



**Centre for Equality Rights
in Accommodation**

Annual Report

2010-2011



ABOUT CERA

CERA - The Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation, founded in 1986, is a province-wide, non-profit organization that promotes human rights in housing. CERA works to remove the barriers that keep disadvantaged individuals and families from accessing and retaining the housing they need. CERA has become a world leader in using both domestic and international human rights law to address issues of homelessness and poverty. We work collaboratively with non-governmental organizations in Canada and in other countries to promote and enforce economic and social rights.

The general objectives of CERA are to:

- ❖ Promote knowledge and enforcement of human rights in housing among disadvantaged groups and individuals;
- ❖ Provide educational materials and programs in housing and human rights to groups whose human rights may have been violated, to landlords, to service providers and to the public at large;
- ❖ To provide representation to disadvantaged groups and individuals who believe their human rights have been infringed;
- ❖ To encourage and facilitate effective public education and enforcement of human rights by provincial, national and international commissions, agencies, organizations and institutions and by governments;
- ❖ To engage in research into human rights in housing as they affect disadvantaged groups.

To carry out these objectives, CERA has established several programs and engages in various activities:

- ❖ **WOMEN'S HOUSING RIGHTS PROGRAM**
- ❖ **HUMAN RIGHTS CASEWORK**
- ❖ **TEST CASE LITIGATION**
- ❖ **EARLY INTERVENTION-EViction PREVENTION PROGRAM**
- ❖ **PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**



The Chair of CERA's Board of Directors, Adrienne Lei

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I am very happy to provide to you, on behalf of CERA's Board of Directors, the Annual Report for the 2010/2011 fiscal year.

CERA's resilience in the face of adversity continues to amaze our members, our clients, and our partners. Canada has never seen such a competitive funding climate, with fewer dollars available than ever before. Small and medium sized organizations across the country are being forced to close their doors for insufficient resources. At the same time, over the last few years there has also been an unprecedented attack on human rights and human rights organizations. Of course this has had a direct impact on CERA, but nevertheless we continue to offer our services, and promote human rights. We have done this by spreading our modest resources as far as possible, and relying on our committed volunteers. We have no choice: as long as the housing rights of low income tenants continue to be infringed, CERA continues to do its work, one way or another.

As individuals and families struggle to make ends meet in the midst of an economic recession, our Eviction Prevention program was an essential service to low income tenants in Toronto. This program assisted almost 820 tenants over the course of the year. CERA also continued to provide one-on-one human rights in housing assistance to over 450 individuals and families.

At the same time, CERA's long standing use and facility with a human rights framework is now recognized as an important resource. National organizations look to CERA to participate in discussions regarding reinstating and creating new institutions and mechanisms to ensure government and private sector accountability to human rights.

Beyond providing essential services and contributing to discussions regarding human rights protections in Canada, CERA undertook some exciting new projects in this fiscal year. For example, we started an innovative national financial literacy project in collaboration with Canada Without Poverty, began work on a national human rights in housing video series and launched *RightsCheck*, a human rights education and outreach initiative targeting housing providers in Toronto.

We also developed a series of resources promoting healthy multi-unit housing for people living with environmental sensitivities, completely re-vamped our website and began work on a series of online educational tools.

We also continued to engage the international human rights community where our 20+ years of experience are valued and relied upon.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the support of our funders, the Law Foundation of Ontario, the City of Toronto, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Legal Aid Ontario, SEDI/TD Financial, the Canadian Bar Association Law for the Future Fund and the Atkinson Charitable Foundation, and our many dedicated volunteers.

Sincerely, Adrienne Lei, Chair

WOMEN'S HOUSING RIGHTS PROGRAM

In the last fiscal year, the Women's Program at CERA suffered an unfortunate setback when Status of Women Canada (SWC) decided not to renew funding for the Women's Housing Equality Network (WHEN) project. WHEN was the only national group focused on addressing women's homelessness and inadequate housing and had, over the course of five years, established itself as an important voice within the housing sector, contributing unique information and perspectives to ongoing housing debates and discussions.

Despite having no funding, CERA continued to advocate for women's housing rights at the national level and through international mechanisms. In particular, we continued to advocate for the adoption of Bill C-304, a private member's bill which establishes a national housing strategy. As a result of our collaborative work with a number of organizations including the Social Rights Advocacy Centre and FRAPRU in Quebec, the Bill made it to third reading at the House of Commons.

