

# TURNING — YWCA TORONTO — POINTS

**TRANSFORMING LIVES**

## 60 Years of Women's Housing on Woodlawn Avenue

**LEADERS IN ACTION**

*YWCA Leaders Get Results  
on Parliament Hill*



**FROM OUR ARCHIVE:  
1950s-YOUNG WOMEN  
GETTING HOUSING AT  
1ST STOP WOODLAWN**

COVER PHOTO | 'QUILTED HOME' BY WOODLAWN COLLECTIVE



A TURNING POINT  
FOR WOMEN





**YWCA TORONTO** TRANSFORMS LIVES.  
AS CANADA'S LARGEST WOMEN'S  
ORGANIZATION, WE HELP WOMEN ESCAPE  
VIOLENCE, MOVE OUT OF POVERTY AND  
ACCESS SAFE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING. WE  
WORK TENACIOUSLY TO BREAK DOWN  
BARRIERS THAT HOLD WOMEN BACK  
FROM ACHIEVING EQUALITY.

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## LETTER FROM THE DESK OF OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

*Advocacy works! At YWCA Toronto, we celebrate Canada's National Housing Strategy that seeks to enshrine housing as a fundamental human right in law. It also includes a firm commitment that 25% of funds will be dedicated to projects and services targeted at women and girls – this was a specific call to action championed by our YWCA movement across Canada. We are steadfast in our commitment to ensure the right for all women to access safe and affordable housing.*

*In this newsletter, you will read about the strength and tenacity of our YWCA movement. We are intimately aware of the challenges faced by women as they negotiate systemic barriers to housing, safety and security – not only for themselves, but also for their children. YWCA leaders took these experiences to Parliament Hill and shared them with over 54 Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, Senators and senior ranking staff across a range of ministries. We conveyed the critical importance of developing social policies that count women in.*

*The inclusion of a gender-based lens on the National Housing Strategy is a hopeful first step in the right direction.*

*You will also read more about three significant milestones for our Association – the 60th anniversary of our 1st Stop Woodlawn Housing, the 10th anniversary of Bergamot Apartments, and the 5th anniversary of Elm Centre. Together, we have created safe, affordable homes with supports in place to ensure women and their children are successful. We have built culturally nurturing spaces that allow for physical and spiritual safety. We have ensured trauma informed responses to sexual violence and harassment. These models are shaped by the very tenets of women's lived experiences. The women we support guide our work and, like you, I continue to be humbled by their strength and resilience.*

Heather M. McGregor,  
Chief Executive Officer, YWCA Toronto

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## IN THIS ISSUE

**3** TRANSFORMING LIVES  
*60 Years of Women's Housing*

**5** LEADERS IN ACTION  
*YWCA Leaders Get Results*

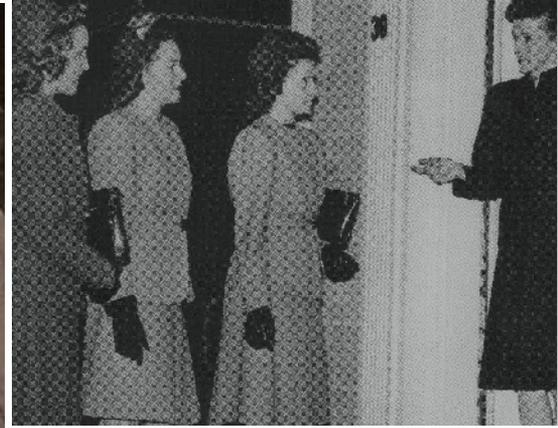
**7** YWCA TORONTO AT-A-GLANCE

**8** CREATING SYSTEMIC CHANGE

**9** DONORS REMEMBERED  
*Remembering Helen Gurney*

**10** SPOTLIGHT ON PHILANTHROPY





## 60 YEARS OF WOMEN'S HOUSING ON WOODLAWN AVENUE

On a quiet, tree-lined street in Rosedale, YWCA Toronto's 1st Stop Woodlawn is celebrating 60 years of housing for women. 1st Stop Woodlawn, or simply 'Woodlawn' as it is affectionately called by residents and staff, includes an historic building that was originally owned by the Bongard family and purchased in 1950 by YWCA Toronto for \$56,000. By 1957, a new larger building had been added to the site.

