

For Immediate Release  
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## Senator and Noted Philanthropist Supports Housing for Women

In advance of International Women's Day, YWCA Toronto is pleased to announce a generous gift of \$1 million from one of Canada's leading women's advocates, Senator Nancy Ruth. The Senator's gift will support the YWCA Elm Centre, the YWCA's new \$80 million affordable and supportive housing complex for women and their families, as well as families of Aboriginal ancestry, her name gracing the 200-seat theatre.

Senator Nancy Ruth says "*Now more than ever, our City needs projects such as the YWCA Elm Centre, which demonstrate that the solution to poverty is affordable, permanent housing, not just more shelters for women. I'm thrilled to be a supporter and applaud the YWCA for taking leadership on this issue. Further, there are many women in our city who have the means and desire to affect change, and I challenge them to step up and support the YWCA at this critical time.*"

Nancy Ruth, a YWCA Woman of Distinction (1988), has long been a leader in the women's community. As an advocate of social change in Canada, she has co-founded many organizations including the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF), the Canadian Women's Foundation (CWF), Toronto's The Linden School, the Women's Future Fund and the Charter of Rights Coalition. Nancy's history with the YWCA runs deep. Her grandmother, Nellie Langford Rowell, was a national YWCA President, and her mother, Mary Coyne Rowell Jackman, also a YWCA Woman of Distinction (1988), was a long-time YWCA volunteer.

YWCA's CEO, Heather McGregor says, "International Women's Day is a major day of global celebration for the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future, so it is timely that we recognize Nancy's philanthropy in support of women. Nancy is a long-time friend of the YWCA and was the first person to commit her philosophical and financial support to the YWCA Elm Centre. Her leadership gift has also been instrumental in gaining the early support of others, and we are grateful."

With construction underway and completion scheduled for 2011, the YWCA Elm Centre will provide 300 new homes in partnership with Wigwamen Incorporated and The Jean Tweed Centre. It will also become a hub for women-focused programming and activities, featuring the 200-seat theatre, a reception hall and courtyard, a Women's Resource Centre, restaurant and retail space.

Since 1873, YWCA Toronto has offered women supportive, affordable well maintained housing. Currently the largest association by, for, and about women and girls in the city, YWCA Toronto provides a range of housing options for women and their families - from emergency shelter and transitional housing to permanent apartments. In 2008, 1,310 individuals (women and their families) called the YWCA home.

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