Two law students, Aidan Henderson and Adolfo Peters, worked with us during summer 2008 and helped with many projects. Myra Skerrett continues to fulfill her role as Executive Assistant very professionally. In September 2008, Cecelia Frohlick joined PBLA as Project Manager and was instrumental in the start up and success of Grande Prairie Legal Guidance. Andrea Lamy, a second year law student, joins us for summer 2009. Together the PBLA team is committed to assisting the Board of Directors in fulfilling the mandate of PBLA and creating a legacy project that the Law Society and the lawyers of Alberta will always be proud of.

In May 2008, PBLA hosted its first meeting for managing partners of several Calgary law firms to discuss the potential for the organized delivery of pro bono legal services within their respective firms. Speakers included The Honourable John C. (Jack) Major, QC; Ms. Lynn Burns, Executive Director of Pro Bono Law Ontario; and Mr. David Scott, QC, of Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (Ottawa) who delivered the key note address entitled "The Business Case for Pro Bono." PBLA looks forward to pursuing relationships and projects with law firms in Calgary and beyond.

PBLA was pleased to co-host the second national pro bono conference in September 2008, in partnership with Pro Bono Law of BC, Pro Bono Law Ontario, and Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan. The conference, entitled Pro Bono: Spanning the Nation, was well attended and representatives from across Canada, including a strong contingent from Alberta, enjoyed presentations on various issues relating to the delivery of pro bono legal services.

The highlight of the year was the establishment of Grande Prairie Legal Guidance (GPLG) in November 2008, followed by a grand opening celebration and volunteer appreciation event in March 2009. After an initial six month pilot period, our volunteers confirmed their commitment to the clinic and GPLG will continue to assist the residents of Grande Prairie and surrounding communities. GPLG has extended its service to include the provision of summary legal advice in family law. Thank you to Bianca Cooper, who served as Program Coordinator through the start up, and welcome to Tanya Ruigrok who has recently assumed that role.

PBLA moved into its new premises in March 2009. Thank you to the Law Society of Alberta for all of their assistance over the last two years. We would also like to thank WestJet and Green Solutions North America Inc. for donating the furniture for our new offices.

As we look ahead to the coming year, we are excited about the possibilities for PBLA. I look forward to continuing the work already started and developing new programs and initiatives for PBLA.

Gillian D. Marriott
Executive Director

A year in review: highlights of 2008-09

The past year has been extremely productive and rewarding for PBLA. This work was made possible by the efforts of our full time and contract staff, Board of Directors, Advisory Board, summer students and volunteer lawyer, and through the support of Law Society of Alberta and Alberta Law Foundation.

Outreach to the legal community

- hosted first Managing Partners' Meeting, Calgary, May 2008
- presented at Canadian Centre for Professional Legal Education (CPLED) sessions in Edmonton and Calgary in May 2008 and February 2009
- created the pro bono Volunteer in Profile (VIP) program, profiling the pro bono contributions of lawyers on our website and in *Pro Bono Network News*
- networked at American Bar Association Equal Justice Conference, Minneapolis MN, May 2008
- developed a best practice guide for law firms entitled *Investing in Pro Bono: A Best Practice Guide for Pro Bono Legal Services by Law Firms*
- co-hosted the second national pro bono conference "Pro Bono: Spanning the Nation" in Vancouver BC, September 2008
- participated in Association of Women Lawyers Retreat, November 2008
- published three *Pro Bono Network News* issues: Spring 2008, Summer 2008 and Winter 2009
- published article in *Law Matters*, January 2009
- engaged in various other meetings that continue to build credibility with the legal profession

Project development

- brokered the Volunteer Lawyers Project with the Women's Centre of Calgary and the Association of Women Lawyers and provided continued support
- continued support of the Child Advocacy Pro Bono Project – our first brokered project
- established a new clinic, Grande Prairie Legal Guidance, which evolved from project idea to a viable service for the Grande Prairie community, November 2008
- proposed a limited scope retainer project to be undertaken in next fiscal year
- continued research and exploration of new project ideas and various outreach programs



Managing Partners' Meeting, May 2008: John Henderson, QC; Rod Jerke, QC; Don Bishop, QC; Susan Billington, QC; Hon. John Major, QC; Lynn Burns, PBLA; David Scott, QC, BLG LLP (Ottawa); Suzanne Alexander-Smith; Gillian Marriott; John Cuthbertson, QC

