



# **ANNUAL REPORT 2016 - 2017**

## > A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



From its humble beginnings with one consultation table, the Mile End Legal Clinic celebrates its 15 year anniversary with three service points to serve an ever growing clientele. It is thanks to the dedication of lawyer volunteers and law students that the Clinic continues to enjoy its solid reputation for free, quality and individualized legal services.

of self-representation. The research results will be used to guide Quebec policy on concrete measures to be taken to improve the increasing access to justice problem.

We remain deeply convinced of our work and continue to be motivated by clients who say they could not have defended themselves or asserted their rights without our assistance. We could not do this without the invaluable support of our large and small donors, who, year after year, continue to show us their support and trust in our mission. The Clinic is certainly at a pivotal stage of its development and we will continue the work to ensure its promising future.

**“The Clinic is certainly at a pivotal stage of its development and we will continue the work to ensure its promising future.”**

M<sup>re</sup> Leslie Ning

I am particularly proud of two accomplishments of the past year. We succeeded in opening the service point in Park Extension, a neighbourhood devoid of legal resources, and with it, also welcome M<sup>re</sup> Anne Thibault to the team. With grants from the Quebec Ministry of Justice and the Law Foundation of Ontario, this project will be funded until 2020; we hope that it will become permanently anchored in the community and will enjoy stable funding for the future. The Clinic also participated in the vast multisector research project *Accessing Law and Justice*, hosting a team of researchers for their first case study on the theme



01

## > A MESSAGE FROM THE LEGAL DIRECTOR



It has been a great pleasure to work with the Mile End Legal Clinic since May 2017, when I joined the organization to work as Legal Director. Upon my arrival, I had the unique opportunity to open up the Clinic's new service point in Park Extension. Slowly but surely, we are establishing ourselves in the neighbourhood's social fabric by being

attentive to the needs of the population. By working in close collaboration with community organizations and the CLSC, we are also ensuring that we respond to people's needs in a more holistic manner. After working in Park Extension for the past six months, we have also come to realise that an important segment of the population firstly needs to be made aware that they have rights, before even getting to the point where they decide to come for a consultation at the Clinic to assert such rights. We are therefore continuously adjusting ourselves and adapting our services to the neighbourhood's specific needs.



02

I am also thrilled to be working with the student interns from Université de Montréal and McGill University, who constantly demonstrate enthusiasm in their tasks, and most importantly, a great amount of empathy during consultations. This internship allows students to see a social dimension of law, very often disregarded when only learning the theory. They are exposed to extremely vulnerable segments of the population, individuals dealing with mental health issues, disabilities and other impairing difficulties. I strongly believe that this internship makes students acutely aware of the challenges of access to justice, and through it, that we are training the next cohort of jurists and lawyers sensitive to this issue and who will remain involved in working to making it better.

M<sup>re</sup> Anne Thibault

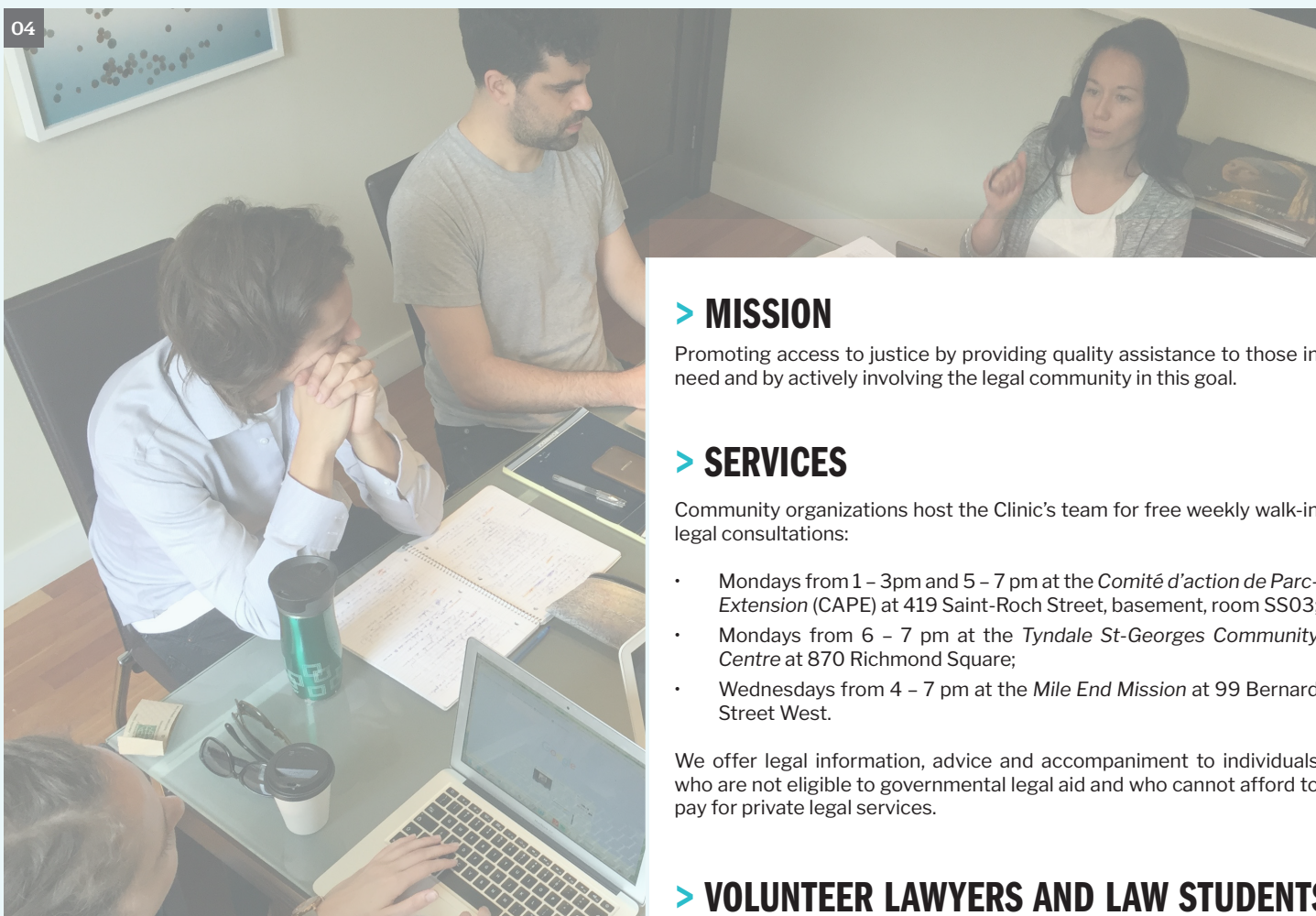
01: M<sup>re</sup> Ning fired the starting gun for the *Christie Community Bike Ride*, which raised funds for the Clinic.