We also started to work more collaboratively with other organizations to challenge the Government's attack on women's equality rights. In this regard, we attended a meeting at the Canadian Human Rights Commission with



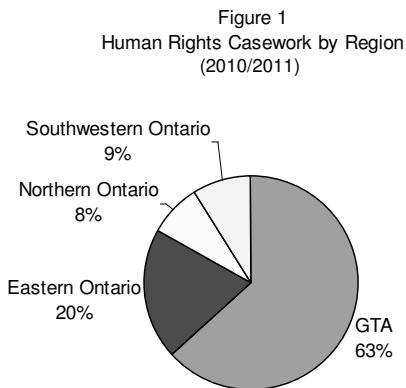
Narmeen Hashim, Ottawa Program Officer

approximately 15 women's organizations to discuss how the Commission might do more and better work to advance women's equality. CERA's Executive Director also gave a keynote speech with other leading feminists in Canada at the Public Service Alliance's national meeting on women's rights in October 2010. Leilani received a standing ovation for her comments.

CERA's Executive Director also participated in an important symposium, *Feminism at Fifty*, which brought together leading feminist academics and advocates from across the country to assess where we have come with feminism in Canada and where we need to go. Leilani presented on the status of women's socio-economic rights in Canada.

Because it is so difficult to work on women's housing equality domestically, CERA's women's program participated in a number of activities to advance women's equality rights at the international level (see: International Work)

HUMAN RIGHTS CASEWORK



Despite an almost complete absence of funding, there continued to be significant demand for CERA's individual human rights intake and advocacy services in 2010/2011. Over the year we opened 497 new human rights files. While the majority of our clients reside in the GTA (see Figure 1), CERA worked across the province, assisting households in communities such as Ottawa, London, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, St. Catherines, Kingston, Peterborough, Guelph, Elliot Lake, North Bay and Windsor. It is thanks to our dedicated team of volunteers that we were able to provide assistance to these individuals and families. Heartfelt thanks go out to Saleha Ali, Linden Dales, Christopher Fitch, Robert Genoe, Emma Heffernan, Laura Isvan, Vlad Klacar, Bart Makowski, Melody Maleki-Yazdi, Alexandra Mingo, Amanda Montague, Shabnam Nasserifar, Sameer Nurmohammed, Reilly Pollard, Sowndrapriya Royam, Tara Sadeghian, Wil Szuhovzky, Akash Toprani, Brad Tartick and Rachelle Williams.

Our clients reported experiencing discrimination based on virtually all of the prohibited grounds included under the *Human Rights Code* (see Figure 2) – and most often, they suffered discrimination based on multiple grounds. As in previous years, the most commonly reported ground of discrimination was disability and usually it came in the form of

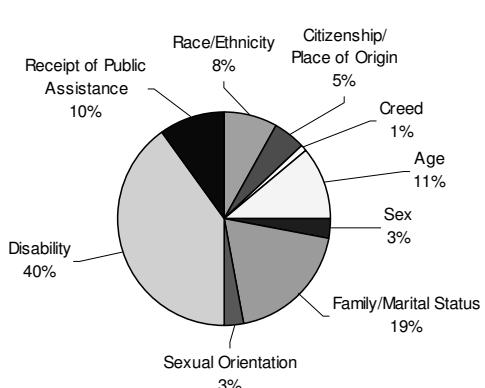
housing providers refusing to adequately accommodate a resident's disability-related needs. For example, Sharon Smith, who has a variety of mobility impairments and uses a wheelchair, scooter and walker to get around, spent over two years trying to get her corporate landlord to install a lift so that she could properly access her apartment. Promises were made, but nothing was done. CERA helped Ms. Smith file an application with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. While most of CERA's disability-related cases related to physical disabilities, 20% of these cases involved discrimination based on a mental health disability, such as where a tenant is being harassed by other residents because he/she has a developmental disability.

Discrimination based on family or marital status was also frequently reported. Typically, this involved landlords refusing to rent to families because they have children – or because of the number of children they have – or threatening to evict them because of the everyday noise made by their children. Carolina contacted CERA after she and her husband were turned down for a one bedroom apartment because they had a young baby. The owner politely told them that the other tenants would not be happy to have a newborn in the building.

Many of our clients were also denied housing or harassed based on their race or ethnicity, receipt of public assistance, or because they are young. For example, one of our clients was turned down repeatedly because she is seventeen, despite having good references and having her rent guaranteed by the Children's Aid Society.

