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Legal services

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The legal profession enjoys a unique role in the community. Lawyers and other firm members have the skills and ability to provide legal services to the disadvantaged and to promote the public interest in ways that no other profession can. It's a responsibility that we honour at McMillan.

McMillan's commitment to *pro bono* legal service

We consider the provision of *pro bono* services to be a particularly important element of our professional responsibility. We strongly encourage all of our lawyers to be involved in *pro bono* work.

To maximize the effectiveness of our efforts, a structured and coordinated approach to this work is essential. That is why we work closely with recognized agencies devoted to *pro bono* legal programs, including Pro Bono Law Ontario, Pro Bono Law Alberta, Calgary Legal Guidance Clinic, Calgary Small Claims Duty Counsel, and Centre Pro Bono Québec Inc.

Our history of helping is a rich one. Newton Rowell, who founded our firm in 1903, was counsel to the five female plaintiffs in the famous "Persons" case in 1929. In that case, the British Privy Council, then the highest level of appeal in Canada, determined that women were "persons" within the meaning of the British North America Act and therefore eligible for appointment to the Senate.

More recently, we represented the plaintiff in the landmark Supreme Court of Canada decision in *M. v. H.* This equality rights case, which was supported by the firm on a *pro bono* basis, recognized spousal support rights and obligations for same sex couples for the first time.

While we are proud of our precedent-setting *pro bono* work, we are equally proud of the day-to-day work our lawyers carry out in providing individuals and organizations in our communities with the legal representation they need.

In 2015 McMillan provided approximately \$600,000 in *pro bono* legal services to over 50 organizations across Canada and we are committed to providing an even higher level of *pro bono* services in the future.

Here are a few examples of the *pro bono* services we provide. From our work with large multinational organizations like Médecins Sans Frontières to our work for a parent trying to secure benefits for their chronically ill child, we are honoured to serve our communities.

Maytree Foundation

In 2009, McMillan developed a partnership with the Maytree Foundation – a private organization that promotes equity and prosperity – to provide *pro bono* services to Maytree's network of contacts in the local not-for-profit community. We deliver these services in two ways:

- Provide not-for-profit agencies in the Maytree Leadership Network with a guaranteed amount of *pro bono* services annually through our *pro bono* certificate programs.
- Create and lead legal seminars for Maytree's client groups on relevant legal issues. These presentations are videotaped and posted on Maytree's website as a continuing resource for those in the Maytree network.

Through this partnership McMillan provided approximately \$100,000 in *pro bono* services to the following organizations:

1. Delta Family Resource Centre
2. Diaspora Dialogues
3. Eating Disorders of York Region

4. Manifesto Community Projects
5. Planned Parenthood Toronto
6. Scadding Court Community Centre
7. Scarborough Women's Centre
8. Scientists in School
9. Social Services Network
10. The York Centre for Children, Youth and Families
11. Tides Canada Initiatives
12. Working Skills Centre

One example of our Maytree work was with Scadding Court Community Centre (SCCC), a non-profit agency that administers Market 707, a unique street food and retail marketplace built from retrofitted shipping containers.

Market 707 needed an updated license agreement to attract and retain vendors, while still protecting SCCC's interests. McMillan worked with SCCC to revise its existing agreement by identifying the needs of all parties – then working through revisions until the form contained all of the provisions that will allow Market 707 and the vendors to flourish and succeed. SCCC is now using the revised agreement at Market 707.



