



NATIONAL ADVOCACY.
COMMUNITY ACTION.

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF IMPACT ANNUAL REPORT 2023

A person wearing a red dress stands with their back to the camera in a misty forest. The scene is dimly lit, with tall, thin trees visible in the background. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

YWCA Cambridge is located on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to the Haudenosaunee people of the Six Nations, which includes six miles on either side of the Grand River. This unceded territory is the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg and Haudenosaunee Peoples.

We acknowledge the rich histories and ways of knowing of the Indigenous peoples of these lands who lived on them and had their own governance structures and ways of knowing for thousands of years before European colonizers arrived. We acknowledge that colonization was a genocidal practice and that Indigenous peoples were not in need of “civilizing” by colonizers. We acknowledge that a part of colonization was murdering and displacing Indigenous peoples from their lands and their communities, from their languages and ways of knowing, from their families. We acknowledge the enduring richness of Indigenous cultures despite the colonial project, and we honour that resilience and power.

We commit to using this understanding to inform our work to ensure we do not perpetuate the harms of colonization and instead work to repair them. We commit to continuously investigating our policies, practices and our long history to come to terms with and acknowledge the harms we’ve participated in or even propagated, and to truly, intentionally and genuinely do the work of reconciliation. We commit to being a part of a society that creates a roadmap to reconciliation.

WHAT GUIDES OUR WORK

As a member agency of YWCA Canada, YWCA Cambridge is part of a national movement known as the country's oldest and largest women's multi-service organization, the largest national provider of shelter, literacy, life skills, employment and counselling programs, and is the second largest provider of child care services in Canada. For over 75 years, YWCA Cambridge has been a respected leader on issues that impact women and girls in our community.

MISSION

YWCA Cambridge, a trusted community leader, gives a voice to the needs of women, girls and gender-diverse individuals through innovative and responsive programs, services and advocacy.

VISION

Through leadership, advocacy and program and service delivery, YWCA Cambridge will influence communities to ensure all cis and trans women and girls and non-binary and two-spirit individuals are respected, valued and equal.

OUR CORE VALUES



Accountability



**Community
Mindedness**



Equity



Accessibility



**Self
Determination**



Inclusion

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OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

EXECUTIVE TEAM

Chief Executive Officer

Kim Decker

Director of Finance, Administration

Mary Wright

Director of Communications and Advocacy

Rosalind Gunn

Director of Philanthropy

Nataleigh Ballantyne

Director of Programs

Kate Taylor

Director of Child Care Services

Kristina Lyman

CORE SUPPORT TEAM

Project Manager

Zoe Whitman

Wigg Coordinator and Graphic Designer

Kristen Gaudet

Manager of Advocacy

Jennifer Gordon

PROGRAM STAFF

Uplift Coordinator

Ashley Locke

Small Steps to Success Program Coordinator

Sara Hohenadel

Small Steps to Success Outreach Coordinator

Terra MacDonald

SHYFT Program Facilitator

Shannon Thoms

SHYFT Program Facilitator

Caitlyn Jaipersaud

Roots of Empathy Coordinator

Lili Galbraith

CHILD CARE CENTRE SUPERVISORS

Kim Whalen
Wendy Gilchrist
Gillian Scott
Susan Mathers
Fatma Elhefney

CHILD CARE CENTRE ASSISTANT SUPERVISORS

Katrina O`Brien
Laura Einwechter
Mellissa Slade



FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT & CEO

October 2023 marked the 75th anniversary of YWCA Cambridge. In looking back over our history we wanted to take this time to share some thoughts and highlights.

It is most important to recognize the work of the women who came before us and on whose shoulders we stand today. We remember a group of four women who met to talk about establishing a YWCA in Galt. It was those four women who met over tea at the Iroquois Hotel with the Galt Women's Association who gifted those four women the property so that a YWCA could be established in our community. It is hard to imagine the barriers they faced and yet they never gave up or gave in to external pressure. We remember the women who gathered in a basement to make posters and marched for reproductive rights. We remember the women who reminded us of our responsibility to support our sister YWCAs around the world. We remember all of the women who fought large and small battles for social justice and gender equity. All of these women left a legacy of perseverance, tenacity, courage and strength. It is our responsibility to carry on that important legacy as we think about how we want to envision our community today and in the future.