When people think of human rights casework, they typically imagine complaints being filed with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. In fact, the vast majority of our human rights casework does not involve Ontario's human rights enforcement process – most of our clients want to resolve their problems informally. They want to persuade the landlord to change discriminatory policies or practices and rent to them, or to address their disability-related needs. Many of them just want to educate the landlord on the *Human Rights Code*. As a result CERA staff and volunteers spend most of their time advocating with landlords over the telephone or through letters to address our clients concerns without the need of any legal process.

Figure 2
Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination Reported
(2010/2011)



Sharon Smith

This early intervention is a critical component of CERA's services. Public resources for human rights in Ontario are almost entirely focused on the legal process through the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. In our view, this is misguided as legal processes, no matter how much effort has been devoted to improving accessibility, do not meet the needs of Ontarians experiencing housing discrimination. These individuals and families – whether they are recent immigrants or refugees, young families, Aboriginal people, youth, people with disabilities, people living on social assistance, etc. - face significant barriers in trying to access the human rights system. And they need timely assistance as their housing is at stake.

That being said, Ontario's human rights enforcement process is still critical as a means of clarifying the law, educating landlords and compensating victims of discrimination. In 2010/2011, CERA assisted ten clients to file applications with the Human Rights Tribunal. An additional eight formal applications were settled with applicants receiving a total of \$21,500 in compensation and a variety of other public interest and individual remedies.

TEST CASE LITIGATION

CHALLENGE TO REFUSAL TO WAIVE FEES FOR POOR PERSONS

In 2008/2009 Ruth Goba, CERA's Staff Lawyer, worked with the Charter Committee on Poverty Issues (CCPI) on an application to the Federal Court for intervenor status in *Toussaint v. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration*. Intervenor status was granted and the case was heard by the Federal court in June 2009.

The constitutional question before the Court in the case was whether the federal government is permitted to impose a fee for humanitarian and compassionate (H & C) applications for permanent residence in Canada without addressing the unequal burden and/or exclusion which such fees impose on those who, because of poverty and/or reliance on social assistance, cannot afford to pay them.

CERA worked with CCPI on the initial intervenor factum arguing that the failure of the federal government to waive fees for H & C applications for people living in poverty results in

the denial of access to a critical legal process and a benefit of law constituting a violation of sections 7 (security of the person) and 15 (equality rights) of the Charter.

In September 2009, Justice Snider of the Federal Court dismissed the applications, finding two of the applications moot, and dismissing the application of Nell Toussaint, finding that poverty is not a prohibited ground of discrimination under the Charter.

In this fiscal year, CERA worked with CCPI on the intervenor appeal factum which was submitted to the Federal Court of Appeal in June 2010. CERA worked on the section 15 arguments, specifically bolstering the claim that the social condition of poverty ought to be included as an analogous ground of section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

HOMELESSNESS CHALLENGE

CERA continued its work with the Social Rights Advocacy Centre, the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, the Dream Team, private bar lawyers Peter Rosenthal and Fay Faraday and a host of other community-based organizations and individuals on a Charter challenge to the federal and provincial governments' failure to adequately address homelessness.

CERA is an active member of the legal team and spent the past year working collaboratively to find appropriate claimants and expert witnesses for the case. CERA assisted in the drafting of affidavits and a notice of application for the case. The case was launched in May 2010 by way of application and on the strength of the claimants' affidavits. As an institutional applicant in the case, CERA's Executive Director acted as a spokesperson for the case, and participated in media events about the case and public forums promoting the case with other community organizations.

It is anticipated that the expert affidavits in support of the case will be filed at the end of 2011.

NATIONAL WORK

CERA continued to build its national profile during this year, through a number of projects.



CERA volunteer, Shabnam Nasserifar



BILL C-304: A NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

CERA and the Social Rights Advocacy Centre (SRAC) have been working since November 2009 to see the passage of Bill C304: *The Secure, Adequate, Accessible and Affordable Housing Act*. As a result of our advocacy, the Act includes a strong commitment to the right to adequate housing as guaranteed under international human rights law and commits to developing:

- ❖ targets and timelines for the elimination of homelessness;
- ❖ priority for disadvantaged groups including women leaving violent households and persons with disabilities;
- ❖ a process for the independent review, addressing and reporting of complaints about possible violations of the right to adequate housing;
- ❖ a process for review and follow-up on any concerns or recommendations from United Nations human rights bodies with respect to the right to adequate housing;
- ❖ a key role for civil society organizations, including those representing groups in need of housing, and Aboriginal communities in designing the delivery, monitoring and evaluation of programs required to implement the right to adequate housing; and
- ❖ a provision of financial assistance to those who cannot otherwise afford housing.