02: M<sup>re</sup> Thibault and Mr. Denis Grladeau, then coordinator of CAPE, sign the agreement for the Park Extension Legal Clinic project.

03: Summer 2017 student cohort (left to right) : Jean-Sébastien Neault, Ariane Vanasse, Nathan Afilalo, Alexandra Ghelerter, Amelia Philpott et Sam Bick (not pictured : Jessica Lelièvre).

04: Hard at work during a weekly team meeting to review and discuss Clinic files.

# > THE CLINIC IN A NUTSHELL



## > MISSION

Promoting access to justice by providing quality assistance to those in need and by actively involving the legal community in this goal.

## > SERVICES

Community organizations host the Clinic's team for free weekly walk-in legal consultations:

- Mondays from 1 – 3pm and 5 – 7 pm at the *Comité d'action de Parc-Extension (CAPE)* at 419 Saint-Roch Street, basement, room SS03;
- Mondays from 6 – 7 pm at the *Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre* at 870 Richmond Square;
- Wednesdays from 4 – 7 pm at the *Mile End Mission* at 99 Bernard Street West.

We offer legal information, advice and accompaniment to individuals who are not eligible to governmental legal aid and who cannot afford to pay for private legal services.

## > VOLUNTEER LAWYERS AND LAW STUDENTS

From sole practitioners to national firms, our roster of about forty volunteer lawyers working in various areas of law offer their time and expertise to provide free legal information and advice to our clients.

Thanks to partnerships with McGill University and Université de Montréal, each year, a dozen law students complete credited internships working at the front lines of the Clinic.

### STAFF 2016-17

#### EXECUTIVE

M<sup>tre</sup> Leslie Ning, Executive Director  
M<sup>tre</sup> Anne Thibault, Legal Director

#### ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Anik Isabelle, bookkeeping  
Jeansil Bruyère and Jan Nato, communications  
Shannon Snow, fundraising



## > PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT



As outgoing President of the Mile End Legal Clinic's Board of Directors, I say farewell with some sadness, but mostly with an extraordinary sense of accomplishment and enthusiasm for the Clinic's future. I have been a member of the board for over ten years, and its president for nearly five. Over this time, I have seen the Clinic grow, change, and flourish.

We began as a homespun startup funded entirely with small donations from a few individuals, our infant board meeting in our founder and sole staff member Geeta Narang's dining room. In many ways, we are still the young grassroots community organization we always were. As ever, we distinguish ourselves as one of the few organizations that follows information with advice and services when necessary.

But we have also matured. We have broadened our points of service to include two other clinics in places where there is acute need: one in Little Burgundy and one in Park Extension. We have two staff members, our Executive Director Leslie Ning and our Legal Director Anne Thibault. We have begun to work more closely with other organizations so that we can be sure that access to justice does not only mean access to courts or legal solutions, but is understood and facilitated in more holistic ways that fit

with our client's lives. Finally, we have learned to harness new kinds of resources in support of our mission, finding synergies between community contributions and grants from public and private foundations dedicated to the pursuit of equalizing access to justice.