Norma McDonald Ewing
Board President



Kim Decker
Chief Executive Officer

We are committed to providing leadership opportunities for young women and gender diverse folks to ensure that YWCA Cambridge continues to meet the ever changing needs of the folks who access our programs and services.

Many exciting things happened in 2023. One significant win was, after a year of research, planning and public education, we received approval from the Region of Waterloo to open a shelter for unhoused women in Cambridge. We are anxious to share the details with the community as we move forward with our plans.

It is a privilege for both of us to have had the opportunity to lead YWCA Cambridge. We continue to honour the women who were our past, the women and gender diverse folks who are leading change today and the young women and gender diverse folks who will carry this legacy into the future. We are excited to see where the next 75 years will take us!



2023 Board of Directors

President

Norma McDonald Ewing

Treasurer

Darlene Sigel

Members

*Ailish McIntyre
Valerie Pollard
Meagan Swan
Stacey Colliver
Naomi Ma
Melissa Kennedy*

Past-President

Christine Vigna

Secretary

Sue Sturdy

75 Years at YWCA Cambridge



W. C. A. OPEN HOUSE



YWCA CAMBRIDGE IN THE NEWS

CAMBRIDGETODAY .ca

"Local groups committed to ending sexual assault and human trafficking"



"New Research Calls for Women's-Only Shelter in Cambridge"

TheRecord.com

"Women in Cambridge deserve better': New research calls for dedicated women's shelter in Cambridge"

CAMBRIDGETODAY .ca

"YWCA Cambridge raises red flags over child care funding formula"

CAMBRIDGETODAY .ca

"Speaker Series Helps YWCA Cambridge Keep Spotlight on Women's Homelessness"

CAMBRIDGETODAY .ca

"Prevention a Focal Point for YWCA Cambridge's Walk A Mile"

CAMBRIDGETODAY .ca

"YWCA Cambridge to keep Women's International Gift and Gallery alive"

TheRecord.com

Op ed: "Dear Men, I'm saving you a spot at the next vigil"



"'Cambridge is a Service Desert' YWCA Seeks Support for Women's Shelter"

CAMBRIDGETODAY .ca

"YWCA Cambridge announces Women of Distinction Award winners"



"Intimate partner violence an epidemic, Region of Waterloo councillors declare in motion"

ADVOCACY

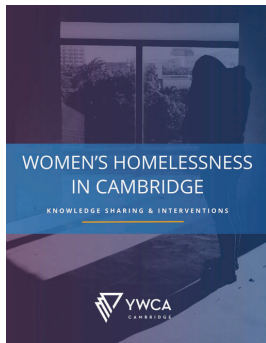
Advancing gender equity and justice

At YWCA Cambridge, advocacy rooted in advancing gender and socio-economic equity is a core part of our work. Through policy analysis, advocacy campaigns, research and coalition building, we work to build a community in which everyone feels safe, valued and equal.

In 2023, we didn't let up on our relentless efforts to advance gender equitable change. In fact, we redoubled our efforts by advocating for and successfully receiving endorsement from the Region of Waterloo to open the first women's emergency homeless shelter in Cambridge.



2023 Advocacy in Action



Read it
Here



Published new research exploring the **service desert** in Cambridge as it relates to women's homelessness.

Made the case and received Regional Council support for the establishment of the first **women's emergency homeless shelter in Cambridge.**

Hosted numerous public education and panel events on issues related to **women's homelessness** and **gender-based violence.**

Wrote and signed dozens of **letters** and submissions to **provincial and federal leaders** on issues relating to **child care, gender equity, women's homelessness** and **budgets.**



Joined YWCAs from across Canada for our annual **Day on the Hill**, meeting federal ministers and senators to call for increased funding to address the **crisis of women's homelessness in Canada.**

A YEAR OF MILESTONES & RECOGNITION



YWCA Ontario, a coalition of Ontario YWCAs which engages in collective advocacy work, received the “**Strong Voice for Women**” advocacy award for all of their shared advocacy over 2022-2023.

