On Oct. 11, 2012, the International Day of the Girl Child, the 160 Girls case began. The claim was that police inaction and negligent handling of rape cases had violated the girls' constitutional rights to equality, security of the person, and dignity and constituted a violation of international human rights law. On May 27, 2013, the High Court of Kenya agreed with the equality effect and ordered the Kenyan police service to conduct prompt investigations and lay charges in both current and future cases. The case provides a solid legal precedent for similar proceedings in other jurisdictions. Following the international media attention garnered by the 160 Girls decision, has been launched in Kenya to kick off the campaign.
This is exactly the type of work we as lawyers need to get more involved in and find ways to support, particularly when we don’t practise in the human rights field. It’s also extremely rewarding to take part in fundraising for a cause that has such a big impact on the future of a continent.

While we always hope to make a small difference everyday in the lives of our clients or in upholding the law, there is something very special about having a far more significant and ambitious goal. This is why we went to law school.

Steven Rosenhek is a litigator and May Cheng is chairwoman of the Toronto intellectual property group at Faskens. For information on the 160 Girls project, contact executive director Fiona Sampson at fsampson@theequalityeffect.org.