

Message from *Carole Dagher*, Board President and *Amanda Dale*, Executive Director

Wow, what a night: And what a year!

“This Clinic rocks! It is there when no one else can be. It does what no one else does. It is the only Clinic of its kind in Canada. Quite frankly, it saves lives!”

With these words, Suhana Meharchand, CBC News Now anchor and MC of the 2012 Tribute fundraiser for the Clinic, opened what looks to be our most successful fundraiser yet to a partying audience of over 400 people on a steamy June evening.



Suhana Meharchand,
CBC News Now Anchor and MC.

This year we set our bar high –higher than ever before. In hard times, you all stepped up to support those who need it most! This year we made our fundraising goal reflect the demand on our services, and raised it by \$25,000 over last year’s actuals. That means, we asked you to help us raise \$145,000 this year, and, thanks to all of you, WE MADE IT!

Our Title Sponsor for the event was Blakes LLP. Blakes has been a loyal sponsor of the Tribute and the work of the Clinic for 13 years. This year, they joined the Clinic’s vision of an enhanced relationship and significantly increased their support of the Clinic. Their enhanced support means the Clinic can fulfill its vision to assist even more women in even more innovative ways.

And Tory’s LLP has also taken us to a new level; we could not be more excited about the launch of a brand new Award, supported by Tory’s, that will be conferred at next year’s event: The Spirit of Barbra Schlifer Award. Tribute night was the official opening of nominations for the 2013 Award, Sponsored by Torys LLP. The award will be conferred to a woman who burns with the spirit for justice that Barbra Schlifer herself was unable to fulfill. (For more information and to make a nomination, please download the nomination form and application process at schliferaward.com.)

But read ahead about even more things on the Clinic’s agenda.

See all the amazing funding partners, donors and community businesses that have come out in support of this amazing little clinic that could; see our efforts to fulfill our mission as a place that is “active in changing the conditions that threaten women’s safety, dignity and equality” through challenging the destruction of the gun registry, innovating service to women and consulting to a wide range of policy makers.



Photo by Denise Babb Sifontes

Best,

Carole Dagher

Amanda Dale

adale@schliferclinic.com

Clinic hosts launch of Family Court support program in Ontario

On April 26, the Attorney General of Ontario, The Honourable John Gerretsen, visited the Schlifer Clinic to announce the official launch of our Family Court Support Worker Program, which keeps victims of domestic violence informed and protected throughout the family court process.

You can read more about the program here: <http://familycourtsupport.ca>



Schlifer Clinic's Family Court Support staff Teresa Mbunwe, Megan Evans Maxwell, Patricia Coelho and Alicia Blanco; Halton Woman's Place CSW Adrienne Pearce; Attorney General John Gerretsen.

Summer in the City: Presented by *The Kind Exchange*

The first ever "Summer in the City" — a shopping event in support of the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic happened on Thursday May 17th. **The Kind Exchange** hosted a night of shopping, laughter, food and fun. We partnered up with some of the best merchants in the neighbourhood and area bloggers to host an AMAZING silent auction and shopping event where a percentage of all sales came to the Clinic in support of our programs. Thanks to our amazing neighbors, we made over \$900!



L to R: Courtney Callaham, Amanda Dale, Jeff Wexler, Meldina Smith.

Every day, **The Kind Exchange** donates a portion of its proceeds to charity; on May 17th, a portion of all sales went to the Clinic.

Kudos to our Legal Director



Mary Lou Fassel; Attorney General John Gerretsen.

Congratulations to Mary Lou Fassel, our Director of Legal Services, who was just awarded the 2012 Attorney General's Victim Services Awards of Distinction. These awards recognize the exceptional achievement of dedicated professionals and volunteers in the field of victim services. Mary Lou has shown incredible dedication to the Clinic and our sector for decades, and we are very proud of her accomplishments.

As if that wasn't enough, Mary Lou Fassel has been nominated for the Ontario Bar Association's Award of Excellence in the Promotion of Women's Equality. The award will be conferred at an October dinner by the bar association. The Award has previously been given to The Honourable Claire L'Heureux-Dubé, the late Doris Anderson, Anne Derrick (now Judge), Michele Landsberg, Mary Eberts, Linda Silver Dranoff, Professor Ursula Franklin and Professor Emily Carasco. This is indeed a great honour!

