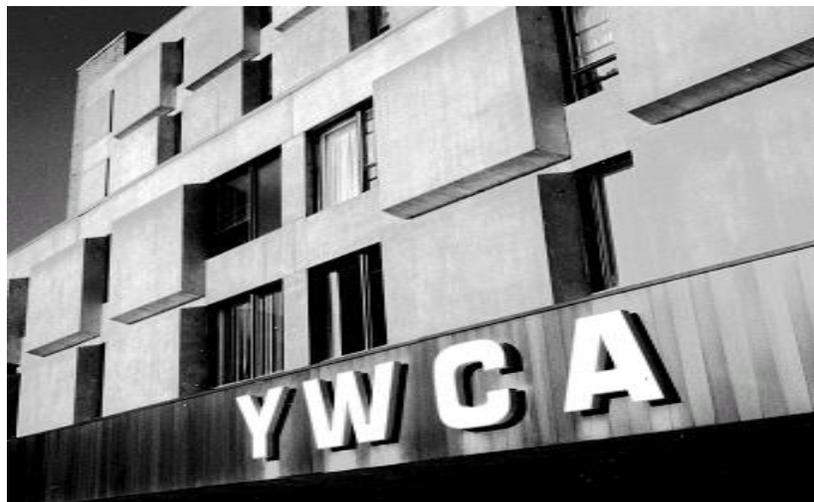




100
years

...a century of serving women

2009 YWCA ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



April
2010

YWCA of Calgary

Written by the *YWCA Quality Assurance Team*

2009 YWCA Annual Impact Report

THE ISSUES, PROGRAMS, AND IMPACT 2009

Introduction

The YWCA mission is to offer programs and services for women and their families providing them with the skills, abilities and opportunities to contribute to, and benefit from, healthy communities. Our vision is to be a cornerstone for women and their families. Our mission and vision have fuelled our unwavering commitment to serving vulnerable women and have enabled us to deliver services to the Calgary community for 100 years. These have also driven our ability to be responsive to the current and emerging needs of women, deliver impact and outcome report accountabilities, and to influence social change. As a result of our work we believe we are contributing to a healthier community; one which is peaceful, just, equitable, inclusive and sustainable.

The YWCA of Calgary believes that the issues of **domestic violence, poverty and homelessness** are inextricably linked and stem from systemic gender inequalities. As such, we work to break the cycles of domestic violence, poverty and homelessness by building capacity in women and their families. Our continuum of services is broad and encompassing, and positions us to provide wrap-around service that is able to respond to the whole of a woman's needs and those of her family, rather than only one aspect of her situation or need. The YWCA of Calgary delivers many critical services in our community to support women and children moving from unsafe, dependent environments to safe, economically stable and independent ones. We represent a vital piece of Calgary's social and economic fabric, serving over 11,238 vulnerable women, children and men in 2009.

This report provides a summary of our work for the year 2009. It is divided into four sections reflecting our four pillars of service: Family Violence Prevention; Poverty and Homelessness Reduction; Child and Family Services; and Life and Wellness. Each section begins with a description of the relevant social issues and related research, provides a brief description of the programs within the pillar, showcases the numbers of clients we have served and highlights a selection of our client outcomes. The YWCA believes that all service outcomes are valuable and informative and go beyond making a difference at the individual level. These outcomes are used in each program's quality improvement planning, new program development, improving agency processes and policies, and board strategic planning sessions.

Because output and outcome information is used to inform practice and are essential for program and agency development, we are engaged in continuous quality improvement in order to increase the positive impact on clients in all of our service areas. This information, or learnings, can be shared at the community and sectoral level and ultimately leveraged in policy discussions. It is through these measures – taking the outcome results beyond that of the organization itself and into the larger community – that lasting change can be created. If you have any questions about this report, please contact Cynthia Wild, Associate Director, Quality Assurance by email at cwild@ywcaofcalgary.com or by telephone 403-294-3669.

YWCA Family Violence Prevention

The Issue

Family violence is at epidemic proportions. Violence against women is the world's largest and most persistent human rights violation, and Canada is no exception. The federal government estimates the economic costs of violence against women at \$1.1 billion per year in direct medical costs, rising to \$4 billion a year with costs of criminal justice, social services, and lost productivity factored in (Statistics Canada 2006). Of the 40,000+ police reported incidents of spousal violence in Canada, women made up 83% of the victims with four times as many women murdered by their current or former spouse than men (Statistics Canada, 2009). Yet only a small proportion of these women turn to shelters for safety and support. The majority never seek any formal type of help including that of police involvement. Despite this fact, large numbers of women still depend on the safety and support of shelters, shedding light on the enormity of family violence. On November 25, 2009, the first ever Global Shelter Data Count was conducted. In **one** day, 2,883 sheltering agencies from 24 countries around the world helped 90,602 women and 63,315 children. On this same day, these shelters were unable to accommodate 12,228 women and 8,176 children. As part of this same count, 41 shelters throughout Alberta sheltered 693 women and 617 children seeking safety; 16 women and 20 children were turned away – in **one** day (Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, 2010).

Family violence is also one of the most misunderstood crimes in our community because of the nature of the relationship in which the violence occurs amongst intimate partners. While often intensified by anger, intimate partner violence is not so much about anger as it is about power and control in the relationship. Physical violence—kicking, punching, slapping, grabbing, strangling—as well as forced sexual activity and rape, are behaviours that are used by abusive individuals to gain and maintain power and control over their partners. In addition to physical abuse, family violence includes emotional or psychological abuse (i.e. name-calling, isolating the victim, threatening to harm children or pets) financial abuse (i.e. controlling money), sexual abuse (i.e. making partner perform degrading sexual acts), and spiritual abuse (i.e. forbidding partner to attend religious services).

Making the decision to leave an abusive partner is not an easy one and only a small percentage of women report domestic crimes to police. According to the Calgary Police Service, approximately 78% of spousal abuse incidents in 2007 went unreported (Calgary Police Service, 2008). In fact, many women return to the abusing spouse with their children, even after seeking help through a crisis shelter or counselling agency. Among the reasons cited are fear of increased violence, fear of losing children through custody or welfare agencies, embarrassment and shame, lack of emotional support, or lack of affordable housing and financial stability (Tutty, 2006). Leaving the abusive partner may be the only way out, but breaking the pattern without support is often difficult.

Children are often also victims of domestic violence. In 2008, the Calgary Police Service responded to 13,496 family violence related calls in our city, an increase of over 900 calls from 2007. Many of these calls reported children present in the home at the time of the complaint. Children living with domestic violence are at an increased risk of experiencing emotional, physical and sexual abuse and of developing emotional and behavioural problems (Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008).

Our Impact

The YWCA of Calgary believes in helping women, children, and men create paths of change away from chaos and abuse - regardless of their role in the family violence. We focus on promoting healing and supporting clients in making positive changes that facilitate recovery and wellness, with the priority being safety for all members of the family. **In 2009,**

- **3,348** women, children and men were served through integrated and specialized family violence programs and provided approximately **37,000** hours of direct service.
- We responded to **1,722** crisis calls on our 24-hour crisis line; and **2,049** information calls regarding all YWCA family violence programs.
- **77** volunteers provided **1,326** hours of volunteer service to YWCA domestic violence clients.

Shelter-Based Programming

Family Violence Programming for Women's Shelter Clients

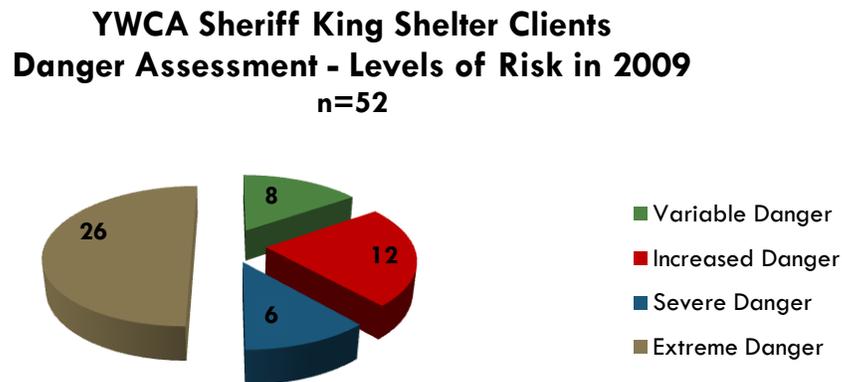
YWCA Sheriff King Home

YWCA Sheriff King Home is a **42-bed** emergency shelter where abused women, with or without children, may stay up to a maximum of 21 days. Services include emergency shelter, supportive individual and group counselling, child support, community liaison follow-up support, basic needs, community referrals and advocacy. Walk-in crisis counselling is also available to women in the community. The 24-hour crisis line provides emergency assistance to victims of family violence by trained shelter counsellors at the YWCA Sheriff King Home.

Many women who come to our shelter have experienced extreme violence by their partners and remain at risk of escalating violence including that of being murdered. Research has been able to identify several risk factors that indicate the risk of lethality for a woman who is being abused. These include sexual assault, the presence of weapons, alcohol abuse and threats of suicide – to name a few.

