

ADVOCATE

DONOR & VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

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Message from the CEO: Advocate and serve

Exceptional programs and services that support women and families in the community have been the hallmark of the YWCA for generations. The strong relationships we have built with donors, partners, and funders, including government, enable us to serve but also to speak out for those who do not have a voice or when we feel our expertise can support changes in policy and culture.

Such an opportunity presented itself unexpectedly this year with the historic visit of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Minister of Veterans Affairs and MP for Calgary-Centre Kent Hehr, Premier Rachel Notley, and Darshan Kang, Member of Parliament for Calgary-Skyview to the YWCA on February 4, 2016.

During this visit YWCA Board member Nirmala Naidoo and I had the opportunity to highlight for multiple levels of government the continued need for affordable housing and financial supports for women and families who are

struggling, as well as accessible, affordable childcare.

The group participated in a tour of the YWCA's downtown facility that included a stop at the YWCA Winter emergency shelter program as well as one of our 29 Language



Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes.

The recognition that nonprofits have unique insights into the experiences of people who are struggling is pivotal to the work you, our donors, help us to do. It is our responsibility, as Calgary's largest and longest serving women's organization to bring those insights to the fore with policy makers and elected officials.

In this edition of the YWCA *Advocate* you will find stories about clients that your donations have assisted to build healthy lives; partners who work with the YWCA to provide services and enhance our community; examples of how the YWCA is striving to work more effectively; as well as upcoming opportunities for you to participate in events and activities.

It takes a village to make positive changes. Governments, individuals, and corporations are needed to ensure we achieve our vision of women thriving in a safe and equitable community.

Thank you for enabling us to continue supporting women and their families in Calgary.

Sue Tomney
Chief Executive Officer
YWCA of Calgary

Supporting newcomers part of our legacy

The challenges faced by Syrian refugees has been in the news for some time, but the YWCA has supported refugees and immigrants to Calgary for decades with language and employment skills as well as understanding of the Canadian workplace culture. Each have their own unique story when they arrive, and occasionally we are able to reconnect with some to hear how the YWCA helped them settle into their new country.

In 1992, after fleeing civil war in Ethiopia at the age of 19 and spending nearly a year in Europe waiting for a visa, Menna arrived in Calgary. She was excited to join her brothers, who were already living in the city, as well as restart her education and her life.

Living in downtown Calgary was new and as a young woman Menna was anxious to make new friends and integrate into her new community. Because of the YWCA's international reputation, Menna and her family knew the organization was available to help women with a variety of supports, including language classes that Menna hoped would make her transition easier.

Shortly after enrolling in the YWCA Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program it became apparent

to the instructor that Menna's language skills were beyond the level of other students. However, that didn't mean there weren't opportunities in the program for her to learn. "My instructor was able to meet me where I was at and respected what I was capable of doing," says Menna of her experience.



Through the creativity of her LINC instructor, Menna was introduced to the world of volunteering, something that was completely unknown to her before coming to Canada but has impacted her life in many ways.

"The idea of volunteering was new to me but opened so many doors," Menna shared. "Instead of being a student I became a volunteer program assistant at the YWCA. I would help other students, do office work, and was honored that they trusted me to come in during the holiday break to check for messages."

The learning, the respect and the connections Menna gained during her time at the YWCA led her to pursue other volunteer opportunities where her knowledge, her aspirations and her connection to her new community grew.

"My family, here and in Ethiopia are largely business professionals; none in a helping profession," Menna says. "My experiences with the YWCA and other organizations helped me realize I wanted to help others." Menna pursued her education and earned a Master's Degree in international social work.

Today, Menna leads a team that provides support to more than 75 non-profit organizations in Calgary, including ones instrumental in settlement and integration of refugees and newcomers to Canada. She is thrilled with the path she has taken in Calgary and encourages new refugees to explore volunteer work. "The connections you make will change your life and provide great resources, new friends and new opportunities."

Menna also encourages newcomers to pursue their education as it's the one tangible way they can make their dreams of a better future come true.

Partnering to bring meals and comfort

In 2015, Calgary Meals on Wheels celebrated 50 years of providing healthy and affordable food options to Calgarians in need. Since 1965, they have grown and expanded their food programs and are now known for delivering ‘more than a meal’ with more than 800 friendly volunteers and their growing community



connections including Calgary Fire Department, offering free smoke alarm inspections; Senior Secret Service, providing birthday and holidays gifts to clients; and more recently the YWCA of Calgary.

In the summer of 2015, YWCA team members visited the newly opened Meals on Wheels production facility for a tour and a discussion regarding a partnership that would provide healthy meals for up to 50 women each night at the YWCA Winter Emergency Response (WER) Program starting on November 1st.

“This partnership means that by doing what we do best; preparing and delivering healthy meals, the YWCA can focus on what they do best; providing safe and supportive shelter for women,” Janice Curtis, Calgary Meals on Wheels Executive Director says of the partnership.