BSCC counsellor, Farrah Khan, receives vital Person Award



Toronto Community Foundation President & CEO, Rahul K. Bhardwaj (L), and its Board Chair, John MacIntyre (R), present a commemorative award to Farrah Khan for her contributions to helping maintain a vital Toronto.

Photo by Bahar Shadpour

Photo by Paula Klein

Photo by Allan Kosmojac

A Toronto legal clinic that helps female victims of violence is going to court to save the federal long-gun registry.

{Licensed from Toronto Star for republication in In Brief }

Laurie Monsebraaten, Social Justice Reporter

The Barbra Schlifer Clinic and its executive director have filed an application before the Ontario Superior Court to have most of Bill C-19 declared unconstitutional. And they are seeking an injunction to ensure the registry continues to operate and no data is destroyed until the case is heard.

The Harper government's legislation to kill the registry and prevent future collection of long-gun registration data received royal assent in April.

The clinic and its director say women's rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms — specifically, their right to security and gender equality — would be violated by destroying the registry.

“Changes to the existing gun-control regime will increase the risk of physical violence, forcible confinement at threat of physical violence, serious physical harm, serious psychological harm, and homicide to women in situations of domestic violence,” they say in their application.

The injunction motion will be heard Aug. 8 while the full case will go to court in March 2013.

Until now, only Quebec has taken legal action against the registry's demise. But the province, which wants to start its own registry using the federal data, is seeking to protect only long-gun ownership records for Quebec residents.

If successful, this latest action, launched May 16, would protect records in every province and ensure the federal registry continues, said Shaun O'Brien of Cavalluzzo Hayes Shilton McIntyre & Cornish LLP. She is representing the clinic and its executive director, Amanda Dale, on a pro bono basis.

A spokesperson for Public Safety Minister Vic Toews said the government will “vigorously defend” its legislation.

“This application for an injunction does nothing to diminish our commitment to ending the long-gun registry once and for all,” Julie Carmichael said in an email Thursday.

“The wasteful and ineffective long-gun registry did nothing to reduce crime or violence against women,” she added.

Lawyers for the federal government assured the court at a scheduling hearing Wednesday that no records are scheduled to be deleted until October, which should keep the registry safe until the injunction motion is heard, O'Brien said.

“We deal with women who have a variety of forms of violence committed against them, including gun violence and it's our observation that guns are a factor in their increased risk, in their intimidation against taking actions to protect themselves,” Dale said in an interview. “We think this case is important.”

In cases of domestic violence, police rely on the registry for information about what weapons a woman may be facing and it helps officers know what guns may need to be removed, Dale and the clinic say in their application. This helps to keep women safe, they argue.

The main reason given by the government for killing the registry has been cost and bureaucratic red tape, O'Brien said. “The risk to women is grossly disproportionate to the benefits they have given for doing this,” she said

The clinic was established in the memory of Barbra Schlifer, an Osgoode Hall law student who was sexually assaulted and murdered on the night of her call to the bar. Since the clinic opened in 1985, it has served some 44,000 women and is the only clinic in Canada that specializes in providing free legal services to women who experience violence.

Earlier this month, Toronto city council passed a motion urging Queen's Park to ask Ottawa for records on local gun owners from the soon-to-be destroyed long-gun registry. It reaffirmed its support for the federal registry and ordered city lawyers to seek ways to prevent the deletion of records of more than 287,000 registered firearms in the GTA. Mississauga passed a similar motion last year.

To assist the Clinic with the costs of disbursements for this case, please contact Meldina Smith msmith@schliferclinic.com, or 416-323-9149, x 237.

Asha from Sudan and Amanda from Toronto discuss women's rights

It was 2006 when Asha El-Karib and Amanda Dale first met in Khartoum with other activists to strategize around advocacy for gender equality and legal reform in Sudan. On April 26, the Clinic hosted an event that brought them together again to have a conversation about promoting women's rights in their respective countries. In Sudan, discrimination towards women is enshrined in law and the constitution; in Canada, there have been several recent challenges to Muslim women's full legal rights and treatment by the state. In both countries, women are courageously tackling these inequalities. In these very different contexts, what are the shared challenges facing women in exercising their equal rights and citizenship? What can we learn from each other's struggles? The two met with constitutional lawyers, activists and Clinic staff to discuss these matters and to strategize for a vitalized women's equality agenda globally. Hosted in the board room of Cavalluzzo Hayes Shilton McIntyre and Cornish, LLP, the two reminisced and projected forward with a riveted and participatory group.



