



Teaching "Emotional Literacy" to prevent bullying in schools: Photograph printed with permission from Roots of Empathy

Pro Bono Blakes was among the first major law firms in Canada to adopt a proactive national policy recognizing pro bono work as a professional obligation. Today, we have one of Canada's largest structured pro bono legal services programs and dozens of our lawyers regularly bring their skills to bear in support of numerous social and humanitarian causes. Recent highlights include:

Evergreen Brickworks Project:

Blakes is making a significant difference to the environment by actively supporting "social entrepreneurs," such as the Evergreen Brickworks project in Toronto. Abandoned for decades, the derelict industrial site has been transformed into an environmental centre showcasing sustainability and green design. Blakes signed on to help Evergreen, a charity dedicated to making cities more liveable, on a pro bono basis in 2004. Over 85 Blakes lawyers have since played critical roles in guiding the project to fruition. The century-old site, which produced many of Toronto's finest building bricks and hosted a grand opening in September 2010, features a public education centre, demonstration gardens, farmers' market, heritage tours and a sustainable urban design centre.

Roots of Empathy (ROE): From a small pilot project with 150 children in Canada to an award-winning program involving 325,000 children worldwide, ROE leverages the power of empathy in the classroom to reduce aggression among children, while also raising social and emotional competence. Blakes has been an active partner in furthering ROE's mission, from advising on legislation affecting children to reviewing contracts and international agreements. Since ROE launched in 1996, its mission has stretched around the globe — most recently, launching in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

International Seniors Lawyers Project (ISLP): Since 2007, Blakes has volunteered the expertise of one of its most senior lawyers, Jim Dube, to assist with the restoration

of the legal system of Liberia in West Africa. Working through ISLP, a non-government organization, Jim is helping to harmonize Liberia's legal system with its indigenous customary legal system — a task that included analyzing 150 years of Liberian jurisprudence.

Urban Financial Services Coalition (UFSC): Since 2008, Blakes has acted as pro bono counsel to the Toronto chapter of the UFSC, a not-for-profit promoting the growth of minority professionals in financial services. UFSC encourages financial fluency and increases awareness of personal finance issues in disadvantaged and minority communities. Blakes lawyers also contribute to UFSC's various educational and professional development initiatives, as well as serving on its corporate advisory board.



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Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary: Pro bono legal services for this organization help support the delivery of a broad range of services for challenged minority, socio-economic, immigrant and aboriginal communities. Blakes also provides an annual scholarship for youth who forged their way through periods of homelessness to further educational pursuits and find self-sufficiency.

Parkinson's Society of British Columbia (PSBC): Since 2006, Blakes has worked in partnership with the PSBC, providing advice to individuals with Parkinson's, developing general resources to make people aware of the legal rights of individuals with Parkinson's, and providing corporate governance advice. Many of the cases Blakes supports involve fighting discrimination in the workplace and barriers to services or facilities generally available to the public.

Right to Play International: This international not-for-profit works to improve the lives of children in disadvantaged areas of the world using the power of sport and play. Blakes approached this Canadian-based organization in 2006 to offer its services on a pro bono basis. Since then, Blakes has assisted Right to Play in a wide variety of matters, including helping it to become a recognized international leader in the not-for-profit humanitarian sector.

Habitat for Humanity Canada (HFHC): HFHC has over 50,000 volunteers and 72 affiliate organizations coast-to-coast. Since 2007, over 50 Blakes partners, associates and law clerks have worked on HFHC-related legal matters on a pro bono basis. Teams of Blakes members also participate annually in its construction projects, such as its first-ever Women's Build Blitz to help launch the largest women's build project ever undertaken in Canada.

ArtStarts in Schools: This innovative organization promotes arts for young people, provides practical resources for teachers and artists, and offers leadership and advocacy for arts in education in British Columbia. Blakes has provided pro bono legal services to ArtStarts since 2008, including helping it open the first art gallery in Canada devoted to young people's art.

Portage Program for Drug Dependencies: Recently, Blakes lawyer Tricia Kuhl received one of the Canadian Bar Association's highest honours for pro bono work for her efforts since 2005 on behalf of Portage, an organization dedicated to delivering treatment services to adults, adolescents, pregnant women, mothers and children afflicted with drug dependencies.

Special Olympics Canada: Blakes has worked closely with the Canadian Special Olympics organization on a pro bono basis for many years, providing support as directors and officers and providing legal advice on a wide range of corporate and sports matters.

Community and Other Legal Clinics:

From acting as small claims court duty counsel in Toronto and Vancouver to helping law school students launch an international human rights challenge in Belize, Blakes litigators regularly volunteer their time and experience to support special interest legal clinics. Blakes associates and students, particularly, learn to think fast on their feet and gain valuable advocacy experience while helping citizens navigate the justice system.

Blakes is committed to providing legal services pro bono publico ("for the public good") to worthy causes and organizations across Canada and globally.

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A History of Giving Back

Since its founding in 1856, Blakes and individual Firm members have understood the importance of giving back to our communities and standing up for those who need help. Our lawyers believe pro bono work is more than just good corporate social responsibility. It promises to enrich and better all of our lives. For Blakes and the many worthy individuals, organizations and causes we help, pro bono is not a handout but a hand-up.