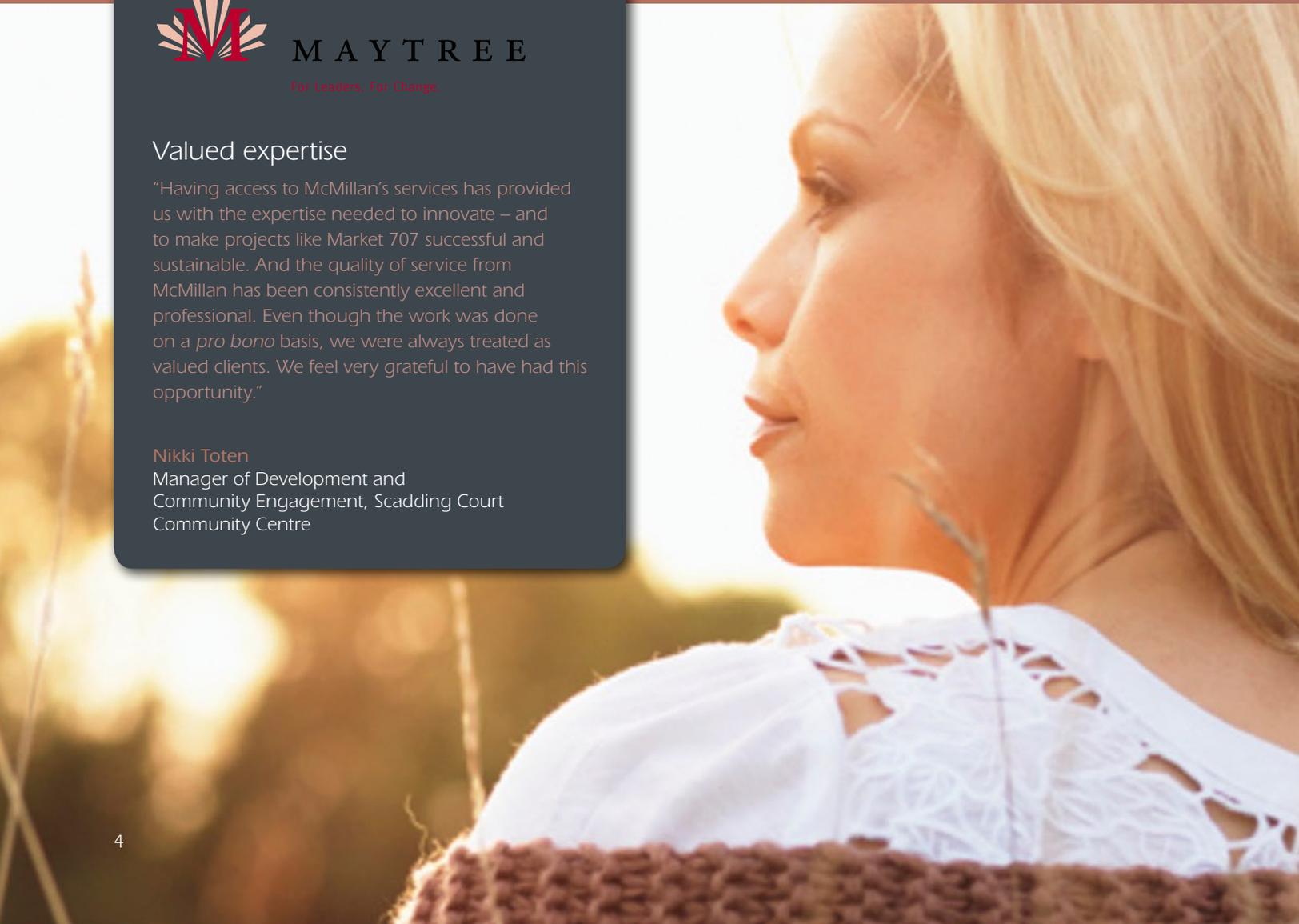
MAYTREE

For Leaders. For Change.

Valued expertise

"Having access to McMillan's services has provided us with the expertise needed to innovate – and to make projects like Market 707 successful and sustainable. And the quality of service from McMillan has been consistently excellent and professional. Even though the work was done on a *pro bono* basis, we were always treated as valued clients. We feel very grateful to have had this opportunity."

Nikki Toten
Manager of Development and
Community Engagement, Scadding Court
Community Centre



Pro Bono Law Alberta (PBLA)

Pro Bono Law Alberta is a not-for-profit charitable organization that engages the legal community to increase access to pro bono legal services for Albertans in need.

McMillan lawyers have acted and continue to act as Civil Claims Duty Counsel in the Provincial Court of Alberta, Civil Division (Calgary). Through our volunteer efforts, we meet with everyday people involved in the civil small claims process and providing them with much needed legal advice. In 2014, when the maximum monetary amount of civil claims heard by Provincial Court of Alberta, Civil Division, increased from \$25,000 to \$50,000, the complexity of issues before the court also increased. Claims include a wide variety of legal issues including debt, personal injury, landlord and tenant, and employment.

We have helped people navigate the civil court process, prepare claims and defences, and get ready for applications, pretrial conferences and trial. Also through our mentoring, we have helped other law firms and lawyers in other organizations find a place and feel comfortable volunteering as duty counsel.



