



## YWCA OF CALGARY LIGHTS THE NIGHT TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

*Recognizing the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of gender-based massacre*

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**CALGARY, Wednesday, December 3, 2014** – Nationally, YWCAs across Canada are calling for dramatic action to end violence against women and girls. YWCA Canada, the nation's oldest and largest women's multi-service association, launches its annual Rose Campaign on Parliament Hill to recognize the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women.

On Saturday, December 6, 2014, the YWCA of Calgary will join with 32 YWCAs across the country to 'Light the Night' against violence. From coast to coast, local structures and monuments will be lit red in honour of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 14 women who were murdered in Montreal, simply for being women.

Showing their support for this nationally recognized day will be Montreal's Olympic Stadium, The CN Tower in Toronto, BC Place in Vancouver and others in cities across the country. Locally, both the Langevin Bridge and the iconic tower will be lit red with thanks to Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) and the Calgary Tower. For more information on these and other locations, visit [rosecampaign.ca](http://rosecampaign.ca).

"The continued violence against women in our community is astounding," says Sue Tomney, CEO, YWCA of Calgary. "Stories we hear from the vulnerable women we work with every day about brutal attacks and assaults on women are terrifying. The life and death aspect of this makes it even more important to speak out against violence. I am thrilled we are able to join with YWCAs across Canada this weekend to "Light the Night' against gender-based violence."

Violence against women continues to plague Calgary; this year to date nine women have been murdered; four were domestic violence related; and multiple women have been assaulted throughout the city. Included in the list of assaults, is the recent kidnapping and brutal attack of a woman, by two men, from a bus stop. Police reports indicate she experienced repeated sexual assaults before she was able to escape.

In addition to 'Light the Night', on Saturday, December 6, 2014, from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. a local Calgary restaurant, the Black Cat Lounge and Grill is holding a Celebration of Life to honour one of those nine murdered woman, Susan Elko. Not only will they be celebrating a life lost to violence but they will also provide support for other women who are struggling.

Susan Elko, a former staff member at the Black Cat Lounge, was stabbed to death in her home in Calgary in September. "She was just about the friendliest, most full of life, beautiful girl you ever met," Susan's father, Mark Elko, told the media at the time of the murder. "We can't believe something like this happened."

The Black Cat Lounge and Grill will be donating all food and beverage proceeds from the day to the YWCA Sheriff King Home emergency shelter and the Elko Family. The Black Cat staff will donate their time and tips as well. For more information on the event please visit [Facebook: Celebration of Life for Susan Elko](#)

YWCA staff, subject matters experts, and a former YWCA client are available for interview opportunities related to the issue of violence against women and the events connected to this campaign.



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**About the YWCA of Calgary:**

YWCA of Calgary is one of the largest and longest serving social service organizations in Calgary. During its 103 year history, the YWCA has touched tens of thousands of lives and adapted its programs and services to meet the changing needs of vulnerable women in the community. In 2013, through the provision of a continuum of services to more than **8,900** clients, including **2,400** children, the YWCA continued its focus on empowering women, who may be struggling with poverty, homelessness, family violence or isolation, to move from a position of vulnerability to one of sustainable strength and opportunity. For more information, visit [ywcaofcalgary.com](http://ywcaofcalgary.com)

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