CERA and SRAC worked collaboratively with a number of organizations across the country to increase community-based support for the Bill including encouraging organizations to write letters to MPs from all parties to encourage them to vote in favour of the Bill. As a result of these efforts, there was a groundswell of support at the local level for Bill C-304 that translated into solid support for the Bill by all opposition MPs. The Bill passed 3rd reading in the House of Commons but has not yet been voted on. If a federal election is called before the vote, the Bill will have to be re-introduced under a new government.

BILL 140 – THE STRONG COMMUNITIES THROUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACT, 2011

Again working collaboratively with SRAC, CERA made both written and oral submissions to the Justice Policy Committee

of the Ontario Provincial Legislature to persuade Committee members to incorporate human rights principles in Bill 140 (Ontario's proposed housing strategy). CERA's submissions focused on existing jurisprudence from UN human rights bodies that support the inclusion of human rights accountability and commitments to end homelessness in provincial housing legislation. A number of other organizations made complementary submissions including the Wellesley Institute, and the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. Miloon Kothari, the former UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, also wrote a letter to Committee members suggesting they adopt a housing rights approach in their legislation.

COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ALLIANCE PROJECT ON SOCIAL RIGHTS

CERA continued to participate in the Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) project focused on social rights practice and accountability. The CURA is comprised of scholars from the University of Ottawa, the University of British Columbia and York University, and community partners such as the SRAC and the Poverty and Human Rights Centre. As a research associate, CERA benefits from the research generated by other members of the CURA on social rights issues and can contribute to the development of social rights accountability mechanisms and practice. Over the past year CERA made an important contribution to the project by assisting in the development of a new website showcasing the work of the project researchers.

VOICES-VOIX

CERA joined a number of organizations including Amnesty International (English Canada), OXFAM Canada, Inter Pares, and the Public Service Alliance to challenge the dismantling of democracy in Canada. CERA's Executive Director acted as one of the spokespersons for this newly formed entity, Voices-Voix, participating in rallies, press conferences, and forums. For example, she was the keynote speaker at the InterPares Annual General Meeting speaking on the "Scale of the Attack on Civil Society", and presented at an event hosted by the McLeod Group and the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at Ottawa University at a forum entitled, *Women, Canada and the World: Is Canada Failing?*



MAKING ENDS MEET: FINANCIAL LITERACY WITH A TWIST

CERA was awarded TD Financial Literacy funds to carry out a national project in collaboration with Canada Without Poverty (CWP) entitled: *Making Ends Meet*. The project will expose the expertise of many low income people across Canada particularly with respect to budgeting and managing money.

Making Ends Meet will provide an opportunity for low income people to meet and exchange stories and information about getting by every month on a limited income: paying rent, buying food and managing other expenses like childcare and health related expenses. We are interested to know what strategies are used and what community resources are available. How are banks, credit unions, money marts, etc. experienced?

The information gathered will be pulled together into a booklet which will be shared with people in positions of financial power and decision making – people at Banks, people who provide courses on money management and budgeting, even politicians. We think this information will help them make better decisions, decisions that actually benefit people living on a limited income.

Making Ends Meet is taking place in 7 cities across Canada: Ottawa, Montreal, St. John's, Saskatoon, Calgary, Vancouver, and Whitehorse.

INTERNATIONAL WORK

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

As we reported earlier, Canada underwent its first examination by the UN human rights council's Universal Periodic Review in 2009. CERA continued to play a leading role in this process domestically. CERA's Executive Director continued to work with an ad hoc coalition of organizations to ensure the Government of Canada implements the UPR recommendations in consultation with civil society. We also actively participated in a number of formal and informal follow-up meetings with representatives from Canadian Heritage and the Department of Justice. At each meeting CERA emphasized the need for government to address the implementation gap and we strongly



