

**Attorney General**  
McMurtry-Scott Building  
720 Bay Street  
11th Floor  
Toronto ON M7A 2S9  
Tel: 416-326-4000  
Fax: 416-326-4016

**Procureur général**  
Édifrice McMurtry-Scott  
720, rue Bay  
11<sup>e</sup> étage  
Toronto ON M7A 2S9  
Tél.: 416-326-4000  
Télééc.: 416-326-4016



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January 29, 2014

Mr. Jack de Klerk  
Neighbourhood Legal Services  
333 Queen Street East  
Toronto, ON M5A 1S9

Dear Mr. de Klerk:

Please accept my congratulations on Neighbourhood Legal Services' (NLS) 40 years of valuable service to the Toronto community.

Our government recognizes that community and legal clinics play an integral role in Ontario's justice system, ensuring that low-income people have access to the justice services they need.

Working on the frontlines of public service, legal clinics help the most vulnerable and at-risk populations in our society. In many cases, when people believe they have nowhere left to turn, clinics like yours are there to welcome them with open arms and without judgment. Needless to say, community legal clinics make an immense contribution to our communities, helping them stay healthy, strong and vibrant.

Ontario's community and legal clinics go far beyond providing legal services to their local constituencies. NLS is a shining example of this. In addition to legal expertise and education, you are a leader in community development. Your work helps clients rise above the challenges they face and embrace the many benefits of living in this province.

NLS has a reputation for being an innovator in hosting local projects which have a wide reach. An example of this was your facilitation of the homeless project pilot, which provided a one-stop-shop for clients to receive multiple services. This successful pilot informed the Homeless Access and Referral Project initiative, which expanded access to services for this client group.

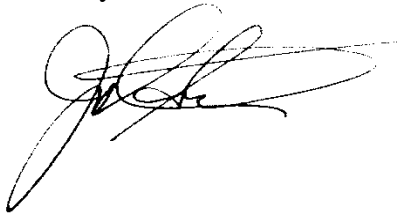
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More recently, NLS played an instrumental role in the GTA Clinic Transformation Project with Legal Aid Ontario. This new framework will realign the delivery of clinic poverty law services. I know you will continue to play a guiding role as the framework is rolled out across the region.

This innovative spirit and dedication to public service is what makes clinics such vital assets in our communities. Our government appreciates the tremendous work that NLS and other community legal clinics do to ensure our justice system remains accessible and responsive.

Once again, congratulations on this significant achievement. I am confident that NLS will continue to be a leader in community legal service for many years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Gerretsen', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

John Gerretsen  
Attorney General