Collaboration with pro bono clinics

- attended various events hosted by Children's Legal and Educational Resource Centre, Lethbridge Legal Guidance, Student Legal Assistance, and Edmonton Community Legal Centre
- held our first annual meeting in Red Deer, in partnership with Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic, June 2008
- hosted third annual Pro Bono Stakeholders' Round Table Meeting "Building the Network" in Calgary, in partnership with clinics, October 2008
- administered the LSA fundraising program for staff lawyer positions in support of the pro bono clinics, November 2008
- hosted Grande Prairie Legal Guidance grand opening celebration and recognition of volunteers, March 2009
- presented our first Pro Bono Leader in Community Award to Grande Prairie lawyer Derek Van Tassell recognizing his contributions to Grande Prairie Legal Guidance, March 2009

Building a sustainable organization

- continued to expand corporate knowledge and capacity
- enhanced operations by hiring two summer students, Aidan Henderson and Adolfo Peters; a new Project Manager, Cecelia Frohlick, in September 2008; and transitioned to a permanent Executive Director, Gillian Marriott, in early 2009
- welcomed volunteer lawyer Janice Pasay, summer of 2008
- reviewed and updated PBLA Strategic Plan, November 2008
- moved from the Law Society offices to new, independent office, March 2009
- continued to engage the PBLA Advisory Board through presentations and other networking events
- garnered a sustainable funding commitment from the Law Society of Alberta for the next three years to 2011
- developed a historical archive for PBLA and LSA

Statement of financial position

As at March 31, 2009

	2009	2008
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	72,942	177,184
Accounts receivable	1,919	-
Goods and services tax recoverable	2,838	1,750
Other receivables	9,949	-
Prepaid expenses	8,119	-
Short term investments	100,000	-
	195,767	178,934
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	22,476	6,500
NET ASSETS		
Internally restricted	100,000	100,000
Unrestricted	73,291	72,434
	173,291	172,434
	195,767	178,934

Statement of operations

For the year ended March 31, 2009

	2009	2008
REVENUE		
Grants	376,260	369,025
Donations	23,288	7,700
Interest	7,168	60
	406,716	376,785
EXPENSES		
Salaries, wages and benefits	220,306	114,578
Program costs:		
Grande Prairie Legal Guidance	26,107	-
Moving costs	25,693	-
Donations	20,770	-
National conference contribution	15,000	-
Office expense	12,229	429
Stakeholder round table	11,462	11,414
Meeting expense	10,912	4,779
National Pro Bono conference	10,517	-
Professional fees	10,000	6,500
Advertising and promotion	5,789	13,052
Equipment expense	5,400	14,202
Rent and operating cost	5,370	-
Website	5,026	14,725
Consulting	4,860	9,124
Travel	4,056	3,913
Professional development	3,815	2,709
Printing	3,763	6,325
Annual Report	2,310	-
Goods and services tax expense	1,649	1,426
Insurance	723	1,125
Memberships	102	50
	405,859	204,351
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	857	172,434

For a copy of the audited financial statements of Pro Bono Law Alberta Society contact PBLA at 403-541-4840 or info@pbla.ca

Thank you

Pro Bono Law Alberta's success is possible with the support of many individuals and groups who work with us to improve access to justice to Albertans of limited means. Thank you for your support.

Board of Directors

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Suzanne Alexander-Smith, Secretary
Bruce Churchill-Smith, QC
Douglas McCallum
John Cuthbertson, QC
Yvonne Stanford (to February 2009)
Brett Anderson (joined December 2008)
Donald Cranston, QC (joined December 2008)

Staff

Gillian Marriott, Executive Director (as of January 2009)
Susan Billington, QC, Executive Director (to December 2008)
Cecelia Frohlick, Project Manager
Myra Skerrett, Executive Assistant
Aidan Henderson, summer student, University of Calgary Faculty of Law
Adolfo Peters, summer student, University of Calgary Faculty of Law

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Consultants

Dave Bretz, Chartered Accountant
Carol Austin, Charity Assist (web site)
Barb Burfoot, Verge Design (graphic design)
Janice Pasay, Volunteer Lawyer

Funders

Special thanks to our funders
Law Society of Alberta and Alberta Law Foundation



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Donors

Many Alberta lawyers and law firms generously provided donations towards the funding of staff lawyer positions through a program initiated by the Law Society of Alberta and administered by Pro Bono Law Alberta in November 2008. All donations received for this program were divided equally between Calgary Legal Guidance, Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic (Red Deer), Children's Legal and Educational Resource Centre (Calgary), Edmonton Community Legal Centre and Lethbridge Legal Guidance.

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