The **Danger Assessment** (DA) is a 20-question measurement tool that encompasses these risk factors and is designed to assess the likelihood of a woman being murdered by her intimate partner (Campbell, Webster and Glass, 2009). All women who come to our shelter are asked to answer all 20 questions of the DA. From this, counsellors are able to score the results and determine a level of risk for lethality. Figure 1 represents the results based on a sample of assessments (N=52) completed in 2009. As illustrated in the pie chart, 26, or 50% of those sampled, reported being in extreme danger from their partners.

FIGURE 1 - DANGER ASSESSMENT SCORES FOR SHELTER SAMPLE

**In 2009:**

- **722** women and children (311 women/411 children) fleeing family violence were sheltered and provided with just over **17,000** hours of counselling support.
- **1,050** women and **340** children who requested shelter were turned away due to lack of space at the YWCA Sheriff King Home Shelter;
- **28** of the 311 women who came to the YWCA Sheriff King Home Shelter in 2009 returned to the shelter more than once.

Based on data from the **Exit Survey** which women are asked to complete prior to program discharge, 96% (138) of women “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that as a result of their stay in the shelter they were better able to keep themselves safe (total n=143); 96% (134) reported increased knowledge about the effect of abuse on their lives (total n=140); and 96% (112) of women with children had increased knowledge about the effect of abuse on their children (total n=117).

Child Support

This program is designed to support families through crisis by providing support to children while residing at the YWCA Sheriff King Home Shelter. Support and referrals are also provided to their mothers. It offers children a safe and nurturing environment where they can play and begin to heal from the violence they have witnessed. Two full-time and two part-time staff provide open playroom hours as well as groups for children who have experienced family violence and some individual support. Counsellors also support the mothers of the children by providing counselling, referrals, resources and parenting strategies.

Innovative After School Child Support Program – New in 2009

The YWCA Sheriff King Home After School Child Support program provides direct therapeutic child support services to school-age children and youth living in the shelter, four afternoons/evenings a week for three and a half hours, and includes both group counselling and unstructured free play. The group work with school-age children is based on the YWCA's *Paths of Change* Group Counselling Program for children exposed to domestic violence.

Community Liaison Counselling (Follow-up)

The YWCA Sheriff King Home Follow-up Community Liaison counsellor supports women in creating and sustaining a life free from violence once they have left the shelter. The counsellor's role includes providing support and advocacy to clients as they transition from the shelter, assisting them in problem solving strategies and accessing community resources. **In 2009,**

→ **98** women and their families were supported in the community after they left the YWCA Sheriff King Home shelter with family violence follow-up, counselling, support and advocacy.

Children's Art Therapy Program – New in 2009

This program offers both group and individual art therapy to children and youth residing at the YWCA Sheriff King Home Shelter and the YWCA Mary Dover House. Art Therapy is a counselling approach that uses the non-verbal language of art and the verbal expression of storytelling. Using the creative process in a therapeutic setting enhances children's ability to identify, express and process the trauma associated with their experience of domestic violence. The therapist works collaboratively with other YWCA children's counsellors to identify children and youth who would benefit from this treatment modality. **In 2009,**

→ The YWCA Children's Art Therapy program served **46** children at YWCA Sheriff King Home and **27** children at YWCA Mary Dover House.

One therapeutic art activity involves creating a mask. Each adolescent is given a mask and invited to decorate both sides. The outside of the mask represents what they show to the outside world and the people around them. The inside of the mask focuses on their hopes and dreams for the future, or their inner world. Youth are given a variety of art supplies to choose from: paint, markers, glitter, feathers, etc... Amazingly each time, with the same instructions, many unique and personal masks are created in a brave expression of self.



This mask is a representation of what one youth experiences and feels about her outside world. Her lips are stitched shut as she struggles to communicate, “can’t speak”, and tears fall out of her eyes. In the same moment of despair, there is also hope in her desire for more love.

Community-Based Programming

Family Violence Programming for Children and Adolescents

This group of programs provides individual and group-based counselling for children and adolescents who have been exposed to family violence. Programs are offered at participating community school locations and the YWCA Sheriff King Home location in Inglewood. **In 2009,**

- **174** children received **2,983** hours of individual prevention, assessment, intervention, and counselling services.
- **284** children participated in supported group counselling delivered on-site and in community schools.

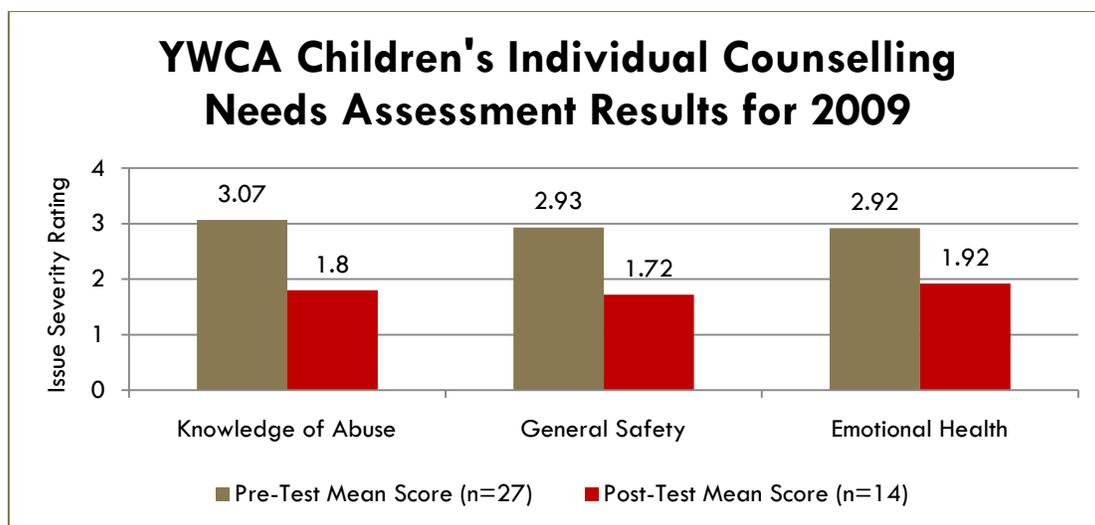
Children’s Domestic Violence Counselling

Often children require additional support through individual counselling in order to heal from the violence they have experienced. Many of these children have completed the Paths of Change Children’s group counselling program but would further benefit from one-on-one therapy. Different modalities such as play therapy, art therapy and filial therapy are utilized in the Children’s Domestic Violence Counselling program. Due to the high demand for trauma counselling services, the goal for this program is to hire one more full-time children’s domestic violence counsellor.

CHILDREN and YOUTH – ASSESSING NEEDS PRE AND POST INTERVENTION

Upon intake, the needs of children are assessed by staff using a **Needs Assessment** instrument developed by the YWCA in order to guide treatment planning. Thirty-one areas of need are given an Issue Severity Ranking from 0-4 (0=not a service issue, 1=mostly not a service issue, 2=minor service issue, 3=major service issue, 4=priority service issue). Staff assesses elements that include the child's level of knowledge of abuse and safety, general safety and emotional health. After the child has received a tailored intervention, the staff then reassesses the child on the same categories. The change from pre to post reflects the change in the child. Figure 2 demonstrates the level of change in the children after their involvement with our program. The lower score in the post-test indicates positive change.

FIGURE 2 - CHILDREN'S INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT



Children's Outreach Counsellor

This position provides ongoing support and counselling to mothers and their children who have accessed the YWCA of Calgary Family Violence programming and require further support as they move into the larger community. Support services provided include home visits with mothers and children, parenting support, play therapy, filial therapy, referrals to community resources and assistance in accessing the family court system for child custody issues. An expectation of this position is that the staff person facilitates one of the community-based YWCA Paths of Change parenting groups.

Families and Schools Stopping Abuse (FASSA) – Children's Group

This program is an early intervention group counselling program for children who have witnessed family violence. It is provided through five designated elementary schools in the Calgary area. This group, similar in format to the Paths of Change Children's program, helps children heal from the trauma related to exposure to family violence.

Paths of Change Group Counselling Program for Children

This program helps children and adolescents aged 4-13 begin to process and understand the family violence they have witnessed and/or experienced directly, learn how to express feelings, thoughts and anger in healthier ways, and to begin the process of healing. Problem solving and safety planning are also integral components of this program. While children participate in this program, their parents concurrently attend a parenting group. This group supports parents in developing positive discipline strategies, improving communicating with their child, enhancing their child's self-esteem and building a better relationship with their child. This 10-week program is offered three times per year and is held on Saturdays to accommodate families' schedules.

CHILDREN and YOUTH - UNDERSTANDING OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

Children and youth that access our family violence programming complete a Children's Questionnaire before and after their counselling experience. The **Children's Questionnaire** was developed by YWCA staff to measure children's knowledge of abuse, responsibility for the violence and safety. Table 1 represents the level of knowledge of abuse and safety after children and youth have been involved in our programming.