Janice, and Meals on Wheels believe “YWCA clients are making an effort to create positive changes in their lives. Just arriving at the door to the YWCA is a step forward and good nutrition can have a big impact on their efforts to get back on track.”

Through the winter months Meals on Wheels volunteers have delivered sandwiches, yogurt and fruit to the YWCA gymnasium each day. In addition to the standard meals, the YWCA often receives extra food from the Meals on Wheels state of the art kitchen, as well as special holiday and weekend meals.

“We are thrilled to have established a relationship with Meals on Wheels. The food is high quality and exactly what the women at our winter shelter program need as they arrive each night,” says Ashley Jellema, Manager, YWCA Housing and Supports.

Much like the YWCA, every Meals on Wheels organization is independent, unique and responds to the needs in their community. Also much like the YWCA not everyone in the community understands the services they offer and the depth of engagement they provide.

Calgary Meals on Wheels’ programs, both short and long term, are available to any individuals, families and groups in Calgary. Through their five programs, including their Lunch and Supper Program, Frozen Program, Chopsticks Program and Soup Program, Meals on Wheels provided 425,000 meals in 2015.

By working with partners in the community Meals on Wheels is able to provide even more people with healthy meals, cheerful conversations, and special treats that brighten their lives. The partnership between the YWCA and Meals on Wheels demonstrates the added impact on individuals that can take place by working together.



Parent Link: Tools for successful parenting

YWCA Parent Link Corridor offers free early childhood development programs for families with young children. Supporting more than **2,700** families each year, stories such as Durga's are common.



Durga and her family moved to Calgary from India in 2011. While her husband worked full time as a software engineer, Durga cared for their young son and sought opportunities to help him thrive and connect with their new community.

During a routine checkup, a health care professional recommended the YWCA Parent Link Corridor programs. With further research, Durga discovered the programs were free and decided to attend

the Teddy Bear Picnic play group one afternoon.

She and her four year old son have been attending a variety of programs almost weekly since that first visit.

Durga says she's seen many positive changes in her son since their first day. Prior to attending YWCA Parent Link Corridor programs she says he only spoke two or three English words. Now his language skills have increased dramatically, which will help when he starts Kindergarten in the fall. She also noticed improvements in his social skills, with other children as well as adults.

"He loves attending the programs," laughs Durga. "If we miss a week, he says 'Why are you not taking me to the YWCA?'"

Durga recently started bringing her 16-month old daughter as well. Her daughter is a bit young to demonstrate the benefits but Durga thinks her progress will show as she grows. Durga feels the programs have stimulated bonding with both her children and she's attended some *Triple P

groups which have improved her skills as a parent. "The programs are a great way to meet other parents and feel connected to the community," Durga adds.

Andrea Desjardins, Child Development Counsellor says, "Durga has been very engaged in the programs and keen on learning about the importance of play and activities she can do at home that are fun and beneficial at the same time."

The YWCA Parent Link Corridor is now embarking on its tenth year of service and will continue to support families in Calgary to have healthy, positive experiences.

What is Triple P?

Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) is a world acclaimed program that gives parents the skills to manage misbehavior and prevent problems from the start.

From toddler tantrums to teenager defiance, from bedtime dramas to outright disobedience, Triple P helps parents sort through the big and small issues of family life – and raise happier, confident and healthy children.

Volunteers bring ideas and energy

The way organizations approach staffing has shifted over the past several years and as a result the YWCA has begun to implement a new staffing model. The concept represents a significant change for non-profits and takes the YWCA down a new bold path.

Traditionally, volunteers are treated as a resource that works for free. However, many of the systems and processes for hiring and managing paid staff and volunteers mirror one another so redundancies and inefficiencies have become apparent. To alleviate this the YWCA began to consider options around adopting the same processes for paid and unpaid staff.

Using this new integrated model, paid and unpaid staff are considered the same in all respects other than compensation. Volunteer management becomes people management; volunteer services becomes another component of human resources.

The evolution of the new model has resulted in opportunities for the organization that until recently could not have been imagined. We now have yoga instructors offering movement instruction to children in YWCA Child Care Centres; a career coach mentoring staff and assisting our People Services team; a facilitator

presenting a workshop on Change Management; and a team of HR professionals from the corporate community providing industry tips and interview support for YWCA Canadian Employment Skills students.

Additionally, a team of 10 volunteers worked side-by-side four YWCA internal departments to successfully operate a full-time donation receiving centre prior to Christmas this past year.

We now have research assistants to support our Clinical Services team, with the aim to present a report on domestic abuse theories that could work at the YWCA.

One such volunteer is Jamana, who has a background in Women's Studies and clinical research.

"Volunteering makes me feel that I am contributing towards supporting clients affected by domestic abuse and bringing about social change," says Jamana. "Conducting research on the various theories of domestic abuse is essential as it helps in understanding the effectiveness of the existing theories, focuses on

different strategies that work in our culture and social setting and incorporates new models of practice."