All of this has resulted in tremendous energy around the Clinic. The energy comes from our ever-growing cadre of students, who contribute with their creativity, rigour, and dedication to ensuring that law serves the goal of achieving justice. It comes from our volunteer lawyers, who recognize the social justice dimensions of their professional obligations and consistently find more time and resources to give despite the growing demands of the profession. It comes from our vibrant directors who never lose sight of the human dimensions of the work. And it comes from our community of clients and neighbours, who know us, and who put their faith in us every time they use and support our services.

As Geeta takes the reins (back) as President of the Board, I feel safe in the knowledge that we will continue to earn our reputation for excellence and engagement. I thank the Clinic for the privilege of these last ten years, and look forward to a long future as a community member supporting the work of the Mile End Legal Clinic.

Alana Klein  
Outgoing President of the Board of Directors

## > THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Prof. Alana Klein  
President

M<sup>re</sup> Geeta Narang  
Founder

M<sup>re</sup> Aisha Topsakal  
Vice President

M<sup>re</sup> Allen Mendelsohn  
Secretary

M<sup>re</sup> Simon Dupuis  
Treasurer

Mme Valérie Gascon

M<sup>re</sup> Sara Gauthier

M<sup>re</sup> Marek Nitoslowski

M<sup>re</sup> Olga Redko  
(not pictured, member  
since June 2017)

# > HIGHLIGHTS

## Launch of the Park Extension Legal Clinic

The new service point in Park Extension opened its doors on June 19, 2017; the project is funded by the Quebec Ministry of Justice's Access to Justice Fund.



**01:** Information session for the Park Extension Legal Clinic on June 14, 2017 **02:** MM Alice Monet, Anne Thibault, Leslie Ning and Mr. André Trépanier  
**03:** M<sup>re</sup> Anne Thibault and students Jean-Sébastien Neault and Amelia Philpott at CAPE **04:** The Hon. Thomas J. Mulcair, Outremont MP and supporter of the Clinic via the Canada Summer Jobs program, and M<sup>re</sup> Leslie Ning **05:** The musicians of the night Jean-Sébastien Neault and Dominique Rheault **06:** M<sup>re</sup> Leslie Ning and prof. Alana Klein with a few major donors : IMK representatives, Manon Sansoucy and M<sup>re</sup> Janet Michelin, and Mr. Ashok Narang and Mr. Paul Bannerman

## ADAJ Conference

On May 30, 2017, ADAJ (the Accessing Law and Justice research project) held its annual meeting. M<sup>re</sup> Ning was invited to present the Clinic, partner of the area of research on "Self-representation and litigants without counsel".



## Christie Community Bike Ride

McGill Faculty of Law students, professors, alumni and friends got together on September 25, 2016 to raise money for the Clinic during the annual Christie Community Bike Ride to promote access to justice.



## Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC) Conference

On May 19 & 20, 2017, M<sup>re</sup> Ning was a facilitator at PBSC's National Training Conference in Toronto and also participated in a panel themed "Working with diverse clientele".





## > OUR WORK, OUR CLIENTS

### TWO TESTIMONIALS FROM OUR CLIENTS



### Julia & Allen

**“They saved us from massive losses and made us feel brave and capable of facing a Sisyphean task.”**

“We sought the help of the Mile End Legal Clinic when our then-landlord became abusive and obstructive after we notified him of a bedbug infestation in our dwelling.

MELC was instrumental in helping us cope during one of the worst years of our lives. M<sup>re</sup> Ning and two MELC volunteer lawyers kept us prepared and handled us with patience when we were fragile. They saved us from massive losses and made us feel brave and capable of facing a Sisyphean task.

The Clinic prepared us for our hearings and thus we were able to leave our dwelling successfully, with our dignity and much of our belongings intact.

Even if we had been financially able I do not believe we could have found better help and encouragement anywhere else.”

### Mrs. L

Mrs. L sought the Clinic’s help after dealing with a dishonest door-to-door salesman which resulted in the purchase of a thermo pump and a myriad of complications. The Clinic researched her case, helped her draft a demand letter and an application before the Small Claims Division and prepped her for her hearing. She recently received a positive judgment and is more than satisfied with the result and for following through to assert her rights.

**“If I received a positive judgment, it’s thanks to the Mile End Legal Clinic’s team’s professionalism and for its solid accompaniment.”**

“I give my thanks and gratitude to the Clinic’s team – thank you for your warm welcome, for actively listening to me about my legal problem, for your moral support, for your expertise, as well as precise and complete follow-ups. You helped by giving me strength to go forward when I was going to give up, by helping me to build self-confidence, by organizing my file and finally by preparing me for my hearing.

If I received a positive judgment, it’s thanks to the Mile End Legal Clinic’s team’s professionalism and for its solid accompaniment. I hope that organizations like the Clinic continue to be supported and to exist to help vulnerable people dealing with their legal problems. I’m so grateful for everything you’ve helped me with and will never forget it.”