Pro Bono Law Alberta

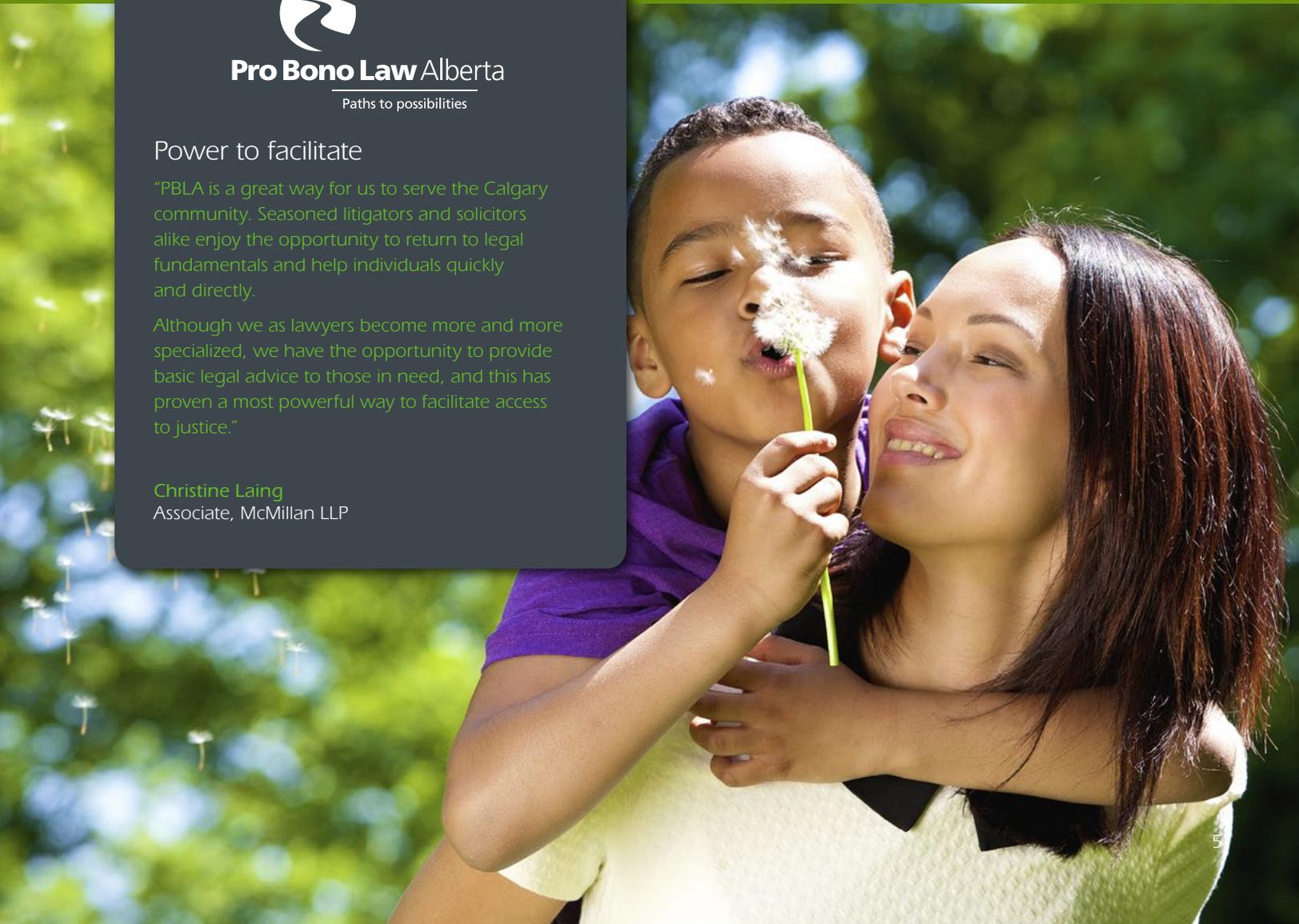
Paths to possibilities

Power to facilitate

"PBLA is a great way for us to serve the Calgary community. Seasoned litigators and solicitors alike enjoy the opportunity to return to legal fundamentals and help individuals quickly and directly.

Although we as lawyers become more and more specialized, we have the opportunity to provide basic legal advice to those in need, and this has proven a most powerful way to facilitate access to justice."

Christine Laing
Associate, McMillan LLP



Pro Bono Law Ontario (PBLO) at SickKids

The PBLO at SickKids program is a collaboration between Pro bono Law Ontario, the Hospital for Sick Children and another Toronto-based law firm. PBLO at SickKids was established to connect volunteer lawyers with low-income parents struggling with a legal issue and, at the same time, a critically or chronically ill child.

The needs are great in many cases – which makes our successes in helping individuals extremely meaningful for both the recipient and our lawyers. Our lawyers consistently report that the cases they take from SickKids are among the most personally and professionally rewarding that they have.

In one case, a McMillan lawyer was able to assist a low-income, disabled, widowed immigrant mother. She told the lawyer that, in “payment” for filling out a simple tax form, an organization took nearly a third of the government benefits that were intended for her severely disabled daughter. The organization then sued the mother, trying to collect an even greater amount of those benefits. McMillan successfully defended the mother against the lawsuit and then counter-claimed against the organization and won. With our help, the mother recovered nearly all of the government benefits that were intended to help her daughter.

