

Rise 
WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE



Second Beach, photo courtesy Hannah Askew

Spring 2021

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Women in BC need Rise, and Rise needs you.

Now more than ever, Rise needs your support.

From the first days of this pandemic through today, Rise has been hard at work helping women in BC maintain their safety and health, for themselves and their families.

We never stopped.

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

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We begin, as always, with welcomes and farewells.

Rise says goodbye to our office manager **Ayesha Ali** this past week as she leaves us to, as Kim put it, "climb higher mountains". Kim speaks for all of us when she says "I'm incredibly grateful to Ayesha for helping to shepherd Rise through a very challenging period as well as a time of growth for the organisation.

Ayesha, you will be greatly missed and I hope you stay in touch." Hear hear, and Jedi hugs from the rest of us. Don't be a stranger, Ayesha!

We're lucky that Ayesha leaves us in the capable hands of office manager **Ellie Ericson**. Ellie brings with her over 20 years of professional administrative and office management experience in a broad range of sectors including, corporate special events, television production, law, and consulting. Ellie is also a talented artist, having been painting for over a decade, and photographing portraits, events, travel and other project work in her personal time. Welcome to Rise, Ellie!



Rise is also very happy to have **Kaelyn Burns** join us as our summer intern. Kaelyn attends law school at Dalhousie, but will be lending her skills to Rise this summer on a variety of projects, not least **Haley Hrymak's** new research project on improving safety for women in rural courthouses.

Farewell to our Winter 2021 cohort of student clinicians, who worked hard and did a great job for their clients. Supervising Lawyer **Vandana Sood** reports that they all appeared in court proceedings at some point in the semester, and that they were all "exceptionally organized" and were able to move every client file forward, including teeing up a number of court appearances for the next (now current) student clinician cohort. Vandana says "That might be the hardest part of the file, and it can take a long time -- they did a great job."

Kudos, Winter 2021!



Victoria Baylis, Amanda Hobbs, Kinsey Furniss, Kaeleigh Philips



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Why Can't Everyone Just Get Along? How BC's Family Law System Puts Survivors in Danger

From 2017 to 2020, Rise researched how the legal system in BC fails litigants – mainly women -- who have experienced family violence and been through the courts with a family law matter. Haley Hrymak travelled to 27 communities in BC and interviewed women who are survivors of family violence and have recently pursued their family law case in a BC court, organized focus groups, surveys, and round-table discussions, and spoke directly with front-line workers and experts from different disciplines, including law, psychology, social work, education, nursing, advocacy, and counselling.



HOW BC'S FAMILY LAW SYSTEM
PUTS SURVIVORS IN DANGER



WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY CANADA Canada
HALEY HRYMAK and KIM HAWKINS
JANUARY 2021

[This report is the result of that research](#), and tells the sometimes heartbreaking stories of what these women faced while trying to access family justice for themselves and their families, as well as offers recommendations on how to improve the court system in BC.

The report is co-authored by Haley Hrymak and Kim Hawkins, with assistance from dozens more among our colleagues, students, staff and volunteers. Rise is grateful to Women and Gender Equality Canada for

the funding that made this research and report possible. It's a compelling read for anyone, in a professional or personal capacity, and is now required reading for the CLEBC training course *Family Violence Screening Training for Litigators and Dispute Resolution Professionals*.

Rise issued a press release, and reporter **Lisa Steacy** of News1130 picked up the story and helped us [publicize the report](#). One especially poignant quote from her interview with Haley Hrymak:

"Many people talked about one person who believed them, one person who truly tried to help them. It could be something as simple as a kind gesture in the courthouse, or at the police station, or one police officer who really believed them. They talked about the positive impact that had on them and how much that helped them keep going."

The venerable **Dr Margaret Jackson**, director of [The FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children](#) at SFU, invited Haley to present the report in a webinar in March, which was well-attended and extremely well received. You can [watch the webinar here](#).

**The Hon. Donna Martinson
Michelle Simpson**

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who have requested anonymity*

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Section 211 Toolkits

Section 211 reports, sometimes called "custody and access reports", are frequently ordered in difficult family law cases involving parenting disputes, and are intended to provide judges with independent information about the views and needs of children. They are a common feature of BC family law cases and can have important consequences for the participants.

Rise developed a [toolkit for lawyers](#), primarily those working with women who have experienced family violence, but also for lawyers who are not as well informed as they would like about s. 211 reports and want to learn more. We also developed a simplified version for women who may be thinking about asking a judge to order a s. 211 report, or who have been told that they need to get one. [Rise's simplified guide](#) provides some basic information for non-lawyers, and has been translated into 12 languages.

Legal Attire Library



Rise is always so proud to watch our alumni being called to the bar and beginning their legal careers. but many of them face one last hurdle on their path to lawyerhood: lawyers must wear proper court attire -- "robes" -- for their call ceremony. Robes are custom made, and start at over a thousand dollars for a complete set -- a considerable expense for someone just beginning their career, often with student debt. Some new calls are lucky enough to have received their court attire as a graduation gift, and some can borrow from a principal lawyer, parent or friend, but many others just don't have

resources like these to rely on.

A couple of years ago Rise started collecting court attire so that we may start a "lending library" for students and new lawyers. We've been collecting gowns, jackets, shirts, tabs and more, that any new lawyer -- not just our alumni -- can borrow for their call ceremony or any court attendance, free of charge. We ask only that they are returned dry-cleaned for the next borrower..

Pictured (with apologies for the bad iPhone photography): Lawyers and Rise alumni [Tanya Thakur](#) and [Daniel MacNeill](#) trying on court gowns donated by [Megan Ellis QC](#) and [Brock Martland QC](#). Megan's robes were a gift from her mother Rae Ellis on Megan's call to the Bar in



1988.

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Among our sources for donated robes and accessories are senior lawyers who have extra unneeded items or who have recently retired, plus judges and QCs who have acquired new robes and no longer need their old court attire. If you have any of these garments languishing in the back of a closet, in need of a new home, [please consider donating them to Rise](#). They will be put to good use and very much appreciated.

Another gorgeous photo by friend of Rise, Lois Shelton.