Jonathan Hutton, YWCA Clinical Supervisor says having Jumana as a volunteer in a co-research position has been invaluable.

"Jumana's background is perfectly tailored to the work at the YWCA with her indepth understanding of feminism, providing her a unique vantage point to examine YWCA programs."



As the YWCA continues to evolve our service and operation models, and strive to be more accessible and nimble as an organization, we aspire to attract the best talents; either paid or unpaid that allow the YWCA to achieve its mission and vision. This new staffing model has proven to be a mutually beneficial approach for the organization as a whole.

YWCA news and events

5th annual YWCA WHYWHISPER Fundraising Gala

On November 19, 2015 the YWCA hosted activist and humanitarian Martin Luther King III as keynote speaker. Mr. King shared his views on civil rights in the 21st century with a crowd of more than 500 guests.

BuckUpYYC campaign

Calgarians always pull together when it's needed most. You never know who needs your help, especially in the current economic climate; she may be a



single mom looking for work or a woman escaping domestic abuse. Launched during the holiday season, the YWCA asked Calgary to “buck up” or donate a few dollars to support and empower vulnerable women and their families.

Building sale

In November, the YWCA announced the sale of its downtown property to purchasers Great Gulf. Operations will continue in the downtown location for another two years while plans are made for the new YWCA hub facility and the transition ahead.

Longtime YWCA connections

Special thanks to Lois Reid for donating a plaque from YWCA Camp Kinnaird for our archives.

The plaque depicts a song campers sang at the camp in the 1960s. The lyrics are evidence of how far we've come in gender equality over the decades.

Lois says the plaque represents so much more than a song to her; after many joyous hours of singing at YWCA Camp Kinnaird, Lois became a music teacher.



Save the date

CELEBRATE:

Thursday, March 10, 2016

The YWCA is hosting *CELEBRATE*, our annual cocktail event in celebration of women everywhere. Join us for an opportunity to mingle and enjoy hors d'oeuvres with your girlfriends, sisters, mothers, daughters, colleagues and male allies. Purchase your tickets at: ywcaofcalgary.com/celebrate



International Women's Day:

Tuesday, March 8, 2016

The YWCA is collaborating on a community fair at noon at Jack Singer Concert Hall featuring entertainment, stories and community resources. To learn more visit: iwd-calgary.com

YWCA KEEP A ROOF OVER THEIR HEADS®:

Thursday, May 5, 2016

Change many lives in just one night. For more information, visit: ywcakeeparooft.com

YWCA Annual General Meeting:

Friday, June 17, 2016

Details: To be announced.

The benefits of giving online



More and more donors from every age group are going online to make a donation. What are the benefits and why switch?

Convenience and ease: You can make an online donation from the comfort of your home with the ease of a few key strokes. In fact, many sites are mobile friendly so you can even make a donation when you are out and about and have an overwhelming desire to.

No need to find the cheque book and remember to mail it.

Safe and secure: The third party vendors we use are constantly improving and implementing new security measures and we are confident when we say that our sites are secure. One simple way to check if you are on a secure page is to look for the “s” in “https” or the padlock symbol. The “s” denotes security software.

Handling costs: Donors say that it is more than just convenience that is drawing them to online giving. They are also concerned about fundraising costs. Online

donations are more cost effective to process and online donors immediately receive a link to their tax receipt: no printing and mailing costs!

In addition, where possible use a charity’s own online donation page (rather than a third party vendor) so that 100% of your donation goes directly to the charity.

Give it a try: Here is the link to the YWCA’s secure online donation page: ywcaofcalgary.com/donate

The YWCA is the largest and longest serving women’s organization in Calgary. Through its more than 105 year history, the organization has touched tens of thousands of lives and evolved its programs to meet the changing needs of women in the community. The YWCA offers a variety of programs that create a continuum of service for women, and their families, who are struggling with poverty, homelessness, domestic abuse and isolation.

With the focus on empowering women to move from a place of vulnerability to one of resilience, the YWCA continues to be there when and where she needs us most.

YES! I want to help vulnerable women in Calgary.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Prov _____ PC _____

Phone _____

ENCLOSED IS MY SINGLE GIFT OF:

\$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other \$ _____

I WANT TO SUPPORT YWCA OF CALGARY WITH A MONTHLY DONATION:

Pre-authorized withdrawal of \$ _____ every month.

(Please include credit card information at right or attach a void cheque. You may cancel or change your monthly gift at any time.)

Date _____ Signature _____

I AM MAKING MY DONATION BY: (CHECK ONE)

Cheque (*Payable to: YWCA of Calgary*) VISA MC AmEx

Cardholder Name _____

Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____ Security Code _____

Complete this form and mail to:

YWCA of Calgary 320 5th Ave SE, Calgary, AB T2G 0E5

Donations of \$20 or more will receive a tax receipt.
YWCA of Calgary respects the privacy of our donors.

www.YWCAofCalgary.com/donate or call 403-294-7343

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