## > 15 YEARS: FROM 1 TABLE TO 3 SERVICE POINTS

By: M<sup>re</sup> Geeta Narang  
Founder



When I began offering free legal services at the Mile End Mission in 2002, I was driven by a healthy dose of righteous indignation. I was young and I was mad that so many of the rights that I learnt of in law school did not translate into substantive justice in the real world. I had more anger – more energy and fewer children – than I do today. And I was convinced that few of my colleagues believed that access to justice is a fundamental right just as worthy of attention as human rights violations abroad.

I was wrong.

Others care. The left does not have a monopoly on righteous indignation and being moved to action by the injustices that result from the way our legal system works. There are corporate lawyers who believe in the importance of access to justice. This is one of the biggest pieces of news that my current self has to share with the woman who provided legal counsel to clients at the Mission fifteen years ago. She probably wouldn't believe it. The young lawyer who started the Clinic was headstrong and stubborn.

Through the years, I have been consistently surprised when colleagues from law school whose career paths are radically different from mine have, seemingly out of the blue, sent checks for large and small amounts payable to the "Mile End Legal Clinic". Though we disagree on many things – from the soundness of tax incentives for businesses to the role that private charities should play in ensuring that we have a social safety net – we seem to agree

that we have an obligation to do something to improve access to justice.

With time, my understanding of what the Clinic does has also evolved. I used to think that I had not done anything of worth if I helped a client who went on to lose her case in court. I no longer believe this: the world is not black or white, just as access to justice is not a binary yes or no equation. In fact, there is an important distinction to be made between access to *justice* and access to the *legal system*.

Sometimes there is absolutely nothing we can do to help someone win their case in a courtroom. There are tenants who consistently pay their rent late, despite orders to pay on the first of the month, whose leases will be cancelled by the tenancy board and single parents who cannot claim arrears in child support because they did not act earlier. In such circumstances, as jurists, we need to explain the hard facts to clients and help them make the best decision available to them. There is great value to this type of work, though it is hard to compose a catchy phrase to fundraise for it. It is nonetheless important: people need to know where they stand in relation to law.

When we secured funding to hire an Executive Director in 2012, I knew that I needed to step back. The Clinic was my baby and I had to let it evolve and grow without me. I feared that my answer to every operational question would be 'When I was running the Clinic, that was not how we did things ...' Now, I am open to new ideas. The anger of youth has subsided, but my belief in the importance of what we do has not and I look forward to my new role as President of the Board of the Clinic.

Alana, Simon and Sara, our outgoing President and board members, thank you for all that you have done. You helped the Clinic grow from a small neighbourhood project to the organization we are today.



02

01: The front of the Mile End Mission, host of the Wednesday night consultations.

02: M<sup>re</sup> Allen Mendelsohn and hosts of the "Pasta Opera" fundraiser night in June 2015 at the Rialto Theatre.

03: M<sup>re</sup> Colin K. Irving and M<sup>re</sup> Geeta Narang in discussion during a consultation session in 2011.