Initially, Woodlawn operated as a boarding house for young women arriving in Toronto from rural areas. As the needs of the community changed - reflecting demographic, cultural, and economic shifts - so did Woodlawn's residents and services. Woodlawn went from housing primarily young women and students from small towns, to providing emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing for single women.

Out of all YWCA Toronto housing initiatives, Woodlawn is home to the largest population of senior women within its 72 units of affordable,

permanent housing. For staff, it is important to create an environment that enables those of all ages to feel comfortable. Woodlawn offers a variety of innovative and trauma-informed programming, including mental health and housing-related supports and referrals, arts-based healing programs, and access to clinical staff.

Looking back to 1957, there were three emergency shelter beds slated for girls who needed temporary housing. Today, there are 56 shelter beds, 22 of which are designated for young women 16 to 25 years old. Woodlawn is home to one of only nine shelters in Toronto serving young women at risk of homelessness.

Darlene Penney, Housing Administration Manager, has worked at YWCA Toronto for 41 years and at Woodlawn for the past 32 years. She explains that "We have women living at Woodlawn for over 25 years and this is their home." The biggest change that Darlene has observed is the growing diversity of the



*“If these walls could talk there would be so many incredible stories – a lot of sad stories – but also really incredible stories about women overcoming their challenges.”*

DARLENE PENNEY, MANAGER OF HOUSING ADMINISTRATION AT 1ST STOP WOODLAWN

populations served at Woodlawn, including Two Spirit Peoples and the trans community. “We are known as a safe place. Within all of our housing, we have a fairly diverse population and I think we are very reflective of Toronto.”

The housing crisis in Toronto has meant a dramatic reduction in affordable and safe rental units for women. Woodlawn has a two-year waitlist for permanent housing and the shelter is often at capacity. With over 97,000 households on Toronto’s social housing waitlist, women-only housing, shelter, and supportive programs are needed more than ever.

For 60 years, Woodlawn has built a rich and proud history that is celebrated by many staff and residents. Its Rosedale location, among the most affluent in Toronto, is a reminder of growing income inequities and our collective responsibility to end poverty in our city. With the continued support of generous donors, government and community partners, we will continue building on Woodlawn’s success for many years to come. ■

PHOTO (FACING PAGE) | ARCHIVE PHOTOS OF EDITH VUCHNICH, DONOR AT THE CONSTRUCTION OF 1ST STOP WOODLAWN AND YOUNG WOMEN GETTING HOUSING IN THE 1950s, COUNCILLOR KRISTYN WONG-TAM WITH ERTHA DOWNEY, 1ST STOP WOODLAWN MANAGER AND HEATHER MCGREGOR, YWCA TORONTO CEO.

# HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT

## OUR IMPACT

**\$12.9**

million invested in permanent housing programs

**943**

women and children live in safe affordable housing

**255**

women received specialized mental health and addiction supports

**50**

units of affordable housing designated for Indigenous women

**3**

milestone anniversaries for YWCA Toronto housing programs in 2017, including: the 60th anniversary of 1st Stop Woodlawn, the 10th anniversary of Bergamot Apartments, and the 5th anniversary of the Elm Centre

# YWCA LEADERS GET RESULTS ON PARLIAMENT HILL

It was a day for the YWCA history books. In November, 120 YWCA leaders from coast-to-coast-to-coast participated in the movement's first-ever advocacy day on Parliament Hill. In meetings with Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament and Senators, we called for a gender lens on the National Housing Strategy that includes a minimum of 25% of funds dedicated to projects and services for women, girls and their families.

Driven by the voices of the women and girls who use our services, we spoke truth to power – literally.

