

OCTOBER 2026



turning points

IMPACT
REPORT

NAVIGATING GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE AS A NEWCOMER



YWCA
TORONTO

NATIONAL ADVOCACY.
COMMUNITY ACTION.



United Way
Greater Toronto
FUNDED AGENCY

Illustrations Designed Using Freepik



A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

TURNING POINTS NEWSLETTER

Charitable Business
#10822 9865 RROOOI

Publication Mail
Agreement #40932523



I am truly honoured to be speaking to you, our valued partners and supporters, as the new CEO of YWCA Toronto. I have admired this organization and its dedicated community of supporters for many years, and stepping into this role feels meaningful and humbling. Thank you for your unwavering solidarity in making this organization a vital sanctuary and a force for justice where women, girls and gender diverse individuals can find safety, support and community.

My own journey as an advocate and lawyer has been guided by an unyielding commitment to intersectionality, social justice, human rights and the profound understanding that collective care and systemic continuity are the bedrocks of lasting transformation. I am energized to join the exceptional teams here, to build upon our legacy, and to work alongside you to co-create a future of deep care and respect.

YWCA Toronto's strength lies in its commitment to equity and in recognizing the intersecting realities that shape the lives of women, girls and gender diverse people. In this issue of *Turning Points*, we will explore one of these intersections: that of immigration and gender-based violence. Supporting survivors to navigate this complex and distinct set of circumstances has been particularly important to me throughout my career, and I am proud that YWCA Toronto has so many robust resources for survivors woven into the fabric of our programs and services.

Thank you for welcoming me so warmly to YWCA Toronto. I am truly grateful for the generosity, openness and kindness I have already experienced from this incredible community. I feel hopeful and confident about the path ahead and grateful to be walking it with you.

Deepa Mattoo,
YWCA Toronto CEO, LL.B, MBA, LSM



NAVIGATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AS A NEWCOMER

Escaping abuse can be difficult for any survivor, involving immense resources and risk. When that experience of violence intersects with migration or displacement to a new country, it creates a unique set of circumstances that complicate a survivor's ability to find safety and move forward.

In these scenarios, abusers often use isolation, lack of familiarity with the new country, and even the immigration process itself, to maintain control and cause harm. At times, survivors are left struggling to access resources and fearing deportation if they leave their abuser.

Adding to a survivor's challenges is that when Canadian society acknowledges this intersection, it often positions the violence as a product of a foreign culture instead of acknowledging it, more accurately, as a broad societal

problem that transcends immigration status and race.

Carol Hines-DaCosta, manager of YWCA Toronto Women's Shelter, shares that her staff see these very issues in the shelter, adding that those waiting for official refugee status face additional complexities.

"There aren't many programs that are available to people without status," she shares.

YWCA Toronto also connects with newcomer survivors as they seek other types of community programs and services.

"Although YWCA Toronto's JUMP programs are primarily settlement and employment programs," says Nicole Sutherland, manager of JUMP Scarborough and Etobicoke, "participants often turn to one of our trusted staff members when

experiencing violence or abuse."

In both our emergency shelters and community programs, staff take a holistic approach to providing care, working collaboratively with newcomer participants facing violence to develop individualized safety plans, find housing, navigate Canadian social systems, and connect with additional resources such as English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, immigration supports and child care—all within a non-judgmental, trauma-informed environment.

For one survivor attending YWCA Toronto's Skills Development Centre (SDC), this approach empowered her not

only to escape violence but also to embark on a new journey as an entrepreneur.

"You could actually see her stand so much taller," recalls Skills Development Centre (SDC) program manager, Jasmine Rosario, of this participant. "Her confidence bloomed."

We know that when we acknowledge and seek to understand the intersecting facets of a survivor's experiences, we can provide them with supports that truly meet their needs. At YWCA Toronto, we are so grateful to the funders and donors who share in this understanding and support these life-changing programs.

The Heather M. McGregor Fund: A THANK YOU



We would like to express our deep gratitude to everyone who has given to the *Heather M. McGregor Fund* since its launch last year.

Your generosity has raised more than **\$631,000** and will allow YWCA Toronto to remain nimble, strong and innovative as we honour the incredible 30-year legacy of our retired *Chief Executive Officer, Heather McGregor*.



YWCA Toronto's 2026 Distinction Award Recipients (L-R), Kehkashan Basu, Jenny Ahn, Chinyere Eni, Janice Rubin, Ellen Kanika Tsi Tsa Blais, Juana Berinstein and Sara Asalya.

Thank You!