CERA's Executive Director and Staff Lawyer, Leilani Farha, in Geneva (far right)

encouraged the Government of Canada to take seriously the recommendations made to it aimed at addressing our poor record in the area of economic and social rights. CERA was also one of three organizations – along with Amnesty International and the Canadian Coalition on the Rights of the Child – to appear before the House of Commons Sub-Committee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. CERA's submissions focused on the implementation of the recommendations of the UPR.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (ESCR-NET): WOMEN'S ESCR RIGHTS

CERA was also very active with the International Network on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net). In October 2010 in conjunction with two other members of ESCR-Net, CERA's Executive Director provided a briefing on women's economic, social and cultural rights to members of the United Nations Committee on Discrimination Against Women. In particular, Leilani provided information to Committee members on how they could incorporate a substantive equality rights approach in their work, particularly through the optional protocol. A similar briefing was held with the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in November 2010. These two events are ground breaking, and indicative of new found interest and momentum on the meaning and application of economic and social rights for women.

CERA's Executive Director also participated in an exciting event in Penang, Malaysia in December 2010 on *Claiming Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – a Pilot Capacity Building Workshop on Bringing Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Claims before the Optional Protocol to CEDAW and the ICESCR*. Leilani was one of the key resource persons and presenters during the 4 day meeting. There were 20 participants all with experience working on women's human rights litigation from every region of the world.

UNITED NATIONS RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

During this fiscal year, CERA's Executive Director worked with Celeste Mckay (Mckay Consulting Inc) to draft a policy guide on land and property rights for Indigenous peoples. The



The *Claiming Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights workshop* in Malaysia



Eviction Prevention Caseworker, Howard Akler

report will be finalized and published by UN-Habitat in 2011 and used in its work with governments around the world.

At the end of this fiscal year, Leilani was appointed the “North American Focal Point” by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing. In this role, Leilani will facilitate a North America-wide online conversation about the status of women’s housing, land and property rights and contribute to the Special Rapporteur’s global report on women’s housing rights which she will present to the UN Human Rights Council in 2012.

EARLY INTERVENTION EVICTION PREVENTION

During the 2010/2011 fiscal year, eviction prevention staff assisted 817 tenant households facing eviction. Over 90% were facing eviction because of arrears. The average rent amount was \$957 and the average arrears amount was \$1,553 – less than 2 months rent. Tenant household composition was as follows:

Tenant Household Composition	Total Number of Households	Percentage of Total Number of Households
Single	274	34%
Lone Parent Families (100% women-led households)	198	24%
Two Parent Families	193	24%
Couples Without Children	44	5%
Other (i.e. Extended family or living with friends)	108	13%
Total	817	100%

Women represented 60% of all callers and 40% were men. Eighty households were living in subsidized housing and all other households were paying market rent in private housing.

The following is a description of tenant household employment status:

Primary Source of Income	Number of Tenant Households	Percentage of Total Number of Households
Paid Employment	489	60%
Employment Insurance	33	5%
Ontario Works	99	12%
Ontario Disability Support Program	68	8%
No Income	28	3%
Other (support payments, OSAP, Child Tax, savings)	100	12%
Total	817	100

Many tenants lost full time jobs, fell into arrears and then found other employment, however often at much lower wages and part time hours. As a result they were trying to pay current rent as well as arrears with much less income. Many tenants were working full time and going to school part time or full time to upgrade their employment skills.

Serious Risk of Eviction	Number of Tenant Households	Percentage of Total Number of Households
Eviction Notice only	97	12%
Eviction Application	688	84%
Eviction Order	24	3%
Sheriff's Notice	8	1%
Total	878	100

Over 80% of households calling CERA for assistance had an eviction application against them and were waiting to attend their hearing. Thirty-two households (approximately 5% of the total households) had eviction orders or Sheriff Notices, which means that they were at serious risk of eviction and must pay all arrears to avoid eviction.

MENTAL HEALTH AND EVICTION

Thirty-four tenant households (4% of the total number of households) were managing mental health issues which affected their housing stability. CERA maintained long-term case management services for these clients and none of them were evicted.



Manager of Eviction Prevention,
Theresa Thornton

EVICTION PREVENTION SERVICES

Eviction Prevention services included providing ongoing information and advice about the eviction process at the Landlord and Tenant Board and all stages of eviction. We provided telephone mediation services between tenants and landlords and advocacy for tenants with housing providers, landlords and social services. In many cases CERA referred tenants to income supports, such as the Toronto Rent Bank, which provides interest free loans to tenants in arrears. The program will pay up to two months arrears for qualifying households. CERA referred over 150 households to the Rent Bank for financial assistance. CERA continues to be a member of the Rent Bank Steering Committee which oversees the policies and procedures of the program which helps thousands of tenants every year.