TABLE 1 - SAMPLE ITEMS - CHILDREN'S QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS 2009

Knowledge of Abuse Questions Correct Response "Yes"	Pre-Test (n=73) % Correct	Post-Test (n=61) % Correct
If a grown-up or parent in the family slaps someone, is it abuse?	79%	92%
If a grown-up or parent in the family calls someone names, is it abuse?	52%	80%
Responsibility for the Abuse Questions Correct Response "False"	Pre-Test (n=73) % Correct	Post-Test (n=61) % Correct
Sometimes children are the cause of parent's abusive behaviour/fights.	48%	84%
Children are to blame if dad hits mom.	78%	90%
Safety Questions	Pre-Test (n=73) % Correct	Post-Test (n=61) % Correct
If the adults in your house were fighting would you try to stop them? (Correct Answer=No)	53%	74%
If the adults in your house were fighting would you phone 911? (Correct Answer=Yes)	49%	61%

Paths of Change Group Counselling Program for Adolescents

This program is for adolescents 14-17 who have experienced family conflict. It is designed to assist them with developmental tasks such as individuation, self-identity, social identity, and the development of personal goals and values. This eight-week program takes place three times a year. The adolescent group offered by the YWCA every spring is combined with a parenting group delivered by the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter.

Choices with Horses

The Choices with Horses Group takes place once a year in the spring and operates in collaboration with Healing Hooves Equine Facilitated Counselling. This special equine therapy program is designed for girls age 12-14 that may have difficulty interacting socially with others, have experienced past trauma or violence, and/or may be exhibiting behaviours that are reflective of emotional turmoil and anxiety. Horses become an integral part of the intervention designed to improve the child's physical, social, emotional or cognitive functioning. These animals assist the therapeutic process by using the power of touch to evoke experiences of being loved and secure while reducing barriers to communication.

Family Violence Programming for Parents and Families

This group of programs focuses on the needs of parents and families affected by family violence. The menu of services includes parenting groups for both mandated and voluntary clients, interventions aimed at increasing attachment between parents and children as well as community-based parenting groups for individuals who want to learn positive parenting techniques. **In 2009,**

→ **349** parents participated in family violence parenting groups delivered in nine community locations and onsite at the YWCA.

Paths of Change Community Parenting Program

The parenting group programs use a positive parenting framework to support parents in building better relationships with children. Groups are offered at the YWCA Sheriff King Home Family Violence Prevention Centre on Saturdays and in a variety of community locations throughout the week Monday to Thursday, and are free of charge to all participants.

Paths of Change Father's Parenting Program

This program is a unique parenting group for fathers who have been abusive and are looking to restore their relationships with their children. Program content is very similar to the Paths of Change Parenting Program but addresses issues specific to parenting after violence. This 12-week program takes place on Monday evenings and is offered three times per year.

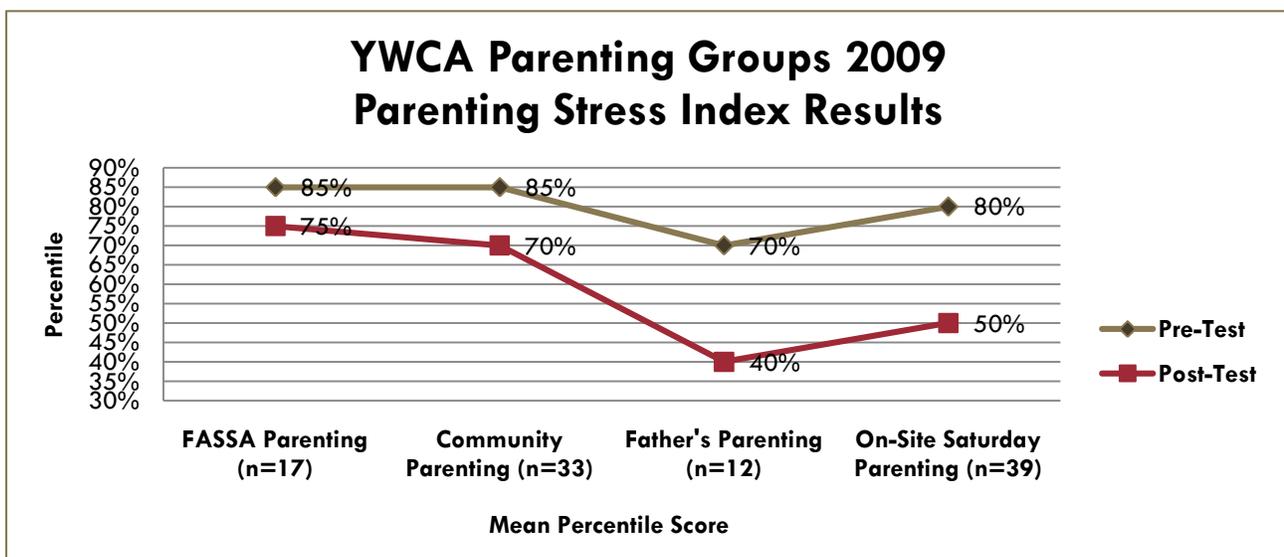
Families and Schools Stopping Abuse (FASSA) – Parenting Group

This community-based 12-week parenting group introduces parents to new alternatives and positive strategies for parenting their children, using a positive parenting framework to support parents in building better relationships with children. The FASSA program takes place in five community schools and is held in the evenings. It is open to all community members, including parents of children attending the FASSA children's groups.

PARENTS WHO ATTEND YWCA PARENTING GROUPS – CHANGES IN PARENTAL STRESS

Parents attending our community-based and on-site parenting groups are asked to complete a measure of parental stress, **The Parenting Stress Index (PSI)** (Abidin, 1995) at program intake and again at program completion. Early identification of stressful parent-child systems aimed at reducing stress have the potential for reducing the frequency and intensity of behavioural and emotional disturbance among children in our society (Abidin, 1995). The graph below presents the mean percentile scores on the PSI across the different parenting programs offered through the YWCA family violence pillar of service. The normal range for scores is within the 15th to 80th percentiles. High scores are considered to be scores at

FIGURE 3 - YWCA PARENTING GROUPS - CHANGES IN PARENTAL STRESS LEVELS



or above the 85th percentile. As illustrated in Figure 3, at pre-test, the mean scores of participants in both the FASSA Parenting and Community Parenting programs was at the 85th percentile, suggesting that parents who attend those groups report higher levels of stress as a group at program intake than parents in either the Father's Parenting or Saturday Parenting Program respectively. However, at program completion, all four samples reported significant decreases in stress, with the biggest change occurring for participants in the Father's Parenting and Saturday Parenting programs. However, at program completion, the mean percentile scores fell within the normal range on the PSI, regardless of which group participants attended.

Filial Parenting Group – New in 2009!

This unique parenting group aims to improve the parent-child relationship by teaching parents about child-directed play time and gain an understanding of the world from a child's perspective. Filial play therapy's unique approach emphasizes the parent-child relationship as a means of alleviating child and/or family difficulties. This method serves to enhance attachment relationships between parents and young children. Attachment to family is one of the protective factors that reduce the likelihood of a child developing serious emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

“This group has helped me recognize instances in my relationship with my son that I can work out.... Such as learning to relax and enjoy my son's actions and let him grow and express his feelings and ideas.”

“What I have learned so far...A.C.T (acknowledge the feeling, communicate the limit and target the alternative) -- I know to acknowledge feelings when setting limits but it's nice to have an acronym to remember.” -- Filial Parenting Group Clients

Family Counselling

This one-on-one counselling program is available to parents who need extra support in order to build a more positive relationship with their children. The Family Counsellor and Children's Domestic Violence Counsellor often work together with different members of the family, providing concurrent counselling support to parents and children. Every effort is made in the context of this counselling process to support families in connecting with ongoing community supports for themselves and their children. Clients are seen either at the YWCA Sheriff King Home or in their own homes in the Calgary community. **In 2009,**

→ **106** women, men and children received **1,051** hours of family counselling services in their home and/or on-site at the YWCA.

