

MARCH 2023

PHOTO: Christina

turning IMPACT REPORT **points**

FINDING STABILITY AND
CREATIVITY AT PAPE

150 YEARS OF
TRANSFORMATIVE
CHANGE



YWCA
TORONTO

NATIONAL ADVOCACY.
COMMUNITY ACTION.



United Way
Greater Toronto
FUNDED AGENCY

150th Anniversary



A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather M. McGregor".

Heather M. McGregor,
Chief Executive Officer

February 22 marked an important day in the history of YWCA Toronto—we are proud to celebrate 150 years of change in our community! It is incredible to think that for a century and a half YWCA Toronto has been providing women in need with life-changing supports. As Chief Executive Officer for the last 28 years, I am incredibly grateful to have been a part of this wonderful history.

We have evolved much over this time, growing our programs, becoming more vocal in our advocacy work, and expanding our services to support gender diverse people. What has not changed is our commitment to being a place where those in need can find safe shelter and stability. I am so very proud of our shared history and thankful for every staff member, donor, volunteer and participant who has contributed to our programs and to our city.

The past 150 years of YWCA Toronto are truly a testament to the extraordinary difference that can be made when we work collectively.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our donors—those who are new to YWCA Toronto and those who have been with us for many years—for every contribution you have made to help transform lives. You are a part of a meaningful 150-year-long legacy. Your generosity has meant that women, girls and gender diverse people have been able to access supports during what is often the most difficult period of their life.

While our 150th anniversary is certainly a time to reflect on our past, it is also an opportunity to look towards the future. We know there is still so much work to be done, and we hope you will continue supporting us as we look to the next 150 years.

TURNING POINTS NEWSLETTER

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FINDING STABILITY AND CREATIVITY AT PAPE

In the brightly lit community room of YWCA Toronto's Pape Avenue Apartments, Christina, a tenant in the building, lays out dozens of pieces of her artwork. From wildlife paintings, to abstract wax images full of intricate, branching lines and splashes of colour, to watercolours reminiscent of Impressionist paintings, she is someone who is clearly creative to her core.

For 30 years, Christina has called this affordable, supportive and permanent residence home. She came to YWCA Toronto initially through our Stop 86 emergency shelter (now 1st Stop Woodlawn) after moving from Newfoundland to Toronto as a teenager. Her childhood out East had been an incredibly difficult one. Years of neglect and abuse left her struggling with her mental health and without a safe place to call home.

When an opening came up at our Pape Avenue Apartments, Christina was able to move in. "I was in shock for the first while," she says, describing what it was like to have a safe place to build a home for the very first time in her life.

Thirty years later, Christina still struggles with the impacts of her childhood experiences. However, living at Pape Avenue Apartments has given her stability and the opportunity to flourish both as a visual artist and as an accomplished creative writer who has been published in multiple anthologies. For Christina, Pape has been a place where she can express herself, and where people listen.

"To be heard and seen is so vital," she shares. "Without that, you don't heal from trauma . . . In the moments I have been seen and heard

by many of the staff over the years—it was phenomenal.”

It is clear in the way Christina discusses her 30 years of living at Pape that the residence and its programming have had an immense impact on her life, giving her support when she needed it the most. She expresses that she loves the building and looks forward to many more years of stability and creative fruitfulness.

“I feel very fortunate to have Pape as my home.”



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150th Anniversary

[www.ywcatoronto.org/
womenofdistinction](http://www.ywcatoronto.org/womenofdistinction)



JOIN THE MOVEMENT

This year marks our 150th Anniversary!
Mark the milestone with your 2023 membership to YWCA Toronto.

Membership is so much more than the \$20 membership fee – it is about being part of a worldwide feminist movement, having a voice and supporting women, girls and gender diverse people. Together, we can create lasting change in our community.

Contact Liz Chornenki,
LChornenki@ywcatoronto.org
or 416.961.8101 x360.

Highlights from YWCA Toronto's 150-year History

1873

The Association opens its first boarding houses at 19 and 33 Duke Street (now Adelaide Street).

**Circa
1912**

Ontario House, YWCA Toronto residence at 698 Ontario Street, is a thriving hub for Caribbean immigrant women working as domestic labourers and escaping abusive employers.

1929

The Eaton family donates the Georgian Bay property that would soon become YWCA Toronto's Camp Tapawingo.

1957

Woodlawn Residence, an affordable housing building for single women, opens. The residence remains open to this day as 1st Stop Woodlawn Emergency Shelter and Residence.