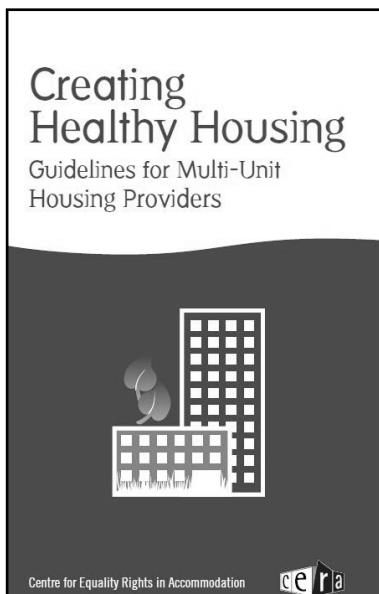
PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

PROMOTING ACCESS TO HEALTHY HOUSING FOR TENANTS WITH ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITIES

HomeSafe, CERA's initiative to promote healthy apartment environments that meet the needs of residents with environmental sensitivities, entered its second year in 2010/2011.

After extensive consultation with experts in public health, human rights, housing, environmental sciences and property management, and individuals living with environmental sensitivities, CERA staff developed a set of healthy housing guidelines for landlords and property managers and an information pamphlet for tenants.

The guidelines offer landlords a variety of practical strategies – some simple and some more complex – to improve the indoor air quality in their apartment buildings while the pamphlet provides tips to tenants on how they can make their homes healthier. The guidelines are available in English and French, and the pamphlet is available in English, French, Arabic, Chinese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, and Urdu. CERA also worked with Stephen Collette, a certified building biology environmental consultant, to develop a more detailed resource guide to complement the guidelines and pamphlet.



To promote the new resource materials, CERA developed a new webpage focusing on environmental sensitivities and housing, and conducted 14 workshops and information sessions for community organizations and housing providers in Thunder Bay, Windsor, London, Ottawa, St. Catherines and the Greater Toronto Area. An additional six workshops have been scheduled for the coming months in Ottawa, Sudury and Mississauga. The Greater Toronto Apartment Association and the Federation of Rental Housing Providers of Ontario have been instrumental in helping us get the information to their members across the GTA and Ontario.

The *HomeSafe* initiative has really taken off and CERA staff are frequently called upon to provide articles and healthy housing information. Currently, we have published articles on healthy housing in the MCS America Newsletter, the Federation of Rental Housing Providers of Ontario's Fair Trade magazine, Condo Business and the Canadian Apartment Magazine. We also developed a cycling slide presentation for display at the North Hamilton Community Health Centre.

NEW TOOLS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

In early 2010, CERA began work on *Real Rights in a Virtual World*. This human rights education project, funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario, incorporates a wide range of strategies including enhancements to CERA's website, webinars, and in-person and online housing "clinics".

Over the past year, CERA has been holding bi-weekly housing rights clinics in Toronto in partnership with the June Callwood Centre for Young Women, Stonegate Community Health Centre, the Working Women Community Centre and Youth Without Shelter, and in Ottawa with the Well day program for women and children and Operation Come Home for homeless youth. In Thunder Bay, we are holding bi-weekly online clinics through the Ontario Native Women's Association and the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Our website improvements have gone well beyond "enhancements" and have included a complete overhaul of the site, converting it to a blog format and changing the layout and sections to make the information easier to access. In addition to the core sections on human rights in housing and CERA's services, we've incorporated more informal blog posts on a range of topics, including discrimination against recent



CERA's Program Director, John Fraser

immigrants and refugees, a National Housing Strategy and, evictions and mental health. The blogs have been a great opportunity for CERA staff, volunteers and special guests to discuss topics that are timely and important to the organization and our clients. The website also includes a new section on testimonials, where current and former clients are profiled in text and video.

In the coming year, new website improvements will include training videos on human rights in housing and short human rights-themed animations. The first video, an overview on housing and the *Human Rights Code* has been posted and a second on human rights enforcement is underway. We also plan to develop videos on disability and the duty to accommodate, the *Charter* and housing, and international human rights. Thanks to the support of the Canadian Bar Association Law for the Future Fund, we will be able to supplement these videos with a series of nationally-focused training videos. For the animations, we have been very fortunate to partner with professional animators Jamie Muntean and Rod Amador. We look forward to seeing what they create.