Outreach Counselling

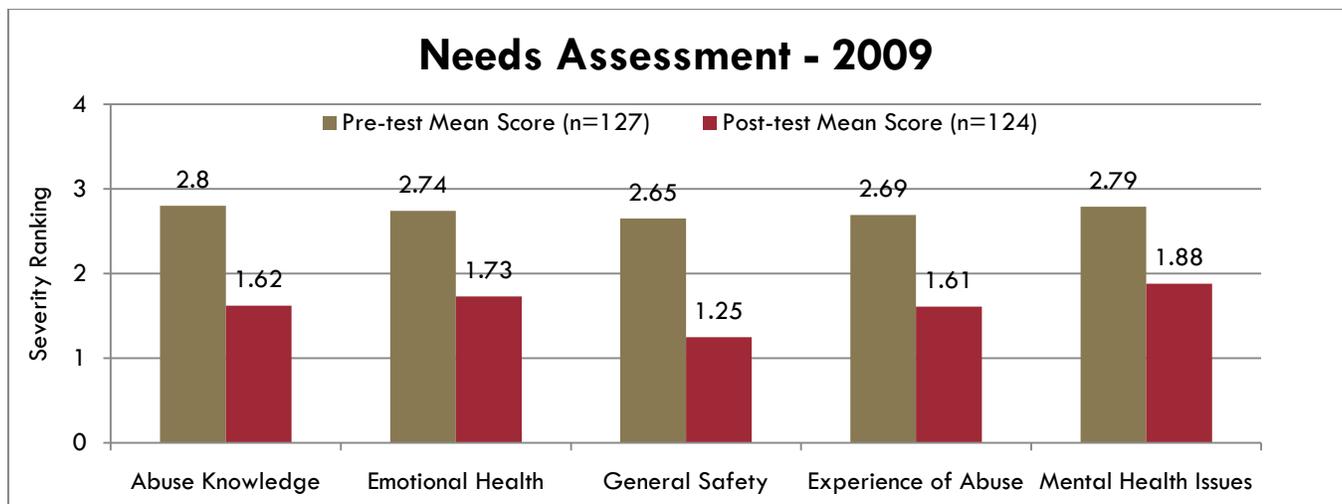
Outreach Counselling is a community-based prevention program that is accessible to women, men, and their families in Calgary who have experienced or are experiencing family violence. The outreach counsellors provide information, support, advocacy, safety planning and referral services to families who are impacted by family violence but choose not to access the services of a shelter. **In 2009,**

→ **177** women and their families were supported in the community with family violence outreach counselling, support and advocacy.

OUTREACH CLIENTS - ASSESSING NEEDS PRE AND POST INTERVENTION

Upon intake, the needs and current issues of outreach clients are assessed by staff and a service plan created. Using our **Needs Assessment** form during program intake, 44 areas of need are given an Issue Severity Ranking from 0-4 (0=not a service issue, 1=mostly not a service issue, 2=minor service issue, 3=major service issue, 4=priority service issue). Staff assesses the nature and impact of abuse and issues related to safety, basic needs, community services, and emotional and mental health. Staff then reassesses these same issues at the end of the service. The change from pre to post test reflects the change in needs of our outreach clients as rated by their counsellors. A reduction in needs suggests the severity of the needs were reduced throughout the clients' participation in the program. Figure 4 illustrates the change as assessed by outreach counsellors in the five areas of need where service was required by a majority of clients seen in 2009; abuse knowledge, emotional health, general safety, experience of abuse, and mental health.

FIGURE 4 - OUTREACH CLIENTS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT



Family Violence Programming for Adult Women and Men

Our family violence programs for adult women and men are recognized locally, provincially and nationally as exemplary intervention models for men and women who are impacted by intimate partner violence. Women and men who have perpetrated abuse and violence as well as those who have been perpetrated against are referred to our programs by HomeFront (Calgary's coordinated community-justice response to domestic violence), Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Authority, and other community agencies who trust in our research validated approach to treatment. **In 2009,**

- **963** women and men wanting to break the cycle of violence participated in group counselling.
- **224** women and men received just over **3,600** hours of counselling support through individual trauma and multi-cultural family violence counselling.

YWCA Adult Services - Group and Individual Counselling Programs for Women

Our Paths of Change Women's program is available for any woman in the community who has experienced, witnessed and/or perpetrated family violence. The 14-week program is provided in a group format and provides women with information regarding family violence, safety planning, and the psychological and emotional impact of violence on women and children. Women are supported in healing from the effects of the abuse and taking responsibility for the abuse they have perpetrated on their partners. In addition to the group sessions, short-term crisis counselling is available for women attending group who require additional support. If language or culture represents a barrier for a woman, our multi-cultural counsellor is available to provide individual counselling and to assist with appropriate referrals.

Jenna's Story

"Friends would describe me as a normal, educated, confidant, out-going individual. My ex-husband would be described as funny, loyal, charismatic and intelligent...certainly not the type of people that would ever need the services of a domestic violence program. We had our share of fights, but he never hit me and wasn't a monster, so it clearly couldn't have been abuse, right? When I was four months pregnant, we had one of our fights...he kicked the baby gate, hit the dog with it, took my credit cards and disconnected my cell in the middle of a call for help to a friend. After this I was referred to the YWCA Sheriff King by my EAP counsellor.

After the intake meeting, I was referred to the group program and for individual counselling, even though I was certain I didn't belong in either. Week 1 of the group was a big wake-up call; most of the women were just like me and then they started talking about their relationships...just like mine. Now I was paying attention; maybe I did belong here!

Being able to admit and accept that my relationship was abusive was the first of many difficult steps - how did this happen to me and I not see it sooner? He says he has changed but has he, can he, will he? Is it really abuse if he doesn't hit me? Why does leaving feel harder than staying in an abusive relationship? Since realizing all this, I've read what feels like every book ever written on the topic; however one session of individual counselling was more valuable than every book combined! The sessions were the focal point of many weeks for me and through these sessions, my feelings were identified, validated, explained and encouraged; I addressed all the questions I had, and more.

Now I can finally proudly say I have broken free of the ties that kept me in my abusive relationship. The individual counselling is responsible for changing the outcome of my life and my daughter's life. My gratitude is endless; thank you so much!" -- Client, Individual and Group Counselling Program for Women

YWCA Adult Services - Group and Individual Counselling Programs for Men

Our Paths of Change Men's program is aimed at examining attitudes and behaviours that contribute to men using violence, with the ultimate aim of ending all forms of abuse. In the YWCA Men's Groups, men are encouraged and supported to develop attitudes that reflect willingness to change and an acceptance of responsibility for their own behaviour. During their 14-week participation in the group program, their partners/ex-partners are contacted by program staff to provide support and assess the safety of women and children. Short-term counselling is also available for those men requiring additional support. If language or culture represents a barrier for a man, our multi-cultural counsellor is available to provide individual counselling and to assist with appropriate referrals.

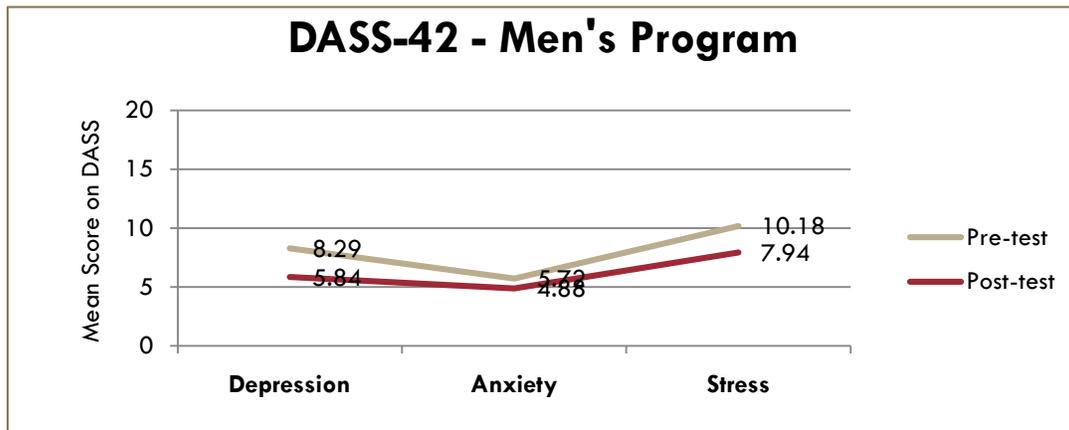
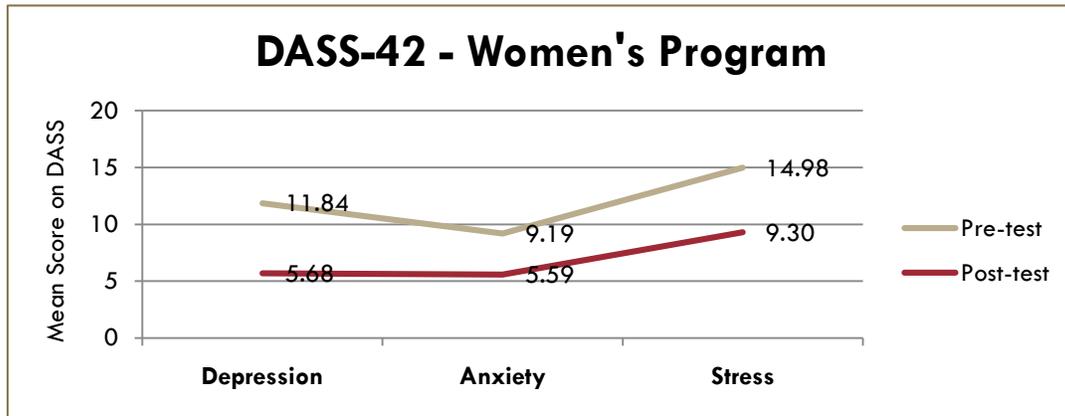
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNSELLING FOR ADULTS – CHANGES IN DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, AND STRESS

Men and women who attend our adult programs are asked to complete the **Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS)** – a standardized tool used to measure the negative emotional states of depression, anxiety and stress (Lovibond and Lovibond, 1995) at program intake and again at the end of treatment. The Depression scale assesses dysphoria, hopelessness, devaluation of life, self-deprecation, lack of interest/involvement, anhedonia, and inertia. The Anxiety Scale assesses autonomic arousal, skeletal muscle effects, situational anxiety, and subjective experience of anxious effect. The Stress scale is sensitive to levels of chronic non-specific arousal. It assesses difficulty relaxing, nervous arousal, being easily upset/agitated, irritable/over-reactive and impatient. Figure 5 compares the pre/post mean scores on the three scales of the DASS for a sample of men (n=198) and women (n=98) who completed domestic violence counselling at the YWCA in 2009.