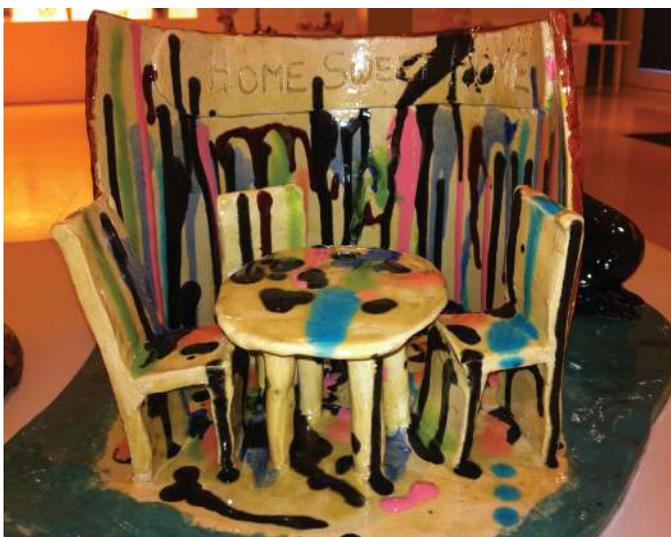
Photo by Bahar Shadpour

Asha El-Karib, one of Sudan's leading feminists, is the Director of the Sudanese Organization for Research and Development (SORD), based in Khartoum, Sudan, and co-founded the Gender Centre for Research and Training. She has extensive knowledge and expertise in gender equality, human rights, and women's political participation in Sudan. Asha has collaborated with Inter Pares, the Clinic's international women's rights partner, for over a decade.

Gardiner Ceramic Museum and Schlifer forge ahead against violence

On May 9th, The Barbra Schlifer Clinic and the Gardiner Museum presented an evening exhibition of engaging works. These works emerge from an 11-week intensive expressive arts group for women survivors of violence. This exhibition will be expanded into a 10-year retrospective that will form the main exhibit of the museum in 2013.

To assist us in the ambitious endeavour, contact Meldina Smith, msmith@schliferclinic.com or call her at 416-323-9149, x 237.



Join us to reflect on the year!

Barbra Schlifer AGM

September 27, 2012, 6 to 8 pm

Oakham House, Thomas Lounge,
Ryerson University, 63 Gould Street (At Church)
Toronto, ON M5B 1E9

Food and refreshments

Special keynote speaker, **Dr. Wendy Cukier**,
President of the Coalition for Gun Control.

RSVP by September 14 to Victoria Nhan at v.nhan@schliferclinic.com or at 416-323-9149, x 262.



Fundraising Coordinator Meldina Smith; Rob Collins, Senior Counsel, Blake, Cassels, Graydon LLP; Amanda Dale, Executive Director, Barbra Schlifer Clinic.

Bill C-31: Schlifer Clinic joins METRAC and LEAF to challenge new refugee bill

Bill C-31, currently wending its way through the House, is poised to change our immigration system for generations to come.

Bill C-31 focuses on a class of newcomers to Canada, refugees, whose welcome here has been a badge of honour in a violent world. These newcomers contribute to and hold promise to enrich the wealth of our nation, both economically and socially.

Despite recent changes announced by Minister Kenney, this new Act threatens to violate domestic and international human rights laws; to sully Canada's current reputation as a compassionate as well as prosperous nation; and perhaps most sadly, to endanger the lives of many abused asylum seekers, especially women and children, whose rights have been violated in their home countries.

The "Designated Safe Countries" provision of the Bill allows the Minister to remove procedural protections from citizens of countries deemed to be safe. The designation fails to recognize that in many otherwise stable countries, non-traditional forms of persecution, recognized in international legal instruments, such as domestic violence and rape—continue to be perpetrated with impunity. The result will be that women and children fleeing violence will be denied a fair process, and very possibly face deportation before their circumstances are considered.