In April we will start a series of webinars in collaboration with COSTI Immigrant Services and the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario. CERA, COSTI and ACTO will be hosting a three part housing rights series for front line workers who provide housing assistance to recent immigrants and refugees. The webinars will help community workers better understand their clients' rights under the *Human Rights Code* and the *Residential Tenancies Act*, and how to work effectively with diverse communities. The project is funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario as part of the Connecting Communities Project, an initiative which brings together legal and non-legal community organizations to collaborate on public legal education.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION TO LANDLORDS

In October, 2010, CERA launched *RightsCheck*, an innovative education project targeting landlords in Toronto. The goal of the project is to pro-actively reach out to landlords and property managers that may be violating the *Human Rights Code* and educate them on their legal obligations. To this end, we have partnered with 12 organizations across the City that provide housing assistance to vulnerable individuals and families. Every two weeks, these organizations forward us



CERA volunteer, Saleha Ali

contact information for landlords that have discriminated against their clients. CERA staff and volunteers then follow-up with the landlords by telephone, educate them on the *Human Rights Code* and mail them additional materials. To complement this outreach, CERA staff and volunteers are also scanning rental housing advertisements in Kijiji and Craigslist and contacting landlords who have posted discriminatory ads. We have had constructive discussions with housing providers across Toronto and we're pleased to report that many seem genuinely interested in gaining a better understanding of their obligations under the *Code*.

WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS AND PRESENTATIONS

While CERA has been increasingly using online and other non-traditional approaches to housing rights education, there continues to be a huge demand for our “in person” workshops. With the assistance of the Law Foundation of Ontario, the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the City of Toronto, CERA staff and volunteers conducted 79 workshops and information sessions on human rights and eviction prevention for tenants, community workers and housing providers across Ontario. Specifically, we held workshops in Ottawa, London, St. Catherines, Windsor/Essex, Hamilton, Thunder Bay, Mississauga and Toronto for or in collaboration with the following organizations:

- ❖ Flemingdon Neighbourhood Services
- ❖ Youth Without Shelter
- ❖ The Well day program for women and children
- ❖ Operation Come Home
- ❖ Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada
- ❖ Houselink Community Homes
- ❖ COTA Health
- ❖ Ryerson University
- ❖ Hamilton Housing Help Centre
- ❖ Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services
- ❖ Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto
- ❖ The Redwood Shelter
- ❖ Our Place Peel
- ❖ Durham Community Legal Clinic
- ❖ The Landlord Self Help Centre
- ❖ Golden Horseshoe Co-operative Housing Federation
- ❖ University of Windsor
- ❖ St. Clare's Residence
- ❖ University of Toronto
- ❖ Peel Adult Learning Centre
- ❖ Northwood Neighbourhood Services
- ❖ Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture
- ❖ William Punnett Housing Co-operative
- ❖ Canadian Council of Refugees
- ❖ George Brown College
- ❖ Stonegate Community Health Centre
- ❖ The Greater Toronto Apartment Association
- ❖ Carleton University
- ❖ Settlement and Integration Partnerships in Toronto
- ❖ RENT
- ❖ Ottawa Region Landlords' Association
- ❖ Ontario Native Women's Association

CERA'S FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2011

Revenue	2011	2010
Government Funding		
Government of Canada		\$7,927
City of Toronto	\$89,682	\$79,122
Charitable Foundations		
Atkinson Charitable Foundation	\$7,015	\$35,900
Ontario Trillium Foundation	\$74,238	\$87,362
Law Foundation of Ontario	\$94,929	\$30,149
TD Financial	\$13,781	
Other Grants	\$46,546	\$15,565
Donations	\$813	\$920
Total Revenues	\$327,004	\$256,945
Expenditures		
Salaries, Benefits and Contracts	\$215,845	\$207,324
Rent	\$35,755	\$39,614
Insurance	\$7,506	\$7,763
Office Expenses	\$21,838	\$21,771
Professional Fees	\$7,976	\$8,980
Staff Travel	\$1,055	\$7,445
Amortization	\$840	\$1,140
Dues and Fees	\$1,798	\$2,190
Bank Charges and Interest	\$488	\$143
Direct Project Expenses	\$37,196	\$40,998
Total Expenditures	\$330,297	\$337,368
Surplus (Deficit)	(\$3,293)	(\$80,423)

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