In terms of interpreting the mean scores for both samples, according to the authors of the instrument, emotional syndromes like depression and anxiety are intrinsically dimensional - they vary along a continuum of severity. Hence the selection of a single cut-off score to represent "clinical" severity is necessarily arbitrary (Lovibond and Lovibond, 1995). However, for clinical purposes, they developed a set of cut-off scores for defining mild/moderate/severe/extremely severe scores for each DASS scale.

Figure 5 provides some interesting information about the men and women who attend the YWCA domestic violence counselling programs in 2009. First, women self-reported higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress at program intake than men. Part of this however, may be due to underreporting on the part of men who are socialized to equate acknowledging emotions with weakness. Second, women as a group reported statistically significant decreases at program completion on all three scales, compared to the men who reported statistically significant decreases on the depression and stress scales, but not the anxiety scale. Finally, the greatest improvement across both samples was the impact that the program has on depression levels for women who, as a group, had the most significant decreases in their mean score.

FIGURE 5 - PRE AND POST DASS-42 SCORES FOR WOMEN'S AND MEN'S DV COUNSELLING



Visitation Services Programming

Our Visitation services are designed to meet the urgent need of a protected setting for the safe transfer and visitation of children between custodial and visiting adults. This need arises out of the potential for escalated violence and increased safety risks to women and children (and some men) that occur during separation and divorce, particularly in families experiencing domestic violence. **In 2009,**

→ **97** parents and **114** children accessed our Visitation Services Programs.

→ **439** supervised visits and **179** monitored exchanges were provided to families accessing the Visitation Services Programs.

Community Safe Visitation

The YWCA Community Safe Visitation program offers supervised access visits and monitored exchanges between non-custodial parents and their children, the goal of which is to create a safe and healthy environment for continued contact in situations where family violence has been present.

Safe Visitation

The YWCA Safe Visitation program offers supervised access visits to families referred by Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Authority. The goal is to create a safe and healthy environment for continued contact between non-custodial parents and their children in situations where there has been a history family violence.

“This program has been a great success to both the children and me. It renews my sense of security knowing that there will be intervention/monitoring and safety plans in place should a situation arise.” – Custodial Parent

YWCA Poverty and Homelessness Reduction

The Issue

The interconnection between family violence, poverty and homelessness is profound. Two of the most significant reasons women return to an abusive spouse is because of lack of affordable housing and a lack of financial resources (Tutty, 2006). Many women fear they will not be able to support their families or find sustainable employment if they leave the abusing spouse. These fears are very real. Extensive research by Statistics Canada (2006) demonstrates that women continue to be disproportionately poor in Canada. Of all people living in poverty, 53% were women - a total of 1.9 million. Not surprisingly, the greatest disparity rests with lone-parent families headed by women: 38% of these families were living in poverty versus 13% of male-headed lone parent families. Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, senior women and immigrant women have the lowest levels of income in the country (Statistics Canada, 2006).

Across the province, issues of poverty and homelessness for women are also abundant. Women make up the majority of minimum wage earners in Alberta at 66% (City of Calgary, 2007) and 92% of the single parent households dependent upon provincial Income Support are headed by women (Alberta Human Resources and Employment, 2006). Compounding these realities, women continue to experience ongoing cutbacks to social and income support programs dating back to 1993 when Alberta became the first province to cutback what was already among the lowest social assistance rates in Canada (Faid, 2009). This trend has remained unchanged in Alberta; where we continue to offer the lowest income rates in the country. A mother with one child for example, receives only 51% (\$13,703) of what is needed to meet the poverty line (National Council of Welfare, 2008).

In Calgary, of the 3,491 people counted as absolutely homeless by service agencies in Calgary on May 14, 2008, 22% were women. 197 families were also counted on this day; most of which were headed by lone women (City of Calgary, 2008). With over 3,000 people on the waitlist for subsidized housing through the City of Calgary's Calgary Housing Company (Calgary Housing Company, 2009) and wait times estimated as high as four years (Government of Alberta, 2001), lack of affordable housing in Calgary continues to be a significant issue.

The Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation bases affordable rent limits on 30% of gross annual household income. In other words, a person should not pay more than 30% of their gross income on rent (including utilities) for a home to be considered affordable. In April of 2009, the Alberta minimum wage increased to \$8.80/hr. A person employed at a minimum wage job, working 40 hours a week for 52 weeks per year has a monthly affordable rent limit of only \$458 per month. Yet the average monthly rent for a *bachelor* apartment in Calgary in 2008, was \$778 per month; a discrepancy of \$320 per month (City of Calgary, 2009). The gap only worsens when considering the rent costs of one (\$952), two (\$1,151) and three (\$1066) bedroom apartments with discrepancies rising as high as \$608 per month. This places women into a difficult predicament. They must choose between being forced into expensive units, living beyond their means with little money for food or clothing and one step away from homelessness or returning to an abusive situation. Some have referred to this as a "downward spiral" where women cycle through abuse, homelessness, poor housing, poverty, then return to abuse, and return to homelessness (Dale, 2007). A supply of accessible and affordable housing form women has been touted as one of the most reliable ways to prevent recurring cycles of domestic violence (Dale, 2008).

Our Impact

The YWCA Homelessness Reduction services provide safe and affordable emergency and transitional housing to women and children experiencing homelessness and who require a supportive environment, while experiencing a transition and/or crisis in their lives. The YWCA Poverty Reduction services provide programming for clients in the areas of technical, language, cultural and life skills training, job search and maintenance skills, counselling; advocacy, referral, and support - all with the intent and goal of increasing our clients' employment choices and personal capacity.

Housing Programs

YWCA Mary Dover House Transitional Housing

YWCA Mary Dover House is an **80-bed** transitional housing program that offers safe, affordable, and supportive housing to women and children in times of crisis or transition. It includes on-site counselling and support for women and children, along with referrals and advocacy in an environment conducive to positive change. Case Managers work alongside women to assist them in increasing their social, emotional, and financial resources in order to support women in obtaining safe, permanent, affordable housing in the community. Residents also have access to VON nursing support, monthly access to a Family Law lawyer and a full-scale fitness centre at YWCA Fitness on 5th. Women may stay for up to six months in the program, although the average length of stay is three to four months.

YWCA Mary Dover House Dorm (Emergency Housing)

The YWCA Mary Dover House also provides **6 emergency beds** available for single women experiencing homelessness where the maximum stay is 14 days and there is no cost to the residents (the Dorm). During their stay at the YWCA, women are provided with housing, basic needs support and case management services. If women are unable to find safe, permanent, affordable housing in the community and there is space in the transitional housing program, women are given the option of transferring to the YWCA Mary Dover House Transitional Housing Program.