04: Thank You Cocktail, 2016



03

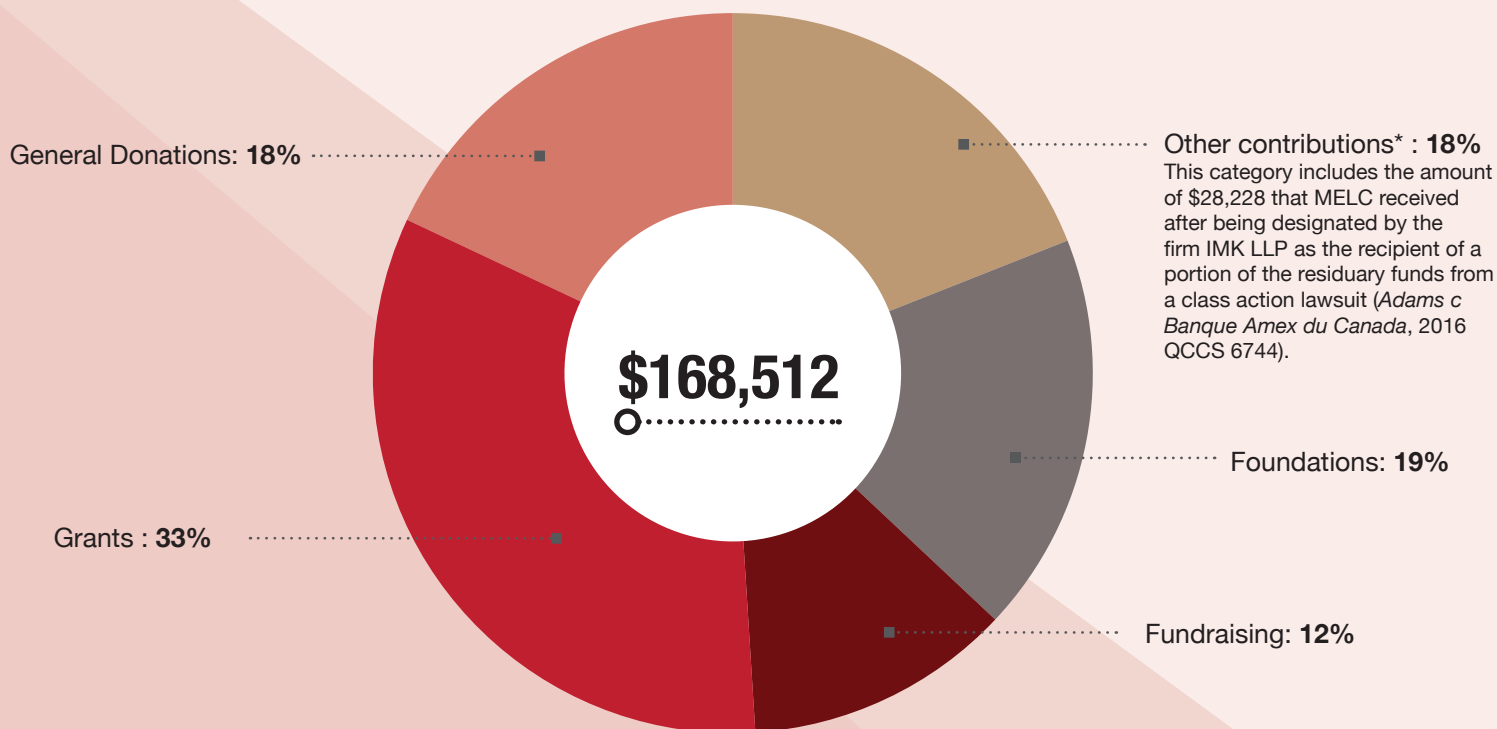


04

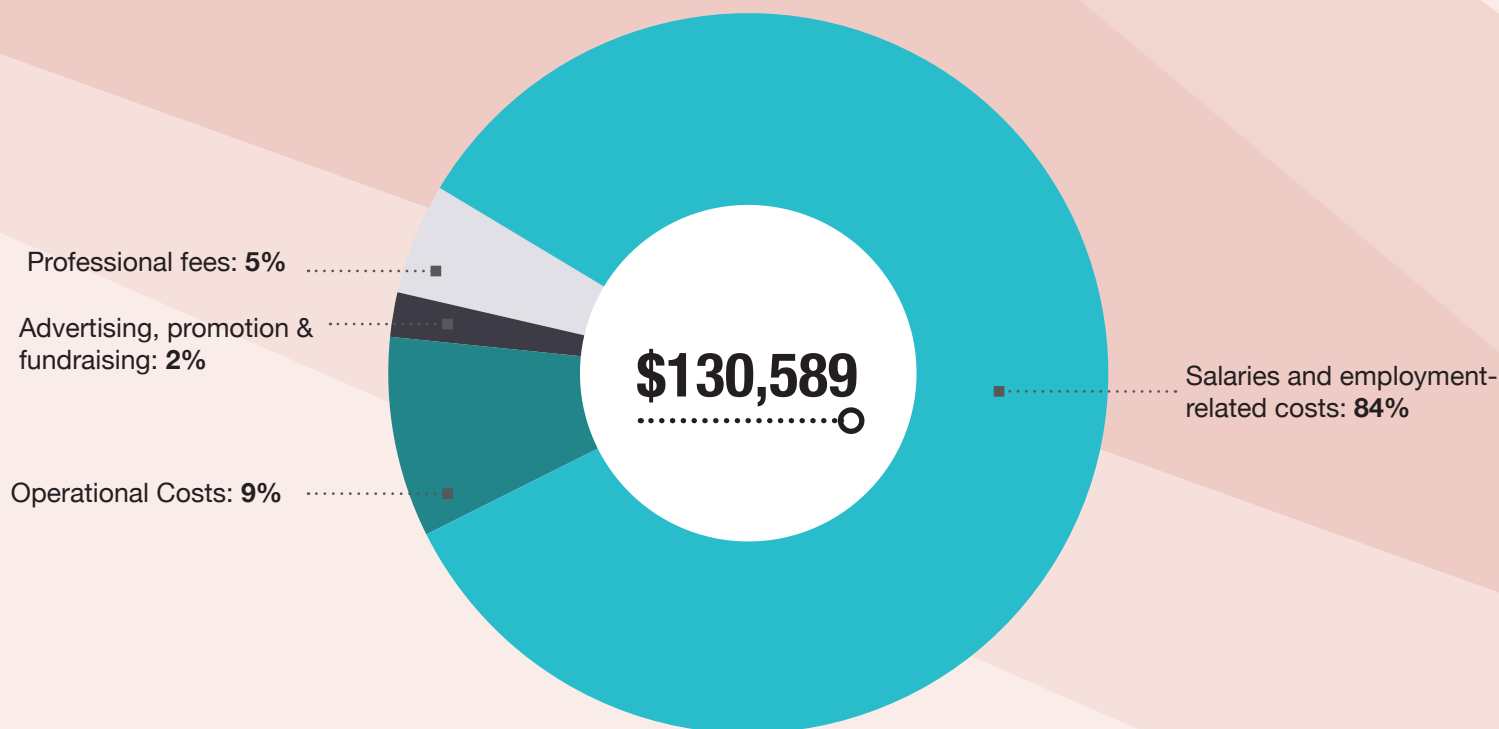
# > FINANCES <<<

Based on audited financial statements as of September 30, 2017

## > REVENUES <



## < EXPENSES >

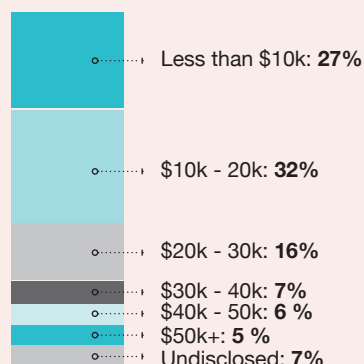




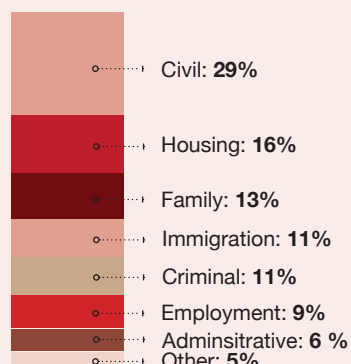
# > STATISTICS <<<

Period: October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017

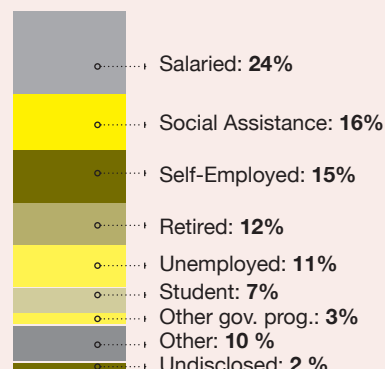
## < ANNUAL INCOME >



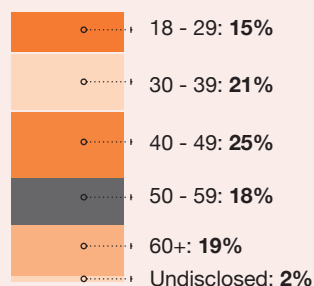
## < AREAS OF LAW >



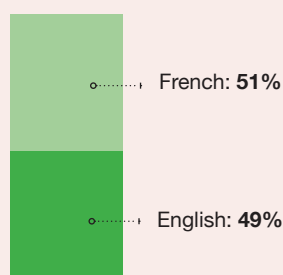
## < EMPLOYMENT OR OCCUPATION STATUS >



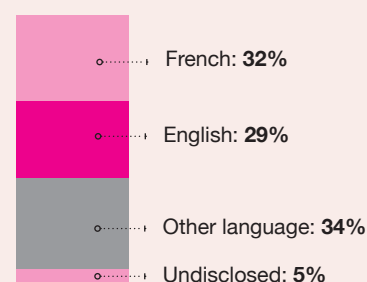
## < AGE >



## < CONSULTATION LANGUAGE >



## < FIRST LANGUAGE >



## Clients

This figure represents the number of individuals who accessed the Clinic's services.

434

## In-person consultations

This figure represents the number of individual consultations between a client and a Clinic student, staff or volunteer lawyer (a client may benefit from multiple consultations).