Our deepest appreciation goes out to our sponsors, table and ticket purchasers, silent auction and Create Change donors, and the many volunteers whose efforts ensured YWCA Toronto's 45th Annual Distinction Awards, presented by Elmwood Spa and Bangkok Garden, was truly an evening of hope, inspiration and impact.

Your contributions helped raise more than \$480,000 to fund vital YWCA Toronto programs and services that help women, girls and gender diverse people flee violence, secure housing, find jobs and transform their lives.

Thank you for your generosity and for joining us in celebrating the accomplishments of seven extraordinary champions of gender equity. We look forward to welcoming you next year in May, 2027 at YWCA Toronto's 46th Distinction Awards.

THANK YOU TO OUR WONDERFUL SPONSORS

PRESENTING

Elmwood Spa |
Bangkok Garden

CHAMPION

Dawson Partners
TD Bank Group

CREATE CHANGE

Hilditch Architect Inc.

TRIBUTE

Deloitte
RBC

PATRON

Cavalluzzo LLP
Healthcare Insurance
Reciprocal of Canada

VOLUNTEER

Cidel Asset
Management

MEDIA

The Globe and Mail

OFFICIAL JEWELLER

FTJCo Fine
Jewellery
with Integrity



WHO INSPIRES YOU? WE WANT TO CELEBRATE THEM!

Help us honour remarkable changemakers who are advancing the lives of women, girls, and gender diverse people by nominating the next YWCA Toronto Distinction Award recipient!

**Nomination deadline:
Monday, November 2, 2026**

Scan the QR code to submit a nomination.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Anna Borges, Manager of Events and Volunteers
aborges@ywcatoronto.org | 416.961.8101 x365
<https://www.ywcatoronto.org/distinctionawards>



YWCA
TORONTO

NATIONAL ADVOCACY.
COMMUNITY ACTION.



United Way
Greater Toronto
FUNDING AGENCY



DONOR LOVE JOAN AND JERRY LOZINSKI

Giving back to the community is fundamental for Joan Lozinski, OC, and Jerry Lozinski, OC. For over a decade, this couple has generously supported YWCA Toronto and were some of the first donors to act when our programs required urgent pandemic aid in 2020. We recently spoke with Joan about her and Jerry's philanthropy.

Tell us about how you became involved with YWCA Toronto.

In 2015, I was asked to come for lunch to consider supporting YWCA Toronto. The need at that time was for a secure entry system at the Elm Centre building so that residents would feel safe from threat should they be in the outdoor courtyard. Jerry and I knew, as we all do, that gender-based violence is a serious problem in society, unfortunately. It was really the first time we were being asked directly and personally to take note and take action, which we did.

You and Jerry have been incredibly generous and valued members of YWCA Toronto's community for over a decade. What keeps you engaged?

After our initial donation, YWCA staff reached out and arranged a visit for Jerry and me to view the 1st Stop Woodlawn and Elm Centre facilities. We learned a lot about YWCA Toronto's programs, like the quick access to shelter, affordable housing, child care and special employment training, which participants could use to move forward and support themselves in a new life, a safer life. We liked what we were learning about YWCA Toronto, its various programs, its challenges, its successes, so it was just obvious that we would continue to support.

Are there any of our programs and services that you are particularly glad to support?

We tend to make a general donation to the organization, leaving it to the very core qualified staff, who impress us with their knowledge, to determine where the biggest current need is. Whenever we have visited, we have felt confident that the staff are very well trained, and if we were in that situation ourselves, these would be the kind of people we would feel comfortable explaining our situation to and asking for help.

You also support a number of other wonderful organizations at both local and national levels. Why do you think it is important to give back?

Jerry and I were both taught by our parents that one gives back to the community as one can, by volunteering time, raising money, making donations or advocating for change. By becoming actively involved now while we are alive, we can see how our donations are making positive changes. An example is at Canada's National Ballet School where we provided the seed money for their community dance programs, now the Lozinski Centre for Community Dance. We are so proud that our initial donation indicated a belief in the relevance and importance of this program, which galvanized government, corporations and individuals to contribute as well.

What difference do you hope your gifts make?

Our most recent gift was in honour of the retiring CEO, Heather McGregor, which we hope indicates to her our gratitude for many years of excellent leadership of YWCA Toronto. And I know that those monies will be put to good use. Lives will be turned around. We all have a basic right to live our lives well, in safe conditions and with the confidence to look after ourselves and our children. Sometimes we need help to get there, so if by supporting YWCA Toronto, it helps people to heal, to learn, and to move confidently on to a better place, that will be very satisfying for us.

Thank you, Joan and Jerry, for your trust and for helping to empower women, girls and gender diverse people across Toronto.