In 2009,

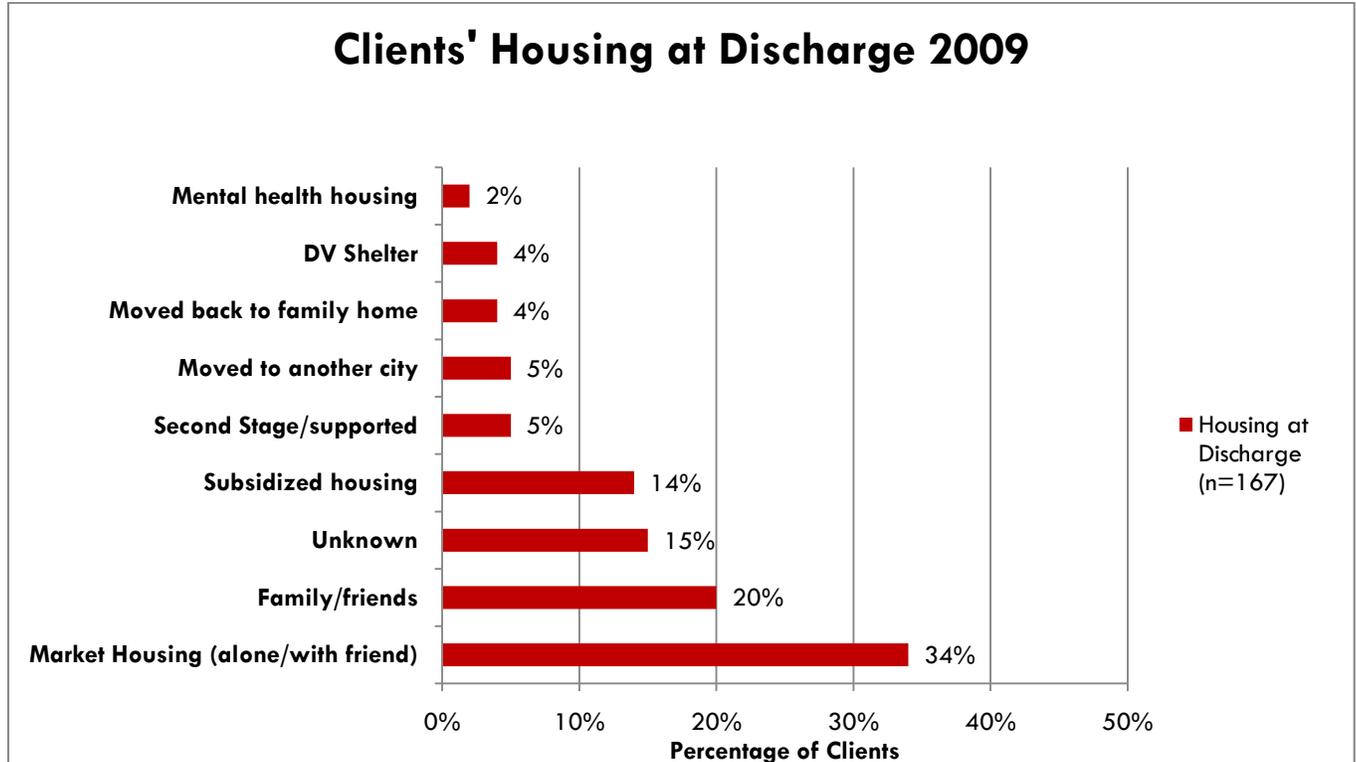
- **207** women and **111** children were sheltered in the YWCA Mary Dover House Transitional Housing program.
- **69** families sought shelter with the YWCA Mary Dover House.
- **194** women were provided with emergency shelter in the YWCA Mary Dover House Dorm.
- **1,117** women requested space at the YWCA Mary Dover House and **778** were turned away due to no available space or very high risk issues that could comprise the safety of other residents and/or themselves and their family (e.g. *domestic violence safety issues*).

- **3-4** months is the average length of time a family stayed at the YWCA Mary Dover House Transitional Housing program.
- **557** volunteers provided **2,837** hours of volunteer service to the YWCA Mary Dover House.

YWCA MARY DOVER TRANSITIONAL HOUSING - CLIENT HOUSING AT DISCHARGE

Upon program discharge, women who are exiting Mary Dover House Transitional Housing are asked to report their housing status at discharge. As indicated in Figure 6, a significant percentage of women (34%) leave Mary Dover House to live in market housing either alone or with a friend. Another 20% leave to stay with family or friends, and 14% move into subsidized housing. In 15% of cases, the housing status of women who leave the program is unknown. This is due primarily to the fact that a number of women leave the program and do not communicate to staff that they are not planning on returning. Timely and intentional discharge planning, particularly as it relates to the Housing First model, will be part of the program's quality improvement initiatives in 2010, and hopefully, will reduce the number of women who leave unexpectedly.

FIGURE 6 - YWCA MARY DOVER HOUSE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING - CLIENTS' HOUSING AT DISCHARGE



A Family's Story - YWCA Mary Dover House Transitional Housing Program

Mourning the loss of her father and living a dead-end life in England, Margaret was desperate to move back to Canada with her four children. The single mother wasn't sure how she would find a place to live, just a month before the holidays. "I got in contact with a social worker who helped to speed up the process," says Margaret, whose children were ages 10, 12, 13 and 14 at the time of the move. "We were so thankful that the YWCA of Calgary was able to step in with a place to stay." The family moved into transitional housing at the YWCA Mary Dover House.

"It was a sad time for us, and challenging to have five of us in two small rooms, but the close quarters helped us work on our relationships," says Margaret. The kids found Christmas especially difficult with the recent death of their grandfather, but everyone was encouraged by the generosity of YWCA donors. "We felt safe and secure, and like we still mattered to people. I can honestly say that our time at the YWCA saved my family. Before that, we were just going down the tubes."

Jason, her 14-year-old son, agrees: "When you're feeling lost and empty at Christmas time, you need that extra spirit to carry you through. The staff was very good to us." Now in their own home, the family will never forget their stay at Mary Dover House during those cold winter months. "When I have money, I will definitely give to the YWCA," says Jason. "It made all the difference for my family."

~ Margaret and her four children, in their own words

Education and Employment Programs

YWCA English as a Second Language (ESL) Program Services

YWCA ESL Program Services has offered English classes to Calgary immigrants for approximately 100 years, providing instruction in practical English language skills and the cultural knowledge essential for living and working successfully in Canada. We serve immigrants, Canadian citizens and international visitors at a variety of times and locations. **In 2009,**

- Just over **2,615** new Canadians received ESL instruction through the YWCA ESL programs;
- YWCA ESL staff members were able to offer customer service and assistance to clients in Cantonese, Mandarin, French, Spanish and Portuguese;
- **1,374** students attended English for New Canadians (ENC);
- **1,166** students attended Language Instruction for New Canadians (LINC);

- The Canadian Employment Skills (CES) program graduated **75** students;
- **368** volunteers provided **3,005** hours of volunteer service to the YWCA ESL Program Services.

YWCA Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)

LINC is fully funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and affords newcomers to Canada valuable insights into Canadian culture and the Calgary community while developing the language skills needed for daily life and successful integration. Classes are offered from the pre-beginner to upper intermediate levels at the downtown location and the Chinese Cultural Centre. Learners may enroll in either part-time or full-time classes, in the morning, afternoon or evening.

YWCA English for New Canadians (ENC)

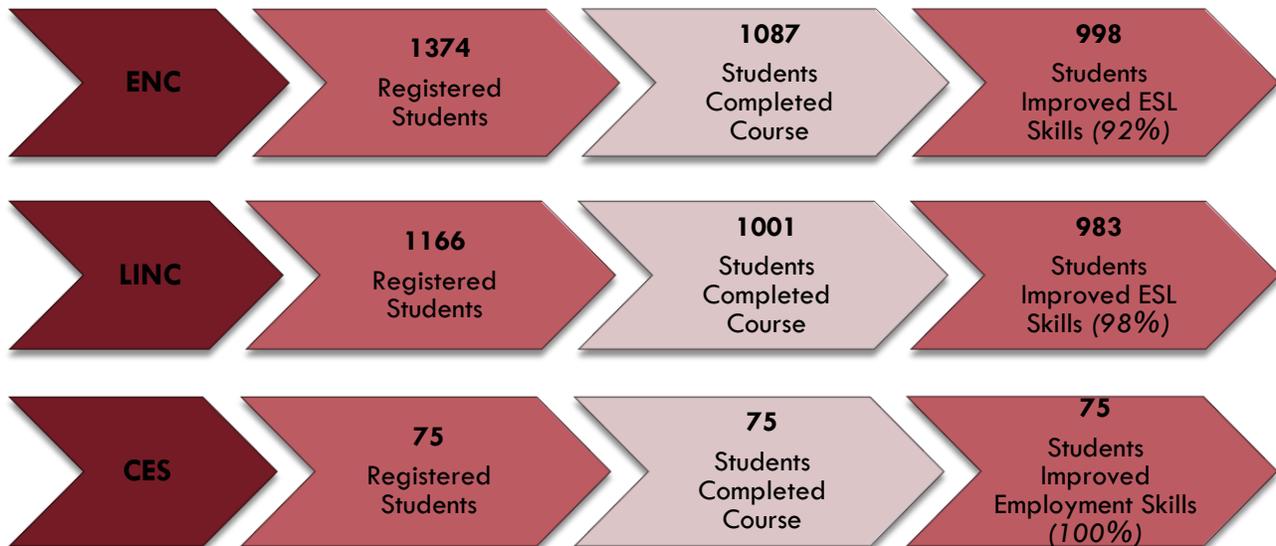
ENC classes are learner-centered and aim to provide new Canadians with the language skills and cultural knowledge needed for daily life and work. Calgary Learns provides partial funding for this program to allow adult learners facing economic barriers to access affordable ESL classes. ENC classes are available at the downtown location as well as at the Calgary Jewish Senior Citizens Residence (in partnership with Jewish Family Services Calgary) and 13 library branches throughout Calgary (in partnership with the Calgary Public Library). Learners may study on a part-time or full-time basis. Classes are offered throughout the day, in the evening and on Saturdays (at some libraries).

YWCA Canadian Employment Skills (CES)

CES is a bridging program that combines communication skills, computer training and job readiness preparation with work experience to prepare new Canadians for employment in their profession in Canada. To qualify for the program, participants must have occupational training and work experience from their country of origin, as well as intermediate English language skills. Many of the participants are working in survival jobs in Calgary in spite of having university degrees and diplomas from their first countries. This 19-week program is fully funded by Alberta Employment and Immigration, and has been offered at the YWCA of Calgary for 10 years. CES clients include engineers, accountants, banking professionals, office administrators, architects, geologists, IT specialists and chemists who come from China, South America, Mexico, Eastern Europe, Russia, Africa, the Middle East, India, Korea and Southeast Asia.