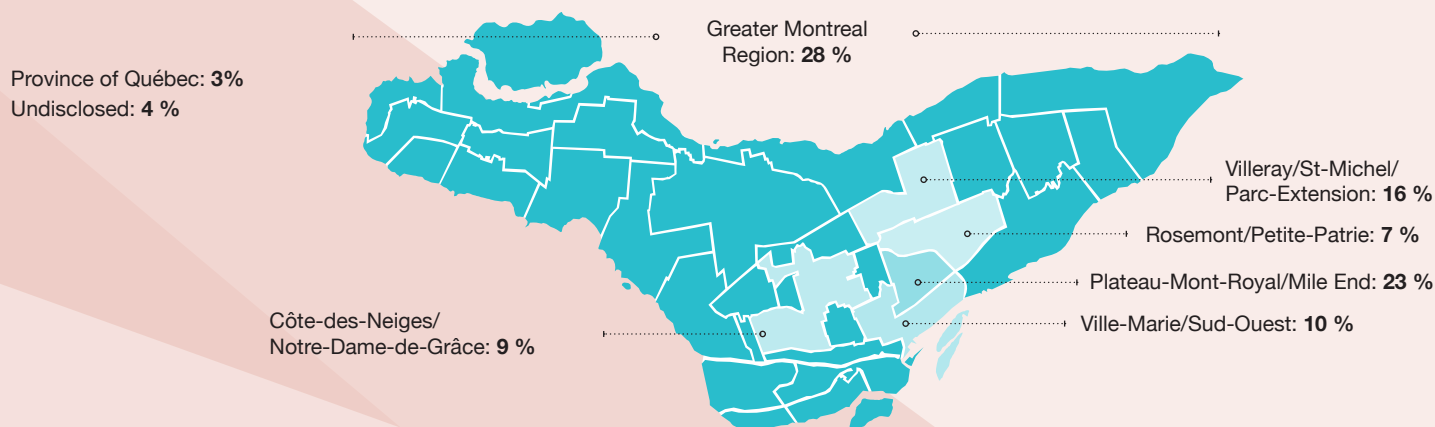
624

## Drop-In Sessions

This figure represents the total number of drop-in consultation sessions at the three service points.

91

## < NEIGHBOURHOODS >



# > THANK YOU <<<

## > MAJOR DONORS AND SPONSORS (\$10,000 AND MORE) <<<

FASKEN



Justice  
Québec 

**imk**  
avocats • advocates

Service  
Canada

M. Ashok Narang

La Fondation  
Bannerman

---

## > SUPPORTERS (\$1,000 AND MORE) <<<

*Blakes*  
AVOCATS

CLYDE&CO



\*  
SOQUIJ

M<sup>re</sup> Christopher Main

M<sup>re</sup> Sasha Mandy

---

## > FRIENDS (\$500 TO \$999) <<<

Roger Jacob Bill  
Dionne Schulze s.e.n.c.  
Donna and Ted Goloff  
Family Foundation

Dunsky Expertise en  
énergie  
Emma Lambert  
François Longpré

Michèle Moreau  
Renno Vathilakis inc.  
Syndicat des conseillers et  
conseillères de la CSQ

Ville de Montréal

## > STUDENT INTERNS <<<

Nathan Afialo  
Sam Bick  
Benjamin Brunot

Virginia Cabello Coronado  
Alexandra Ghelerter  
Meg Jones

Jessica Lelièvre  
Daniela R. Malisia  
Jean-Sébastien Neault

Amelia Philpott  
Ariane Vanasse  
Oksana Werbowy

## > VOLUNTEER LAWYERS <<<

M<sup>tre</sup> Olivier Aldama  
M<sup>tre</sup> Daniel Baum  
M<sup>tre</sup> Aude Bastien  
M<sup>tre</sup> Hugo Beaulieu  
M<sup>tre</sup> Coline Bellefleur  
M<sup>tre</sup> Mélissa Bérubé  
M<sup>tre</sup> Martin Bergeron  
M<sup>tre</sup> Audrey Boissonneault  
M<sup>tre</sup> Annabel Busbridge  
M<sup>tre</sup> Samya-Nessim Chrigui  
M<sup>tre</sup> Svjetlana Cvitkovic

M<sup>tre</sup> Julien Delangie  
M<sup>tre</sup> Alain Deschamps  
M<sup>tre</sup> Julien Dion  
M<sup>tre</sup> Laurence Dubé-Proulx  
M<sup>tre</sup> Zina El Amrani  
M<sup>tre</sup> Jos El Debs  
M<sup>tre</sup> Barbara Felx-Leduc  
M<sup>tre</sup> C. Lachance Gaboury  
M<sup>tre</sup> Renaud Gauthier  
M<sup>tre</sup> Valérie Gobeil  
M<sup>tre</sup> Geneviève Griffin

M<sup>tre</sup> Mike Grodinsky  
M<sup>tre</sup> Maxime Hébrard  
M<sup>tre</sup> Miriam Israel  
M<sup>tre</sup> Aref Kodeh  
M<sup>tre</sup> Molly Krishtalka  
M<sup>tre</sup> Gene Kruger  
M<sup>tre</sup> Jean-Marc Lacourcière  
M<sup>tre</sup> Vincent Cérat Lagana  
M<sup>tre</sup> Daniel Laine  
M<sup>tre</sup> Joanie Lapalme  
M<sup>tre</sup> Maryse Lapointe

M<sup>tre</sup> Félix Larose  
M<sup>tre</sup> Melissa Lonn  
M<sup>tre</sup> Gabriela Machico  
M<sup>tre</sup> Alexandre McCormack  
M<sup>tre</sup> Andres Miguel Pareja  
M<sup>tre</sup> Farid Muttalib  
M<sup>tre</sup> Thu Mai Nguyen  
M<sup>tre</sup> Benjamin Prud'homme  
M<sup>tre</sup> Vincent Ranger  
M<sup>tre</sup> Olga Redko  
M<sup>tre</sup> Alexandre Ricci

M<sup>tre</sup> Andrei Roman (notaire)  
M<sup>tre</sup> Max Silverman  
M<sup>tre</sup> Nicolaos Strapatsas  
M<sup>tre</sup> Elsa Rizkallah  
M<sup>tre</sup> Catherine Sénéchal  
M<sup>tre</sup> Natasha Sivret  
M<sup>tre</sup> Annie-Pier Therrien  
M<sup>tre</sup> Gretchen Timmins  
M<sup>tre</sup> Emira Tufo  
M<sup>tre</sup> Dominique Turcotte