Our CEO Kim Decker was also recognized with a **Cambridge Chamber of Commerce award** for her community leadership.



At the 131st Annual Members Meeting of YWCA Canada, YWCA Cambridge was honoured with a plaque commemorating its **75 years of operating** in Cambridge.

CEO Kim Decker was recognized by the **Carolyn B Bray Award** for spirit, dedication and creativity.



BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR

START TODAY

“——
I will do anything I can to help this
wonderful organization. I am so proud to
be associated with the YWCA Cambridge”

- Lynn Spence, supporter and volunteer



NATIONAL ADVOCACY.
COMMUNITY ACTION.



EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

Building Foundations for Children's Futures

2023 saw many developments in our child care department. Our St Margaret location got a brand new playground, funded by the Region of Waterloo, featuring a “mud kitchen,” picnic tables, sandbox shade sails and an abundance of play-based structures and materials.



The department also explored internal and personal dynamics through capacity training. Training supported supervisors in raising self awareness, conflict navigation and more. Staff appreciated getting to know each other more deeply while learning about different communication and conflict styles. One staff member said of the capacity training, **“the opportunity to learn more about myself has been life-changing for me. I am more confident in my abilities at work and in my personal life.”**

“

The skills that my child has learned over the past few years has been amazing to see. We struggled with gross motor skills and speech delay, and I am so happy to see her flourishing!

- Summer camp parent



415 Licensed Child Care Spaces, five child care centres

Our child care department has also been focusing on bringing to life the **Reggio Emilia approach** to early childhood education. This approach focuses on environment as educator, on each child as unique and full of potential. It sees the child's role in the classroom as learning through exploration, self-expression and collaboration with educators and peers.

Our Woodland Park - like all of our centres - location encourages artistic exploration among children, as pictured above. Educators had shown the children examples of paintings by Picasso, Monet, Van Gogh and Dali. Inspired by the larger-than life murals they saw, the children asked to completely cover the room and to paint their creations, and so they did exactly that!

SUMMER CAMP

Providing Summer Camps for 60+ years

At YWCA Cambridge, summer camp is about more than providing fun activities. Each year, we welcome more than **600 summer campers** to Shade's Mills Conservation Area. Our team works to ensure every single camper feels welcome, safe, supported and empowered to learn and grow while building new friendships and skills.

“

My child was not accepted in other camps due to his high behavioural needs, but he is thriving in your camp and we love coming back each year!

You have helped my child gain more confidence and provided support beyond what I would have expected. Thank you for going above and beyond for our children and keeping them safe!

”

A LEGACY OF LONG-TIME SUPPORTERS

We asked our longest-serving supporters what keeps them committed to YWCA Cambridge after all these years

My involvement with the YWCA over the years has been varied from observer to participant to financial supporter. I think what is remarkable to me is that the Y work is going on all the time and often quietly out of sight. Vulnerable people are being supported and encouraged to participate wholeheartedly in their lives...Our community is stronger, one individual at a time, thanks to the YWCA's many programs.

- Ruth Legate Exon, donor

At the very beginning of the inception of the YW in 1948, my 16-year-old Mother took up residence in the Women's Residence on Cambridge Street...When I became a parent, it was the place to go for excellent preschool care. That is when I became a volunteer instructing sessions for Exploring Nature with Children, serving on the YW Board and becoming a YW Board Chair. Our daughter also served on the board... The work of the Cambridge YWCA is so vital in our community.

- Ann Van Norman, volunteer and donor

THE W

Women's and Youth Programming



“ —

“I like how here we can share openly. I know that here I can say how I really feel or not share at all if I don't want to.”