YWCA ESL PROGRAMS - STUDENT ENROLMENT AND SUCCESS

The diagram below illustrates the total number of individuals who registered for each program in 2009, the total number that completed the program, and a program outcome statement. Although all three programs achieved tremendous success in 2009, the CES program is particularly noteworthy. CES program success is measured by the number of participants working in jobs within their profession six months after program completion. In 2009, the success rate for CES participants was 100%!



YWCA ESL Student Comments and Feedback (in their own words)

"Yes, I liked this class for the activities that helped me to learn the English and speak with my classroom." – ENC Communication student - lower level.

"I like the class because is interesting. I like the activities because practice the pronunciation. The teacher explain everything." – LINC student - level 2

"The teachers here are very patient and kind. The staff are very professional. I like the YWCA. Thank you!" - LINC morning student - level 4.

"I have gained valuable insight into Canadian workplace culture and practices, obtained a Canadian reference and networked contacts in the professional field." Client - CES program

Vermilion/YWCA Skills Training Centre

The Vermilion/YWCA Skills Training Centre is a pre-employment/pre-apprenticeship training program administered through a partnership between Vermilion Energy and the YWCA of Calgary. It seeks to help underemployed or unemployed women, men and youth achieve independence and financial sustainability through trades training and career success in the construction industry. The program receives funding from Services Canada, Alberta Employment and Immigration (AEII) and through corporate and private donations. Community partners include SAIT, Cardel Homes, RONA, Habitat for Humanity, Calgary Construction Association, Hurst Construction, Prestige Railings, Cambium Woodworks, Bow Valley College and Calgary Housing.

- The Vermilion/YWCA Skills Training Centre provided **65** trainees with approximately **24,000** hours of classroom education and practical, hands-on work experience.
- **42** trainees successfully graduated from the Vermilion/YWCA Skills Training Centre in 2009.
- **216** volunteers provided **1,665** hours of volunteer service to the Vermilion/YWCA Skills Training Centre.

2009 Graduate Feedback: - How has the program changed your life?

"I am now employed doing work I used to enjoy as a hobby. I am now able to support myself." B - Graduate and registered apprentice

***"Learning to use my life skills on the job. Taught me to go out there and do a good job."
- J - Graduate***

"So many ways...life skills, the day-to-day interaction with self and others. [The program] introduced a new world of career opportunities." - K - Graduate

YWCA Child and Family Services

The Issues

For optimal child development, children need quality experiences in early life that focus on their emotional, social as well as cognitive development (Mustard, 2010). Given that there has been a dramatic increase in the employment levels of Canadian women with very young children in the past quarter century (Statistics Canada, 2003), non-parental child care is now a significant factor in the way many Canadian children live, learn and grow. High-quality child care in the form of responsive and stimulating care is associated with better cognitive and language development, positive peer relations, compliance with adults, fewer behaviour problems, and better mother-child relations (Owen, 2003).

That having been said, the relationship between children and their parental caregivers is central to optimal early learning and development. Too often, the experience of living with family violence, abuse, poverty and/or homelessness interferes with child development and is felt most profoundly by those whose childhood is soiled with images of violence, parental shame, guilt, neglect, rejection, fear, hunger, and humiliation. Many children in Canada are faced with these circumstances. For example, Campaign 2000 (2009) reported that 637,000 children in Canada live in poverty, while others are victims of abuse and neglect. The most recent *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect* (2005) reported that neglect (30%), exposure to domestic violence (28%), and physical abuse (24%) were the three most common forms of substantiated child maltreatment in Canada (Trocme, MacLaurin, Daciuk, Felstiner and Black, 2005). These conditions burden children with situations of chronic stress which research has demonstrated weakens the biological structure of the developing brain, thereby effecting learning capacity, physical and mental health (Shonkoff, 2009). These changes can affect the child's developmental outcomes over the course of their life resulting in challenges with addiction, violence, mental health, and illness (Cooper, 2009). Through the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, Dr. Vincent Felitti (2009) demonstrated that adverse events during childhood such as abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, growing up in a household with an alcoholic or drug user or with a mother being treated violently, are related to adult health issues and health-risk behaviours such as addiction, heart disease, obesity and suicide attempts.

The importance of healthy mental development for infants, children and youth cannot be overestimated. The Mood Disorders Society of Canada (2009) reported that 1.2 million children and youth struggle with mental health. In the 2005-06 fiscal year, 58,387 children in Alberta under the age of 18 accessed physicians for mental health services (Alberta Mental Health Board, 2008). Early intervention that provides supportive conditions for healthy childhood development, including that of increased parenting skills and family social support is crucial for the wellbeing of children (Dodge, 2004). So too is investment in other critical services such as after school programs, mentoring programs, parenting programs and services that centre on the social and emotional needs of children and youth. These types of services have been found to be extremely effective in reversing some of the negative outcomes including improvements in self-esteem, communication and social skills, positive relationships and decreases in depression, anxiety and behavioural problems (Harvard Family Research Project, 2008).

Our Impact

The YWCA of Calgary believes it is every child's basic right to live a life free of violence and abuse, and in a supportive environment that will encourage positive and healthy choices. It is our vision that every child have a safe and nurturing home, every family be connected formally and informally to the community, and every youth be supported to achieve their optimal potential.

Home and School Support Programs

The YWCA Home and School Support Programs provide a platform from which to build upon and enhance family functioning and wellness. The COMPASS, Bridges and Youth Advocate programs address overall family functioning, mild-to-moderate mental health issues in children/youth and school-related issues, and access to community resources and child/youth recreational opportunities. **In 2009,**

- The YWCA Home and School Support Programs provided a combined total of **34,742** hours of client service to **1,884** children, youth and parents.
- In October 2009, the Home and School Support Programs achieved **four-year** accreditation status with the Canadian Accreditation Council of Human Services (CAC).
- CAC Peer Review Report Comments – “All levels of the organization demonstrated a strong commitment to the success of clients; the organization viewed accreditation as valuable to improve the quality of services provided; program staff were highly regarded by clients.”

YWCA Community, Parent and School Support (COMPASS)

COMPASS is an early intervention program that provides in-home support to families of children 0-12 years of age experiencing moderate emotional, social and/or behavioural problems. The goals of this program are to increase behavioural, social and emotional functioning of children 0-12 years of age; to assist parents in further developing positive parenting skills; to increase the family's awareness of, and access to, community resources and to promote self-sufficiency and well-being in the family. The COMPASS program also offers Positive Choices groups for children and parents in community schools. **In 2009,**

- **637** children and their parents received counselling support, parenting education and access to community resources from the COMPASS program;
- **55** parents and **38** children attended COMPASS Positive Choices groups;
- In 2009, the COMPASS program had an average of **75** families on its wait list for in-home family support services.

→ The average wait time for families to commence services with the COMPASS program was **4-6** months.

YWCA Family School Liaison Programs

- **Bridges** – The Bridges program is a collaborative, school-based program in partnership with the Calgary Board of Education. It provides a safe, nurturing, positive environment for students in elementary and junior high schools who are struggling with school performance due to social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Students aged 6 – 15, and in grades 1 to 9, are supported in their efforts to maximize their potential. Working closely with the school-based team, the Family School Liaison worker provides counselling and emotional support to families and children that addresses academic achievement, basic needs issues, parenting education and support, and information and access to community resources.
- **Short-Term Observation Program (STOP)** – The STOP Program is a short-term school-based early intervention program in partnership with the Calgary Board of Education. The Family School Liaison workers provide short-term intervention services to parents and children ages 6-12, including counselling and emotional support, parenting education and assistance, advocacy and connecting families to appropriate community resources. The maximum length of service provided to a family is approximately eight weeks. **In 2009,**

→ **430** students in grades 1-9, and their **255** parents, received Family School Liaison counselling, support services and recreational opportunities.

