



YWCA DECEMBER 6 FUND HISTORY

The December 6 Fund had its inception in 1990, with the December 6 Coalition. The Coalition held commemorative events each year to mark the Montreal Massacre, including selling “red rose” buttons in TTC stations across Toronto and distributing pamphlets to raise public awareness about violence against women.

In 1994, the group began to consider the ways in which micro loans (a concept created by the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh) would help women leaving abusive situations acquire the items necessary to make the transition from abusive homes to living independently in greater safety. In the first few years, all monies for the loans came from button sales and amounted to three to five loans per year. Eventually, the group began to fundraise more vigorously, becoming a registered charity under the name December 6 Fund of Toronto, and grew into an organization with the potential to serve many more women and their children each year. The Fund was the first interest-free revolving-loan fund to assist abused women in Canada and remains unique in its mandate.

Throughout its history, December 6 Fund of Toronto never received core funding. Each year the Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers struggled to raise enough money to give out loans and administratively operate the Fund. The Board was committed to making the work of December 6 Fund sustainable so that it could continue to provide women with interest-free loans and help them build lives free from violence. It became clear that the best way to do this was to find a stable, like-minded, feminist organization to take over the Fund, continue to nurture this important work and see it grow. YWCA Toronto is thrilled to have been approached and as of April 1, 2007 the Fund became the YWCA December 6 Fund.

The Fund’s mission remains the same: to raise money to make loans available to women leaving abusive situations and conduct public awareness campaigns aimed at ending violence against women.

Since 1994, the Fund has helped more than 900 women leave violent situations. In 2009, the December 6 Fund gave out \$55,953 in loans, assisting 93 women and 127 children to flee violence and re-build their lives in safety.

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In 2004, the Toronto Community Foundation profiled the December 6 Fund in its “Vital Ideas” report as an example of a unique, innovative charity addressing a need not being met by any other organization in Toronto and making a real difference in the community.

The YWCA December 6 Fund is generously supported by donors, the United Way of Greater Toronto, United Way of Peel Region, Royal LePage Shelter Foundation, and the Canadian Women’s Foundation.

Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Montréal Massacre

On December 6, 1989, Marc Lépine entered the L' École Polytechnique, in Montréal, Quebec, separated the men from the women, declared his hatred for feminists and killed 14 women.

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