

Rise 
WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE



Emerald Run, Whistler; photo courtesy The Honourable Judge Lyndsay Smith

Winter 2021

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Now more than ever, Rise needs your support. From the first days of this pandemic through today, Rise has been hard at work helping the women of BC who need us maintain their safety and health, for themselves and their families. We never stopped.

Women in BC need Rise, and Rise needs you.

[Click here](#) to help improve access to family justice for women in BC

Happy New Year, friends of Rise! We hope to find you all healthy and content. Although the tough times that 2020 brought are not yet behind us, we can't help but feel hopeful that 2021 brings better days.



As always, we begin with welcomes and farewells.

After completing her poli-sci degree at UBC with Honours, our treasured program assistant Kala Bryson has left us for her internship at the Legislative Assembly of BC -- just the beginning of many accomplishments we'll all see from Kala as she advances in her professional life. Here she is in an official photo from the Legislature of their 2021 interns -- our Kala is indicated at the back left. So proud!

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Rise owes a debt of gratitude to **Rhona Lichtenwald**, venerated family lawyer, family law mediator and collaborative lawyer whose solo practice is **Hillcrest Law & Mediation**. A past PLTC instructor, Rhona has been a longtime speaker and instructor for Rise's new cohort of student clinicians during orientation every semester, and we were lucky that she was able to join Rise on a contract basis this past fall to help us work through some of our more complex cases and lend an able hand with the increased caseload Rise experienced due to the pandemic. She has just wrapped up that project recently, and we're grateful for her skilled assistance. Thanks, Rhona!





and several foundations that
have requested anonymity



Karon Blandino has also joined Rise on contract, as our Family Advocate & Support Line (FASL) lawyer, assisting family advocates, front-line workers, and support workers all over BC in serving their own clients more effectively. She'll be with Rise for a year while our own **Taruna Agrawal** is on parental leave.

After obtaining her JD from UBC, Karon practised at a boutique family law firm in downtown Vancouver for over 5 years before joining us at Rise, where she is applying her passion for using the law to help people in find solutions to difficult situations. Outside her work with Rise, Karon enjoys baking and tending to her ever-growing collection of tropical plants, making it sadder still for those of us working from the office that Karon, like nearly all Rise staff, works from home.

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Rise is very happy to welcome our third articulated student, **Juliana Pyde**. Having grown up in the small northwest BC town of Prince Rupert, Juliana says she saw firsthand how women and children are most negatively-impacted by the inaccessibility of family law services, and decided in high school that she would pursue family law. Juliana graduated from Peter A. Allard School of Law in May 2020. While in law school, she received the Right Honourable Beverly McLachlin Legal Access Award and the Arthur Close, QC Prize in Advanced Legal Research and Writing. She also completed Rise's clinical externship in summer of 2019. Juliana is excited to be back at Rise and assisting clients with their family law and immigration matters.



Rise's previous articulated student **Lucie Krajca** has now become our new "incubator lawyer" and launched her practice from Rise, officially in the office recently vacated by **Thakur MacNeill LLP**, although in reality working remotely for the time being, like so many. Lucie's new firm is **Linden Law**, focusing on "providing competent and compassionate counsel to individuals with their family and immigration law issues, and those needing assistance with the preparation of a will" and finding "pragmatic and cost-

effective solutions for [their] clients, with a focus on helping low-income women experiencing violence."

Rise provides our incubator lawyers with office space & resources, client referrals, insurance and practice fees, opportunities and funding for Continuing Legal Education, plus ongoing support from staff & lawyers so the new lawyer may concentrate their efforts on building their clientele and establishing their law practice for their first year.