As this case demonstrates, the PBLO at SickKids program makes a tremendous positive difference to *pro bono* clients: the child receives better care and the mother has more time and energy to spend with her children.

PRO BONO LAW
ONTARIO



Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) / Doctors Without Borders

McMillan is proud to be one of Médecins Sans Frontières' (MSF) preferred legal providers of *pro bono* legal services in Canada and internationally. We recognize the extraordinary contribution that MSF has made, and continues to make, in the delivery of emergency aid to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, natural disasters and exclusion from healthcare around the world.

We have engaged in a number of continuing matters for MSF, including its subscription for adequate insurance related to the medical research it carries out.

Its medical research activities focus on the most frequent diseases treated by the organization (malaria, tuberculosis, HIV infection, child malnutrition) and on diseases with epidemic potential such as cholera, meningitis, measles, or hemorrhagic fevers. They place an emphasis on neglected patient groups and on neglected diseases, given that many of the populations MSF works with are excluded from traditional sources of medical research.



RBC/McMillan Law Help Ontario Program

The RBC/McMillan Law Help Ontario Program, run through PBLO, continued to thrive in 2014. The program provides volunteer RBC and McMillan lawyers to both the Superior and Small Claims Courts in Toronto Law Help Ontario offices. As duty counsel, the volunteer lawyers provide a range of services to individuals who cannot afford legal representation. This includes assessing the merits of their claim, advising on the next step in active litigation, and appearing on their behalf in court. The program provides practical real-time support to low-income individuals who otherwise would not have access to legal assistance. This past year, 28 lawyers provided approximately 400 hours of *pro bono* legal services.

In one notable case, a volunteer lawyer conducted a trial for a plaintiff whose vehicle had been improperly seized and sold. The plaintiff did not have the means to hire a lawyer and was forced to bring the claim herself. The volunteer lawyer not only took on the trial on one hour's notice, but returned to court for a second full day to complete the trial after her volunteer shift ended. Before our involvement, the defendants had attempted to bully the plaintiff into settlement and were extremely uncooperative and aggressive towards her. At trial, our volunteer lawyer was resoundingly successful and the court ordered the defendants to fully reimburse the plaintiff for the cost of the vehicle.

LawHelpOntario 

Coming together to help

"Volunteering with this program is an incredibly rewarding experience. As lawyers, it is easy to forget how daunting the legal system can be. A 30-minute session or a brief appearance in court can make a real difference for individuals who would not otherwise have access to a lawyer. I am proud that McMillan and RBC have partnered to give back to the community in such a meaningful way."

Allison Warone
Associate, McMillan LLP



Canada Snowboard

Canada Snowboard is the national sport association for snowboarding in Canada and is responsible for the selection and administration of the national team in the World Cup, World Championships and Olympic Winter Games. Based in Vancouver, Canada Snowboard also provides athletic development and other programming aimed at supporting and promoting snowboarders of all abilities.

The firm has had a long affiliation with Canada Snowboard so the inclusion of the organization in the *pro bono* program was a natural fit. McMillan is proud to be listed as one of Canada Snowboard's partners.

McMillan lawyers assist Canada Snowboard with non-profit governance and business operations, including employment and sponsorship agreements.



Personal and professional excellence

"I have been very fortunate to work with this Vancouver-based organization that promotes and develops a sport to which I have a personal connection. My exposure to Canada Snowboard's legal and business operations has also benefitted me and other members of Vancouver's business law group immensely."

Brittnee Russell
Associate, McMillan LLP



Pro bono Work and our Lawyers

Our lawyers have devoted their time and legal expertise to many organizations, including:

- MayTree - McMillan Partnership in Pro-Bono
- Working Women Community Centre
- Jane's Walk (Tides Canada Initiatives)
- Manifesto Community Projects
- Scadding Court Community
- Scarborough Women's Centre
- Working Skills Centre
- Social Services Network
- Scientists in School
- The York Centre for Children, Youth and Families
- Planned Parenthood Toronto
- Delta Family Resource Centre
- East Scarborough Storefront - Tides
- Acorn Canada

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About us

McMillan is a leading business law firm serving public, private and not-for-profit clients across key industries in Canada, the United States and internationally. With recognized expertise and acknowledged leadership in major business sectors, we provide solutions-oriented legal advice through our offices in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa, Montréal and Hong Kong. Our firm values – respect, teamwork, commitment, client service and professional excellence – are at the heart of McMillan's commitment to serve our clients, our local communities and the legal profession.

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