



WOMEN'S LEGAL EDUCATION AND ACTION FUND

FONDS D'ACTION ET D'EDUCATION JURIDIQUES POUR LES FEMMES

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MEDIA RELEASE

LEAF and RBC Financial Group celebrate Equality Day:

Fundraiser dinner commemorates Section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

April 19, 2007 – This evening, the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF), in partnership with RBC Financial Group, is celebrating Equality Day. Equality Day marks the implementation of Section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Section 15 states that "every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."

"Tonight, LEAF is celebrating the significant advances for women and marginalized groups in Canada," says Audrey Johnson, LEAF Executive Director, "Section 15 of the Charter has provided the tool to challenge discrimination of society's marginalized groups."

Tonight's National Equality Day dinner includes special guest speaker Devyani Saltzman, author of *Shooting Water*, who will provide remarks on her recent autobiography that delves into social and political commentary on Canada and India and a personal exploration of mother-daughter relationships. Speakers also include Jennifer Tory of RBC financial group and LEAF executive director Audrey Johnson.

The dinner will be raising funds for LEAF's ongoing equality work both in its legal cases and educational programs. "While there have been significant advances in equality over the past two decades, there continue to be ongoing acts of discrimination of women's rights under the law and cases that never get the opportunity to be heard. Federal funding cuts to women's and equity seeking programs are making it even harder for minority voices to be heard," says Johnson, "More than ever we need to continue educating the courts and the public of the rights enshrined in Section 15 of the Charter".

LEAF is a national, non-profit organization committed to using the provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to promote equality for women. Since its inception in 1985, LEAF has intervened in over 150 cases and has helped establish landmark legal victories for women on a wide range of issues from violence against women, sexual harassment, pregnancy discrimination, sex bias in employment standards, spousal support, and reproductive freedoms.

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