– Participant age 10

THE W

Participant-led, free of charge programming

Gender-based violence prevention, education and awareness is offered to youth of all genders ages 6+ through presentations and workshops available free to local schools, community-based programs and spaces throughout **Waterloo Region**. Workshops engage youth in **open dialogue** and activities that reflect real life scenarios in order to increase **awareness** and **critical thinking** around **gender-based violence** and its impacts, while **creating safer communities for all**. Workshops include **gender and socialization**, **healthy relationships**, **consent** and **bystander intervention**.

3,056

Individuals reached across all women's and youth programming by The W

550

Youth reached through GBV Prevention workshops

717

Individuals reached through financial literacy programming

56

Programs offered

29

In-school presentations

1,400

Youth reached through programming

389

Adults reached through employment programming

Jodi's Story

Small steps make big things happen

"I have so much confidence now and I don't want it to stop," Jodi said.

Her journey with YWCA Cambridge began in early 2023 when she was referred to our pre-employment and life skills program, **Small Steps to Success**. Jodi hadn't worked since 2010 when she registered for our program.

"It's been a hard journey to get where I am today, to be honest."

"[I had a] rough upbringing, lack of education – I maybe have my grade 8." Raising two children on her own and without higher education made it incredibly difficult for Jodi to find work. "I hadn't worked in almost 20 years," she said.

"I was a stay-at-home mom. It was very stressful trying to bring up my kids. My husband was a truck driver, never home and an alcoholic."

Jodi found herself falling into her own addictions, eventually leaving her husband and moving to Cambridge to start a new life. "I have been clean and sober since."

Her upbringing was "not a great one," Jodi says. She was adopted at age three to a family with whom she lived until she was 15 when she was removed by Family and Children's Services. She struggled with her mental health in her youth, but the supports weren't there for her. "No one believed me. My counselling stopped when I moved to Cambridge."

Jodi credits the YWCA Cambridge Small Steps to Success program for helping her set her life on a good path forward. The 12-week pre-employment and life skills program has given her the confidence she needed to move forward. She had her Small Steps work placement at **Reid's Chocolates** where she thrived. In fact, following her placement, Reid's asked her to stay on as an employee and she loves her job.



ROOTS OF EMPATHY

Building empathy among children

Roots of Empathy is a world-renowned, evidence-based social and emotional literacy program. At the heart of the program is a local family and their baby, our “tiny teacher.” As the students witness the baby’s emotional and physical milestones, they learn more about the baby and themselves. This program plays an integral role in helping students to express themselves and understand the perspectives of their classmates in a risk free learning environment.

The pictures below are of a VIP event hosted by the Roots of Empathy head office in a classroom at a Guelph school where our newest instructor delivers the ROE program. The director of Roots of Empathy from Toronto, Allison Wesley, as well as press and Wellington County Catholic School Board officials were in attendance.

18

Programs

500+

*Students
Reached*



Sold Out
Event!

WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARDS

R2023 saw another incredible slate of Women of Distinction Award nominees (bottom right photo above). The selection committee had the difficult task of assessing all nomination packages and selecting the 2023 recipients. The awards gala, hosted at Langdon Hall Country House Hotel & Spa, was a gorgeous evening of celebration, story-telling and fun!

Congratulations to the nominees and recipients of the 2023 Women of Distinction Awards.



2023

Award Recipients

- Stephanie Pearsall
- Olivia Bluhm - **Young Trailblazer Award**
- Joe-Ann McComb - **Lifetime Achievement Award**
- Rana Mohammad - **President's Award**
- Rebecca Dickinson
- Shupi Mapuranga
- Ellie Hook
- Maria Empringham

WALK A MILE IN THEIR SHOES

Presented by Meridian Credit Union



\$12,800
Raised

64
Walkers

One Goal
End Gender-Based
Violence

2022 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

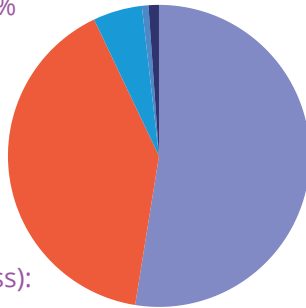
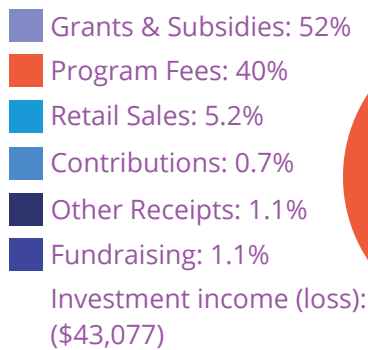
As of December 31, 2023