This is a large step backward for Canada, considered a leader in recognizing gender related persecution and developing guidelines for decision makers that were considered the gold standard.

The proposed mandatory detention of all refugees over the age of 15 who arrive in an "irregular" manner, without review for 14 days initially and then not again for six months, risks re-traumatizing victims of violence, and separating young children from their families.

The bar to sponsoring family members to immigrate to Canada for the first five years of some accepted refugees' permanent residency, will leave many women and children behind to languish, or even perish, in violent homelands.

Refugee women whose claims are tied to abusive spouses are particularly at risk. The amendments will result in many abused women being denied the opportunity to have their personal circumstances considered before they are deported, including the new forced choice between refugee claims and humanitarian and compassionate applications (once considered the last resort for those most oppressed); the unreasonably short deadlines for refugee claims and appeals; and the refusal to consider women's claims independently from their abusive partners.

The impact on the lives of the vulnerable is deplorable. And the loss to Canada will be real. Refugees and their families contribute positively to the Canadian economy. However, in the end the reason Canada should admit refugees is not about the economy, it's about human rights and justice.

While the apparent openness of government to make changes to the Bill has received cautious applause, in the case of abused women, some provisions have been made worse.

The negative and damaging fallout of any immigration policy that does not take these situations seriously will be at once predictable and immeasurable.

Amanda Dale, Executive Director, Barbra Schlifer Clinic; Tamar Witelson, Legal Director, METRAC; Joanna Birenbaum, Director of Litigation, LEAF. See our submission to the Parliamentary Committee on our website, schliferclinic.com, under Advocacy/Hot Issues

Remember Love

Women's roller derby and the Clinic have strong connections. **Remember Love** was an event in support of the Clinic that was held in February at the Garrison, by a women's Roller Derby team, and organized by their coach, Sean Condon. This is the second year Sean and his teams have supported the Clinic, and for them, it is a cause near and dear to their hearts. This year they raised over \$800.



Walk a Day in Her Shoes 2012

Walk a Day in Her Shoes is a unique University of Toronto Law School student initiative to raise funds for the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic and the White Ribbon Campaign. It had male professors and students in pumps, raising over \$6,000 for walking a whole day "in her shoes".



Bountiful Thanks

On March 28, the Barbra Schlifer Clinic hosted an “Appreciation Night” at Bar Italia for the private-bar lawyers who support our Clinic and provide services to our clients.

It featured guest speaker, Professor Brenda Cossman, Professor of Law and Director of Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies, at the University of Toronto.

The topic of Professor Cossman’s session was the recent “Bountiful” legal reference case that was heard in B.C., on whether prohibitions of polygamy are an infringement of Charter rights. Professor Cossman gave a riveting and entertaining talk, engaging all 50 guests in a lively debate of the many social and legal issues raised in the reference.



Professor Brenda Cossman



Torys proudly
presents the
Spirit of
Barbra Schlifer
Award

Barbra Schlifer
Commemorative Clinic
Freedom From Violence.

TORYS
LLP

Nominate someone for the Spirit of Barbra Schlifer Award

Barbra Schlifer was an idealistic young lawyer whose life was cut short by violence on the night of her call to the bar of Ontario. In her memory, the Barbra Schlifer Clinic assists 4,000 women a year to build lives free from violence through counselling, legal representation and language interpretation.

Launched May 2012, the Award recipient will be a woman who has made a demonstrable contribution to increased access to safety and justice for women.

She is selected on the basis of outstanding commitment to improving the lives of women wanting to build lives free from violence through increased access to justice and other systems. She is recognized for advocacy in the area of violence against women—either through her paid employment, community leadership or volunteer work. She may be a lawyer, but she does not have to be.

The work of the successful candidate will exemplify her understanding of the important intersections of gender, race, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, geographic isolation/disadvantage, disability and/or religious belief in building lives free from violence.

Anyone can nominate a candidate they believe meets the criteria of the award.

Visit <http://schliferaward.com/>

- legal
- counselling
- interpretation
- education
- advocacy

contact:
Meldina Smith, Coordinator of Resource Development
Tel: 416-323-9149 ext. 237
email: msmith@schliferclinic.com
www.schliferclinic.com

Barbra Schlifer
Commemorative Clinic
Freedom From Violence.



United Way
Toronto

A United Way member agency