YWCA leaders shook things up on a turf where women's voices and lived experiences are often not adequately heard or reflected in decision making. Women's representation in Parliament stands at a dismal 27%, and we have yet to see full implementation of an intersectional gender-based analysis in policy development. This can render invisible many of the structural barriers faced by different



groups of women, including when it comes to homelessness and accessing housing. We also called for recognition of Indigenous treaty rights to housing and closer attention to the challenges facing gender non-binary populations in securing safe, affordable housing and support.

As the only national association providing housing and shelter for women and girls across Canada, the YWCA movement knows of what we speak. We know that women tend to hide their homelessness because the streets are not

safe. This includes women and their children who couch surf with family or friends; women who remain in violent situations to maintain their housing and the thousands of women sleeping in shelters and waiting for a place to call home. The homelessness we witness on our city streets is a tragedy but it is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the crisis facing women.

We called on politicians of all stripes to take a feminist approach to public policy – and we got results.

Last month, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau unveiled Canada's National Housing Strategy that includes the YWCA 'ask' for 25% of funds to flow directly to projects and services for women and girls. This is a hopeful first step that could mean a continuum of housing options for women – emergency shelters, permanent

housing, and supportive housing. It could mean additional funding for staff support to address the complexity of the trauma, mental health and addiction challenges that many women experience. It is also an important reminder that advocacy works. Change is possible when women come together and raise their voices.

Reflecting on a successful advocacy day, YWCA Canada CEO Maya Roy put it best: “I am so proud to be part of a movement of strong and fearless women – standing in their own power.”

Join us as we move forward: Talk to your friends and colleagues about how the housing crisis impacts women and children. Talk to people who care about building a more equitable and inclusive city for women and who can make change happen. YWCA Toronto can help you to do this. Canada needs a National Housing Strategy that counts women and girls in – nothing less.■

*Etana Cain is the Manager of Advocacy and Communications at YWCA Toronto.*

## COUNT WOMEN AND GIRLS IN TO A NATIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY

ACCESS TO HOUSING AND EXPERIENCES OF HOMELESSNESS DIFFER ON THE BASIS OF GENDER.

**WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO:**

- ▶ **LIVE ON LOW INCOMES**  

  - 70% OF PART-TIME WORKERS
  - 60% OF MINIMUM WAGE WORKERS
- ▶ **LIVE WITH CHILDREN**  

  - 79% OF SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES LED BY WOMEN
  - OVER 50% OF WOMEN ARRIVE TO SHELTERS WITH CHILDREN
- ▶ **LIVE TO OLD AGE**  

  - 72% OF OVER 90 ARE WOMEN
  - 28% OF SENIOR WOMEN LIVE IN POVERTY
- ▶ **LOSE HOUSING DUE TO VIOLENCE**  

  - 8,000 WOMEN & CHILDREN IN SHELTERS ON A SINGLE NIGHT
  - 78% IN SHELTER DUE TO VIOLENCE

**A SAFE HOME IS A HUMAN RIGHT. COUNT WOMEN AND GIRLS IN.**

Source: Count Women and Girls in to the National Housing Strategy, YWCA Canada's Homes for Women, 2016.



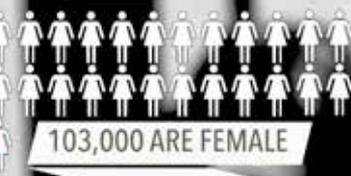



**PHOTO** | (FACING PAGE- TOP LEFT) YWCA YOUNG WOMEN ON PARLIAMENT HILL; (ABOVE) YWCA CANADA STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS WITH THE HON. MARYAM MONSEF, MINISTER OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN; MAYA ROY, YWCA CANADA CEO.

