



**Press Release**  
**March 26, 2014**

## **INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY: WOMAN STEPS OFF THE STREETS TO SPEAK OUT FOR THE YWCA**

Coreen\*, a YWCA of Calgary client who struggled with homelessness and addiction, is speaking up in support of the YWCA Winter Emergency Response (WER) program.

“When I arrived at the YWCA, I was at my absolute bottom,” Coreen said. “At the time, I had been living between the streets and the Drop-In Centre.”

Desperate for a safe place to spend the night, Coreen came to the WER program; a temporary shelter program offered in a portion of the YWCA’S former gymnasium. The WER program first opened in 2012, in collaboration with the Calgary Homeless Foundation, to offer homeless women a warm, safe place to sleep during the coldest months of the year when shelters are at capacity.

“When I came to the YWCA I was pleasantly surprised to say the least,” Coreen said. “The accommodations were clean. Each lady had their own personal space with clean linen, including a pillow. There were hot showers and healthy food was provided. The staff would listen to me for as long as I needed them to, no matter how long it took.”

Coreen is not the only woman who struggles with homelessness and needs a safe place to sleep. From November 12, 2013 to January 31, 2014, the YWCA provided 2,929 bed nights for 398 women. Of those 398 women, one stayed 75 nights, 65 women stayed two nights and 10 women accessing the WER program have been able to find more consistent housing and counselling support at the YWCA Mary Dover House transitional housing program.

Coreen is one of those lucky enough to find a space in the YWCA’s transitional housing facility. She now receives the support and case management she needs in order to move from a place of vulnerability to one of resilience. “As I struggle everyday to overcome my challenges, I know I have a wonderful community of women to help in any way necessary,” Coreen said. “There are really no places for women during winter months like this one.”

Media are invited to interview opportunities with Coreen and YWCA spokespeople to learn more about the challenges and barriers faced by women who may be vulnerable due to extreme poverty and homelessness.

\*Name has been changed

### **Media Availability:**

Coreen - YWCA Winter Emergency Response program client.

Margaret Michaud – YWCA Program Coordinator.

March 27, 2014 – 10:00 am to 12:00 pm - YWCA of Calgary downtown location

**\*\*Please check in at second floor reception. Someone will greet you and take you to the WER program office.\*\***

### **Media Contact:**

Carla Link

Manager, Marketing & Communications, YWCA of Calgary

**Phone: 403.705.5779 | Cell: 587.228.8663 | Email: [clink@ywcaofcalgary.com](mailto:clink@ywcaofcalgary.com)**

The YWCA of Calgary provides emergency shelter, housing, counselling and skills to women who are struggling with poverty, homelessness, family violence and social exclusion. For more than 100 years, the YWCA has continued to adapt to the changing needs in the city. Serving more than 8,000 clients in 2013, across a continuum of programs and services, the YWCA is focused on empowering women and their families to move from a place of vulnerability to one of hope and resilience. For more information, visit [ywcaofcalgary.com](http://ywcaofcalgary.com).