Revenues & Expenditures

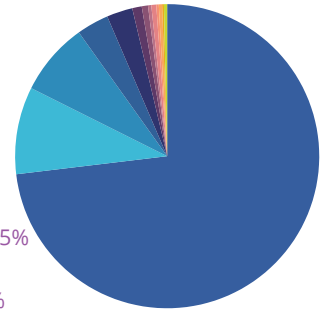
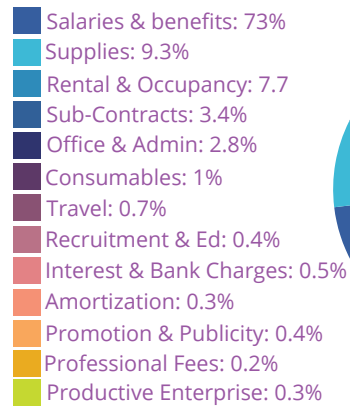
RECEIPTS		EXPENSES	
Grants & Subsidies	\$2,580,961	Salaries & Benefits	\$3,524,858
Program Fees	\$1,983,143	Supplies	\$446,641
Retail Sales	\$257,638	Rental & Occupancy	\$373,102
Contributions	\$35,078	Sub-Contracts	\$164,554
Other Receipts	\$45,082	Office & Admin	\$132,306
Fundraising	\$55,265	Consumables	\$48,925
Investment Income	(\$43,077)	Travel	\$31,925
TOTAL:	\$4,914,090	Recruitment & Education	\$17,027
		Interest & Bank Charges	\$24,850
		Amortization	\$12,778
		Promotion & Publicity	\$16,730
		Professional Fees	\$9,194
		Productive Enterprise	16,509
		TOTAL	\$4,819,399
Government Rebates			\$12,144
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER EXPENSES			\$106,835

2022 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

REVENUE



EXPENSES



Balance Sheet

ASSETS

Cash	\$1,189,833
Marketable Securities	\$1,049,341
Accounts Receivable	\$45,913
Inventory	\$138,230
HST Recoverable	\$62,042
Capital Assets (net of accumulated amortization)	\$94,416
TOTAL:	\$2,579,755

Liabilities & Net Assets

Accounts Payable	\$77,063
Government Remittances	\$2,327
Deferred Revenue	\$636,123
NET ASSETS	\$1,864,262
TOTAL:	\$2,579,775
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	
Excess of receipts over expenses	\$106,835
Transfers	-
TOTAL:	\$1,864,262

WOMEN'S
INTERNATIONAL
GIFT & GALLERY

Wigg

A YWCA CAMBRIDGE
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Women's International Gift & Gallery went fully online only in March 2023. Since then, we've hosted a number of successful pop-up in-person shops while maintaining our e-commerce website, wiggonline.com.

This social enterprise is a critical source of unrestricted funds for YWCA Cambridge. 100% of proceeds support our free, community based programming with women, girls and gender diverse individuals.

Shop online at [WIGGonline.com](https://wiggonline.com)



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

Government Funders, Foundations and Others



Federal Economic Development
Agency for Southern Ontario

Canada



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS

Corportate Sponsors and Others



“

The YW has shown a remarkable ability to adapt to the ever-changing needs of our community, evolving without straying from its foundational mission. This flexibility has kept the YWCA not just relevant but essential.

- Norma McDonald Ewing,
Current Board President, volunteer and donor



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Charitable Registration #: 11930 7387 RR0001

**Cover photo: a newspaper clipping of the original building which housed the newly established YWCA of Galt in 1948. The deed for the building was signed over by the Galt Women's Association to YWCA*