## WHEN YOU PICTURE A HOMELESS PERSON DO YOU SEE A WOMAN?

**LOOK AGAIN**

- ▶ **210,000 PEOPLE USE EMERGENCY SHELTERS AND TEMPORARY HOUSING EVERY YEAR**  

- ▶ **103,000 ARE FEMALE**  

- ▶ **63% use shelters for abused women**  

- ▶ **37% use homeless shelters**  

- ▶ **11,000 girls and young women 16-24 years of age use homeless shelters**  


Source: Seegert, The National Shelter Study: Emergency Shelter Use in Canada 2005-2009, 2012. Gaetz, Donaldson, Richter & Gulliver, The State of Homelessness in Canada 2013. Statistics Canada, Residents of Canada's Shelters for Abused Women, 2010.



# YWCA TORONTO AT-A-GLANCE

## NEAR & FAR

- Talented women from **Winona's Place**, our affordable housing initiative for Indigenous women, participated in the Tapestry of Movement public art project. The end result is a colourful and welcoming mural that has brightened the Toronto Coach Terminal walls on Edward Street. Thanks to the STEPS Initiative for their leadership on this project.



- YWCA Toronto has embarked on the **Trauma Informed Education and Development (TIDE)** project, a four year initiative, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada. The project aims to develop resources, education materials and a framework for organizational change related to integrating Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) across the Association. The focus will be on creating organizational shifts that promote the use of TIP in ways that take into account the violence and trauma that staff and many women accessing services may have experienced.

- By the end of 2017, our **entire staff team** will have completed training on Indigenous histories, cultures and current realities by the **Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres**. This is an important part of our Association's commitment to truth and reconciliation.

## CELEBRATE



- To mark Women's Entrepreneurship Week, Dolores Montavez-Ruz from our **Employment and Training** team joined a special panel discussion organized by the office of the Honourable Jeff Leal, Minister Responsible for Small Business in Ontario. In an audience of government partners and women business leaders, she highlighted our work to help newcomer women launch home-based businesses, generate revenue for their families, and make a strong start in Canada.
- Our **Bergamot Apartments** is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2017. At a time when very little affordable housing was being built, we opened this 68-unit affordable apartment building with on-site, regulated child care in Rexdale. For the hundreds of women and children who have come through our doors, Bergamot has provided stability they can afford and the security necessary to plan their futures and rebuild.
- Enjoy the holiday season by visiting our **International Boutique** for all of your fair trade goods! Proceeds from sales support overseas projects that improve the lives of women and girls. The boutique is located at 81 St. Clair Ave. E.

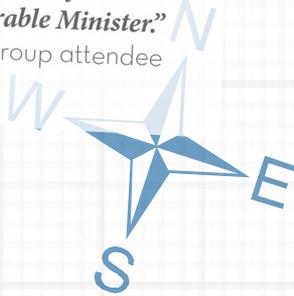
**PHOTOS** | (ABOVE) DOLORES MONTAVEZ-RUZ, YWCA TORONTO MANAGER; ALISON DAVIES, BELLEVILLE SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTRE, JULIA DEANS, FUTURPRENEUR CANADA, MPP CRISTINA MARTINS.

## GENDER MATTERS

■ Women from our Employment and Training programs had a unique opportunity to sit down with the Honourable Indira Naidoo-Harris, Minister of the Status of Women, for a discussion on women's economic empowerment. Participants shared their hopes and ideas for government action to improve women's lives.

*"I was not sure what to expect going into this discussion, but I am so glad I attended... When the Minister spoke, we could tell she cared and she spoke with so much conviction that it gave us hope, hope that the changes being spoken of could actually happen. I am so grateful to YWCA Toronto for giving me and the other participants such a valuable opportunity to share our ideas and to hear from someone as influential as the Honourable Minister."*

— Nirvana, discussion group attendee



## CREATING SYSTEMIC CHANGE ADVOCACY



PHOTO: COLETTE PREVOST, YWCA TORONTO DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATIONS, HEATHER MCGREGOR, YWCA TORONTO CEO, RAINE LILIEFELDT YWCA CANADA DIRECTOR, AND MAYA ROY, YWCA CANADA CEO REPRESENTING YWCA LEADERS ON PARLIAMENT HILL IN OTTAWA.

