



Good Governance Week - October 10-14, 2011

The Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsmen has designated the week of October 10 - 14 as Good Governance Week - a nation-wide celebration of the role of the Ombudsman. Citizens' Representative, Barry Fleming, says "Good Governance Week is an opportunity for the public and the public service to reflect on society's expectation that citizens be treated fairly in their dealings with provincial departments and agencies."



Over the course of the week, the Office of the Citizens' Representative organizes a number of events, including a networking event for community-based agencies and departmental designates who assist the Office in its work.

Also part of the celebration is our third annual essay-writing contest which receives submissions from social studies students in grade six on the topic of Good Governance.

Citizens' Representative Annual Digest to be Released

Citizens' Representative, Barry Fleming, will release his Annual Digest to the House of Assembly and the public during October 2011. The Digest highlights the work of the Office of the Citizens' Representative through case studies and statistics. Previous Digests are available at www.citizensrep.nl.ca

OCR Hosts a Winning Placement

During the Winter 2011 semester the OCR hosted a 5th year Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) student for a final field placement. While the work of our Office may not fit the traditional role of a social worker, there is an appropriate fit for the BSW Community Development Placement. With an oversight role of provincial government departments and agencies, this placement affords an opportunity for students to become familiar with and review government programs, legislation, policies and practices. Opportunity is provided to meet with individual citizens presenting with various problems, often complex and time sensitive. There is also an opportunity to gain knowledge of services within the community which may serve as a means of referral and/or collaboration.

We were happy to have Chris Carter express an interest in completing this piece of his academic career with us. From our perspective, this mutual learning experience was a huge success. Chris was eager to learn about the role and mandate of our Office and experience the practical side of mediation and investigation work. In addition to working on cases, Chris participated in the expansion of our outreach program by facilitating presentations to community agencies to increase awareness of our services. Chris' presence also provided a learning opportunity to the staff of our Office as he shared his social work learning with us and increased our awareness of the relevance of applying a social work lens to the daily work that we undertake.

Upon completion of his field placement with us, Chris was the selected recipient of the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers' Convocation Award. This award is given to a graduating BSW student who has demonstrated a high level of practice competence during both required field placements, and a commitment to Social Work by active participation in professionally-related activities and organizations during the period of social work education. We are certainly pleased to have provided an opportunity to Chris to demonstrate his Social Work skills.



L-R: Barry Fleming, Citizens' Representative; Sharon Samson, Senior Investigator (OCR); Chris Carter; Lisa Crockwell, Executive Director and Registrar, NLASW; and Shelly Birnie-Lefcovitch, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, MUN.

Seeking Fairness

Jerry's wharf was extensively damaged by a provincial ferry. He was frustrated and complained to the OCR that he was not initially notified of the damage by the Department of Transportation and Works, and that officials were denying the claim he made for damages. The OCR initiated an investigation and to its credit, the Department took action on the file. The Minister acknowledged the damage and apologized in writing. Fortunately for Jerry, the Department had a contractor working on the nearby ferry dock. The OCR monitored the rebuilding process and soon after, Jerry's wharf was replaced.



Finding Solutions

Shawn is a single father raising a teenage son with autism who also requires an oxygen tank. His son was too young to receive Income Support from the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, and too old to qualify for a Special Care Allowance from the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services. He contacted the OCR when it became apparent he could no longer afford to send his son to the local autism centre and he did not know where to turn. Working with Child, Youth and Family Services, an OCR Investigator was able to secure funding to cover the transportation costs within program guidelines.

Questions? Comments?

Is your department, agency or community group interested in learning more about the OCR, its services and processes? Call us at 1-800-599-0079 or (709) 729-7647, or e-mail citrep@gov.nl.ca



Office of the Citizens' Representative Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

4th Floor, Beothuck Building
20 Crosbie Place
P.O. Box 8400
St. John's, NL
A1B 3N7

Tel: 709.729.7647
Toll Free: 1.800.559.0079
Fax: 790.729.7696
E-mail: citrep@gov.nl.ca

Subscribe to **OCR INSIGHTS** at citrep@gov.nl.ca



www.citizensrep.nl.ca



Office of the Citizens' Representative
Newfoundland and Labrador