**'70s/
'80s**

YWCA Toronto engages in significant social action, including advocating for lesbian rights, Indigenous rights, affordable housing, gender equity and and participating in the anti-violence against women movement.

2012

YWCA Toronto's Elm Housing Support Program building opens in downtown Toronto, making us the largest provider of women-focused housing options in Canada.

2020s

389 Church Street Housing Support Program opens. Inspirations Studio joins the YWCA Toronto community. After much advocacy and community effort, Ontario adopts \$10 a day child care.

2023

We recognize YWCA Toronto's 150th anniversary—a long history of change in the community.



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DONOR LOVE

Leaving a Legacy of Impact

Cathy Riggall knows the power of a planned gift.



“It’s really the opportunity to leave a larger amount and to recognize you might no longer be here to make an annual gift, but at least you can continue to make a donation—to support the cause.”

A planned gift, also known as a legacy gift, is a donor’s intention to contribute a major gift to an organization beyond their lifetime. It can be made in many ways such as through securities, charitable gift annuities, charitable trusts, life insurance policies or retirement plan designations to name a few, but the most common and simplest form of planned giving is a bequest—a gift of property or cash that is made through a donor’s will. For Cathy, the decision to join YWCA Toronto’s planned giving program, The Monarch Society, was an obvious choice.

“We had insurance policies that were coming to the end of their contribution payment period, and it just seemed like a reasonable thing to do.”

As pragmatic as Cathy is about her choice to leave a planned gift, in speaking with her, it is clear she cares deeply about the impact of her donation. In discussing her years of involvement with the Association, as a donor and past board president, she highlights her particular affinity for our housing programs and how she hopes her gift can help those in need find a safe, stable place to call home.

“It’s hard to get women out of abusive relationships if they don’t have somewhere to go,” she says. “It’s hard for them to focus on upgrading their skills if they don’t have a place to live. It’s just such an important component of what YWCA Toronto does.”

We are so grateful to Cathy and all her fellow Monarch Society members for their commitment to transforming lives. Leaving a planned gift is an incredibly meaningful act that has the power to help women, girls and gender diverse people in need well into the future.

If you would like to become a member of the Monarch Society or have questions about leaving a planned gift, please contact our [Manager of Foundations & Planned Giving, Monika Sormova](#), at [416-961-8101 x327](tel:416-961-8101) or msormova@ywcatoronto.org.

150 YEARS OF TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

February 22, 2023 marked one of the most important days in YWCA Toronto history—our beginning. The City of Toronto proclaimed this day as YWCA Toronto Day to recognize our 150 years of creating positive change in our community.

From a small group of local women who came together out of concern for the safety of young women in their community, to becoming the city's largest multi-service women's organization, for the past 150 years we have worked tenaciously to break down barriers that hold women back from achieving equity and safety.

A significant part of this work has been our long history of providing affordable housing in our community. YWCA Toronto opened its first boarding houses at 19 and 33 Duke Street (now Adelaide Street at George and Frederick Streets) in August of 1873. To this day, we believe that housing is a human right and fundamental to a woman's ability to thrive.

In 1884, YWCA Toronto was ahead of its time. We taught “non-traditional” trades for women including phonography, stenography and typing. This kind of trailblazing was (and still is) at the heart of YWCA Toronto. It is no surprise that YWCA Canada's President, Adelaide Hoodless, proclaimed in 1895, “We will be the greatest and strongest group of young women ever formed. I mean of women, by women and for women.”

The world has changed a lot since the late 1800s—and so have we. In the words of our Chief Executive Officer, Heather McGregor, “Today, we are driven by a vision for a radical transformation of society where all women can thrive and a mission to lead in the provision of feminist, intersectional and transformative shelter and housing, employment and training, leadership, and advocacy for women, girls and gender diverse people.”

From helping 190 boarders in our first boarding houses to serving over 13,000 people—including Two-Spirit, trans and non-binary community members—annually, we are proud and thankful to make an impact in our city over the years.

We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our donors, funders, sponsors and partners for all your generous support and dedication. You are a huge part of our history—our work simply would not have been possible without you. Thank you for being part of a strong, feminist movement. Together we will continue to make transformative changes in the lives of those in need in our city. Together we will create a just and equitable future where women, girls and gender diverse people can heal and thrive.

As we continue to celebrate this milestone throughout the year, follow us on social media and our blog for updates.