**Colette Prevost, Director of Advocacy and Communications**, represented our Association at the National Conference on Ending Homelessness in Winnipeg.

In her presentation, she applied a gender-lens taking into account hidden homelessness, including women living in violent situations and those in precarious, sub-standard housing. In her contributions to a panel discussion, Colette advanced the importance of a National Housing Strategy that addresses the lived experience of women who are challenged by systemic barriers to permanent, safe and affordable housing. Now is the time to act on housing.

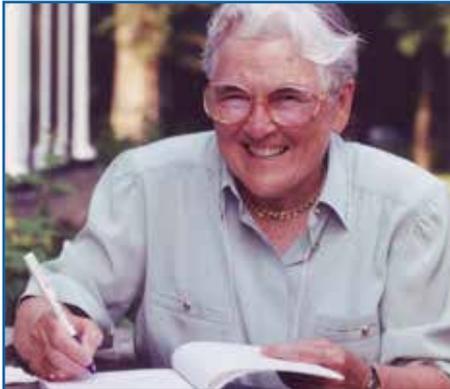
**A new federal strategy to eliminate gender-based violence**



We proudly hosted the Honourable Maryam Monsef, Minister of Status of Women, for the unveiling of Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence. As our CEO Heather McGregor made clear in her remarks, we believe survivors. We believe all women who have courageously raised their voices to say 'me too.' This strategy is an important step forward and we appreciate its focus on increasing support for survivors and their families and the promotion of responsive legal and justice systems, including judicial training.

# Remembering HELEN GURNEY

## (October 16, 1918 - October 28, 2017)



A lifelong educator, mentor, and advocate for women, especially in the field of sports, Helen was a treasured and longtime supporter of YWCA Toronto. Recognized as a YWCA Toronto Woman of Distinction in 1990, Helen spent her life breaking down barriers to full gender equity.

Through her actions and generosity, Helen demonstrated her deep concerns for the rights and well-being of women. There was a special place in her

heart for girls and young women. Helen recognized that their lives are still ahead of them and she deeply believed in their potential, once given a helping hand or the right opportunities. That is why, in addition to leaving a generous bequest to YWCA Toronto girls and young women's programming and her annual Turning Point Partner gift, each December Helen would quietly remember the young women spending the holiday season in our shelters, with an additional gift to provide "something a little extra for the girls at Christmas," as she would put it.

Those of us at YWCA Toronto who had the good fortune regularly to spend time with Helen came to know her as an engaging storyteller of her long life, well lived, on her own terms. We have all gained from her wisdom and the example she set and will miss her amazing sense of humour. ■

## CELEBRATION OF PHILANTHROPY

On November 8th, YWCA Toronto celebrated the kindness and generosity of our wonderful supporters with our annual Celebration of Philanthropy which coincided with the 5th anniversary of the Elm Centre. Over 80 guests enjoyed lovely food and drinks and heard from an engaging panel on the Future of Affordable Housing.

**PHOTOS** | (TOP TO BOTTOM) ETANA CAIN, YWCA TORONTO MANAGER OF ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATIONS; MARGIE CARLSON, ONTARIO NON-PROFIT HOUSING ASSOCIATION; TIM HACKBORN, NISHNAWBE HOMES; AND, SEAN GADON, CITY OF TORONTO. FORMER CO-CHAIRS OF THE ELM CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CABINET DIANE WALKER AND ARLENE PERLY RAE; LINDA GRAHAM, TURNING POINT PARTNER DONOR AND FRIEND, INEKE MOXAM.





## SPOTLIGHT ON PHILANTHROPY



### NOTHING LITTLE ABOUT EDELMAN'S "LITTLE GIVE"

We were thrilled to have been chosen a second time to be the recipient of Edelman Toronto's "The Little Give." On November 2nd and 3rd over 100 Edelman Toronto staff devoted their valuable time, enormous talent, resources and passion to supporting the women and girls at six YWCA Toronto locations. In addition to giving over 1,000 volunteer hours, Edelman donated over \$35,000 in cash and gifts-in-kind. Their hard work, compassion, respect and love has left a lasting impression on all of us and the women we serve.