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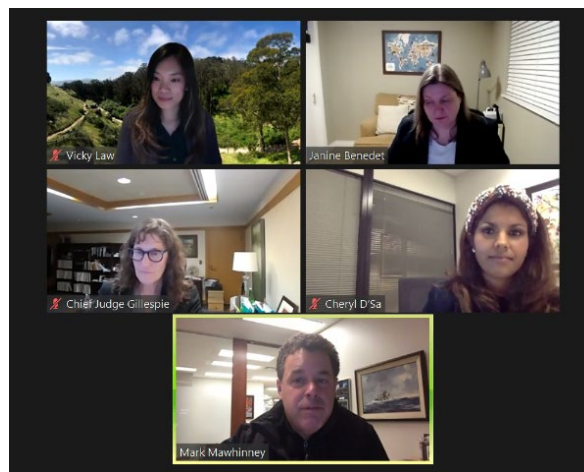
Rise in the News

Rise has received some excellent news coverage over the fall and winter, beginning with this CBC article last October [Survivors of domestic abuse told to keep quiet about it in court or risk jeopardizing child custody](#) which was also broadcast on CBC's televised news, which link can be [found here](#). **Kim Hawkins** was interviewed regarding parental alienation claims being brought by parents who've been accused of family violence, and referenced Rise's own 2019 research when **Haley Hrymak** and **Vicky Law** travelled the province and "interviewed 160 women in 25 BC communities who were domestic violence survivors and had been involved with the family court system." They also report that when we followed up "slightly more than half of the women responding said they had been accused of parental alienation. Just under half said they had been advised by lawyers not to talk about the abuse." It is compelling reading, and Rise case manager **Andrea Bryson** reported an increase in calls from women seeking Rise's help in the weeks following its publication and broadcast.

On a similar note, journalist Flannery Dean wrote in Chatelaine this month about the tragic consequences that sometimes follow when women are compelled to conceal violence in the home from the courts, fearing of the consequences of its misinterpretation. Kim Hawkins was also interviewed for this article, and although Rise isn't prominently featured in the final cut, our 2019 research is referenced again. It's a tragic but galvanizing read: [Why Divorce Cases Involving Allegations of Abuse Still Confound Family Courts](#). Content warning for severe family violence.

News1130 reported in December that "[COVID-19 creates 'tsunami' of demand at Vancouver legal clinic for women](#)" featuring interviews with both Kim Hawkins and Andrea Bryson regarding the tremendous increase in need facing Rise and all women-serving organizations since the health crisis began. Andrea paints an eloquent picture of intake and triage here at Rise, and it's a great read.

Rise in the Community



Vicky Law was invited to participate on the panel for the most recent [J. Donald Mawhinney Lectureship in Professional Ethics](#) at UBC "Ethical Lawyering in a Pandemic", addressing how lawyers and courts may discharge their ethical obligations under the fast-changing legal system and new technical challenges since the pandemic began.

Vicky's co-panelists were Bencher Cheryl D'Sa of Narwal Litigation LLP, and The Honourable Chief Judge Gillespie of the BC Provincial Court. Sadly, it wasn't recorded, but the attendance was reportedly in the neighbourhood of 300, and Vicky in particular got a shout-out on Twitter from one attendee, so -- all around success.

Rise's Supervising Lawyer **Vandana Sood** was invited to present twice at UBC recently: she was a panelist for the Faculty Colloquium "[Critical Reflections on Clinical and Experiential Learning at Allard Hall](#)" moderated by Nikos Harris QC, where she and the panel of supervising lawyers discussed "meeting the challenges of educating students on substantive law, ethics and policy analysis in a clinical setting"; and Vandana also contributed to a PechaKucha event called "The Power of Connection", wherein UBC alumni were asked to present personal stories about their work PechaKucha-style -- a format where presenters show 20 slides for 20 seconds of commentary each.

It's a fascinating and engaging way of storytelling; watch [Vandana's presentation here](#).

A coda to the farewells above -- goodbye and best wishes to Rise's Fall 2020 cohort. Here they are on the days of their very first court appearances, looking excited and proud, as they should.



Let's close with another amazing photo from talented friend of Rise, Jane Dyson, who missed her calling as a professional landscape and cityscape photographer.

Stay safe and healthy, everyone.