## > SPECIAL MENTION AND VOLUNTEERS <<<

Comité d'action de Parc-Extension (CAPE)  
Mile End Community Mission  
Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre

Linda Nolasco Araujo  
Denis Giraldo  
Alexandra Bahary (ADAJ)

Emmanuel Bernheim (ADAJ)  
Dominique Bernier (ADAJ)  
Louis-Philippe Jannard (ADAJ)

M<sup>e</sup> Alice Monet  
Divya Patel  
André Trépanier

## > OTHERS (LESS THAN \$500) <<<

Jordan Altman  
Vesna Antwan  
Eloisa Aquino  
Stéphanie Bachand  
Rilla Banks  
Daniel Baum  
Geneviève Bélanger  
Véronique Bélanger  
Rachel Berger  
Manon Berthiaume  
Jennifer Besner  
Roger Bill  
Alexandra Bissinger  
Andrea Bjorklund  
Genevieve Bourbonnais  
Maria Braker  
Luke Brown  
Harvey Campbell  
Nicolas Cauchy  
Thomas Chalmers  
Valerie Cherneski  
Sherrie Child  
Stéphanie Chipeur  
Louise Chouinard  
Elisa Clavier  
Laura Damecour  
Jason Davidson  
Justina Di Fazio  
Julien Dion  
William Dion-Bernard  
Carla Dombowsky

Jane Donga  
Marie-Eve Dumont  
Simon Dupuis  
Guillaume Dutil-Lachance  
Nathalie Faubert  
Proja Filipovich  
Gerard Fleet  
Hershe Frankel  
Assaf Gal-Or  
Rebecca Gallogly  
Marie Garel  
David Gault  
Sara Gauthier  
Catherine Gauthier-Campbell  
Marika Giles Samson  
Raphaël Girard  
Daniel Girlando  
Annelise Godber  
Marc Gold  
Sara Gold  
Marie-Eve Goulet  
Dan Grodinsky  
Matthew Hamerman  
Fraser Harland  
William Hlibchuk  
Andrew Hodhod  
Christopher Hutchison  
Alexander Jarvie  
Catherine Johnson  
Rosalie Jukier  
Jonathan Kalles

Robert Keller  
Shelley Kerman  
Alana Klein  
Sandor Klein  
Beth Krishtalka  
Hugo Lafontaine  
Kevin Lafrenière  
Faiz Lalani  
Helena Lamed  
Geneviève Langelier  
Bernard Larocque  
Marie-Andrée Larouche  
Rebecca Laurin  
Frédérique Le Colletter  
François Lebrun  
Andréanne Le-clerc-Marceau  
Eugénie Lefebvre  
Maxime Lemoyne  
Jennifer Lepage  
Pierre Lermusieux  
Lisa LeRoy  
Calvin Leung Lung Yuen  
Chad Lubelsky  
Hannah Maldoff  
Marie Manikis  
Kathleen Martin  
David Matyas  
Christopher Maughan  
Allen Mendelsohn  
Judith Mendelsohn

Anne Merminod  
Andree Anne Metcalfe  
Claudia Michaud  
Heather Michelin  
Erin Miller  
Carolina Mingarelli  
Shantha Priya Morley  
Pierre-Emmanuel Moysse  
Farid Muttalib  
Geeta Narang  
Tanya Narang  
Audrey Ning  
Grégory Ning  
Jean-Noël Ning  
Jérémie Ning  
Jan Nitoslowski  
Aristide & Adelle  
Nononsi & Blackett  
Geneviève Normand  
Elizabeth  
Oosterman-Nicholson  
Christine Paquin  
Emilie Paquin-Holmested  
Mario Paul-Hus  
Guylaine Pednault  
Amelia Philpott  
Lauren Phizicky  
Stephen Phizicky  
Brenda Plant  
Johanne Poirier  
Maryna Polataiko

Ryan Quinn  
Vincent Ranger  
Julia Redmond  
Christopher Richter  
Hilary Robertson  
Vanita Sachdeva  
Jamie Salomon  
Nicholas Scheib  
Stephen Scott  
Gina Sebastiao  
Yudi Sewraj  
Manuel Shacter  
John Sibales  
Max Silverman  
Anastasia Soldatos  
Bruce St.Louis  
Cassandra Steer  
Alexander Steinhouse  
Damion Stodola  
Nicolaos Strapatsas  
Francesca Taddeo  
Walter Tom  
Aisha Topsakal  
Marta Usakiewicz  
Mathilde Valentini  
Marion Viau  
Patrick Visintini  
Theresa Wallace  
Katherine Walsh  
Agatha Wong  
Victoria Woo





15 YEARS

Design: Jan Nato