### GETTING TO THE HEART OF DATA

We thank Environics Analytics, under the leadership of longtime supporter Jan Kestle, for generously donating about \$40,000 worth of their time and expertise to assist our Philanthropy Department in an analysis of our database. This kind of deep analysis allows us to understand our donors and how we can serve them better. It also helps identify promising prospective donors and informs innovative fundraising campaigns. We are extremely grateful to Jan and the Environics team for their insights and strategic data advice and look forward to new campaigns based on solid data acumen.



## YWCA TORONTO WOMEN OF DISTINCTION



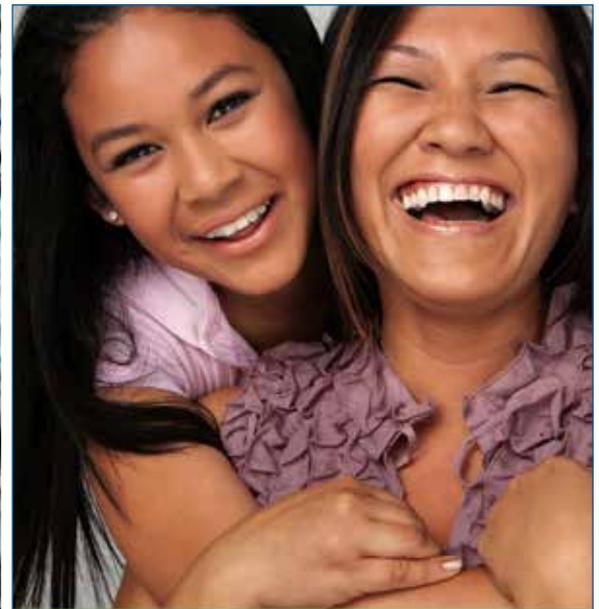
PRESENTED BY



### *Be Inspired!*

For more information, contact Phoebe Wong, Manager of Events, Sponsorships and Volunteers at [pwong@ywcatoronto.org](mailto:pwong@ywcatoronto.org) or 416.961.8101 x361

[www.womenofdistinction.com](http://www.womenofdistinction.com)



# ADOPT-A-FAMILY

BECAUSE *EVERY* WOMAN DESERVES SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR HER FAMILY

[ywcatoronto.org/adopt](http://ywcatoronto.org/adopt)

Celebrate the Women in Your Life this Holiday Season

Make a donation in their honour to YWCA Toronto.

**CHANGE A LIFE.**

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

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO  
YWCA TORONTO | 87 ELM STREET TORONTO, ON M5G 0A8



# YWCA TORONTO

Helps women and girls achieve equality, economic sustainability and lives free from violence.

*Donate today!*  
[ywcatoronto.org](http://ywcatoronto.org)



## Your help is needed now more than ever!

- YES, I want to help women and children
  - \$20  \$50  \$100  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- YES, I would like to join the **Fresh Start Monthly Giving Plan** with a gift on the 15th of each month of:
  - \$10  \$15  \$20  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### PAYMENT PREFERENCE

- My cheque to YWCA Toronto, is enclosed
- I authorize YWCA Toronto to withdraw my monthly gift from my chequing account and I have enclosed a 'VOID' cheque
- Please charge my credit card
  - Visa  MasterCard  Amex

\_\_\_\_\_  
CREDIT CARD NUMBER

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PERSONAL PHONE NUMBER

- I would like to receive the Turning Points newsletter by email
- I have remembered YWCA Toronto in my Will
- I would like information about remembering YWCA Toronto in my Will

**MAKE YOUR DONATION AT [YWCATORONTO.ORG](http://YWCATORONTO.ORG)**

**Receipts are issued for all donations of \$10 or more.  
Thank you for your support!**

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