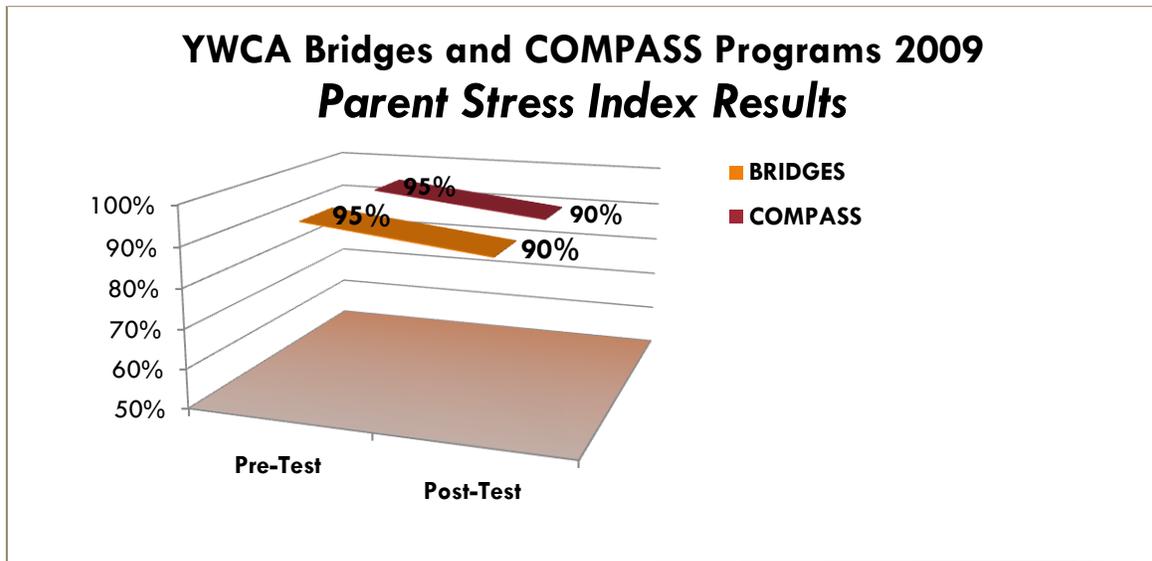
PARENTS WHO ARE SERVED BY THE BRIDGES AND COMPASS PROGRAMS CHANGES IN PARENTAL STRESS

At program intake, parents of children who receive services through the Bridges and COMPASS programs are asked to complete a measure of parental stress, **The Parenting Stress Index (PSI)** (Abidin, 1995). Parents completed the form again at program discharge. The graph below presents the mean percentile scores on the PSI across the Bridges and COMPASS programs. The normal range for scores is within the 15th to 80th percentiles. High scores are considered to be scores at or above the 85th percentile.

As illustrated in Figure 7, at pre-test, the mean scores of parents in both the Bridges and COMPASS programs was at the 95th percentile, suggesting that parents report extremely high levels of stress at program intake. At post-test, parents in both programs reported decreased levels of stress however the COMPASS program parents had a more significant decrease in the severity of their reported parental stress than the Bridges program parents. As a result of the complexity of social, emotional and behavioural issues most Bridges and COMPASS children (and their parents) are required to deal with on a daily basis at school and in the community, parent stress levels can remain high even when there is

improvement in family functioning overall. This is evidenced by the PSI mean scores in Figure 7 remaining in the high range at post-test (90th percentile).

FIGURE 7 - YWCA BRIDGES and COMPASS PROGRAMS – CHANGES IN PARENTAL STRESS



YWCA Youth Advocate Program

The Youth Advocate program is an early intervention program with direct one-on-one support to youth aged 10-18 and their families. It assists with problem-solving, conflict resolution, social skill development and building self-esteem. The program also offers the Positive Choices Adolescent Groups which are designed to provide adolescents with information and tools to manage and enhance their ability to cope with stressful circumstances, promote healthy relationship communication and provide encouragement to make healthy choices for themselves. The Youth Advocate program also provides additional facilitation support to the YWCA “Chill Zone” after school youth drop-in program. **In 2009,**

→ **57** youth and **43** parents received support and mentoring from the Youth Advocate program;

“Chill Zone” – After School Youth Drop-in Program

The “Chill Zone” is an after school drop-in program for youth in NE Calgary that provides support to youth in the after school hours and allows the youth to develop a sense of belonging in their community. The “Chill Zone” youth drop-in program assists the youth to develop leadership skills and positive peer relationships, and provides the opportunity to participate in new and different activities in a safe,

friendly, encouraging, inclusive environment. The program is aimed at reducing risk factors and enhancing protective factors to support youth in achieving their potential in life. **In 2009,**

→ **369** youth participated in the “Chill Zone” After School Youth Drop-in groups.

Meghan’s Youth Advocate Story

Meghan was referred to the YWCA Youth Advocate program because her mother felt that Meghan was often left out due to her younger brother's autism and the mother focussing most of her time on him. Meghan was eager to start a relationship with the Youth Advocate and loved to do any activity.

Meghan often disclosed her struggles with friends and bullying at school; she struggled in school did not like to do her homework. Meghan attended several YWCA and Kids up Front events such as a theatre play and a Flames game. Meghan made several goals around communication, getting along with her family and getting a job. At the end of Meghan's involvement with the Youth Advocate program, she was reporting a better relationship with her mother as they planned to spend time with each other.

For Meghan's goal in getting a job, the Youth Advocate helped Meghan with her resume, apply for Boys and Girls Club Stampede Work Experience program and get involved in the South Calgary Youth Council. Meghan also participated in the YWCA Positive Choices group and the YWCA Choices with Horses group program. Meghan has been attending all the volunteer opportunities available with the South Calgary Youth Council and has attended all the meetings.

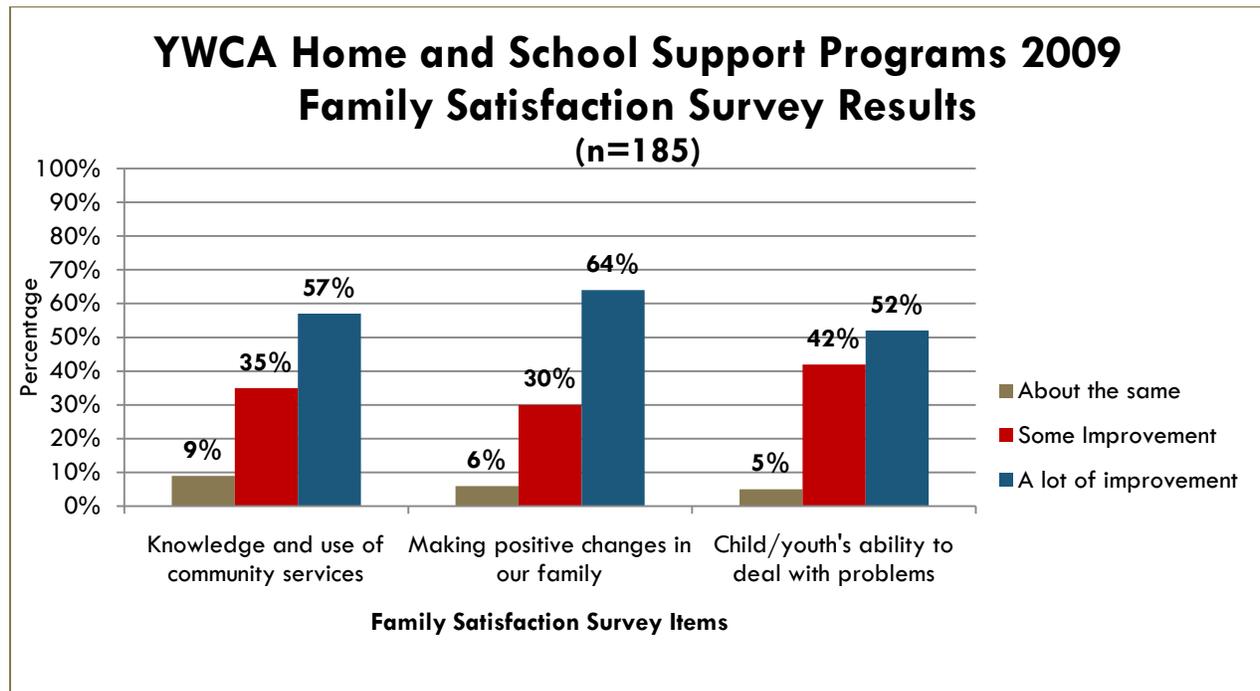
The most amazing part of Meghan's improved functioning is seeing her make friends with several of the other Youth Council members. In the six months working with Meghan, the Youth Advocate has seen her change from a borderline depressed girl to a cheerful and active young woman.

~ as described by her Youth Advocate worker

FAMILIES SERVED THROUGH HOME AND SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAMS FAMILY SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

As part of the outcome reporting process, the YWCA Home and School Support Programs request parents complete a **Family Satisfaction Survey** upon discharge from all three Home and School Support Programs. The survey includes a series of questions about the level of improvement experienced in the following categories: 1) Improved knowledge and use of community resources; 2) Increased ability to make positive changes within their family; and 3) Improvement in the child/youth's ability to deal with problems. Figure 8 illustrates the overall level of improvement, as reported by parents, in these three categories. The Family Satisfaction Survey also has a series of open-ended questions regarding the parent's level of satisfaction with the services received from their respective Home and School Support Program. This information is used by the supervisors in the program quality improvement process and feedback for program staff.

FIGURE 8 - YWCA HOME and SCHOOL SUPPORT – FAMILY SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS



YWCA / Kamp Kiwanis Summer Day Camp Program

For the past number of years, thanks to support from our generous donors, the YWCA has offered a two-week summer day camp program for children who have been clients of the YWCA of Calgary. The program is intended to help children and youth between the ages of 7-14 grow socially, emotionally and physically. Recreational activities, music, crafts, swimming, games, a campfire and nutritional meals and snacks are some of the highlights of camp. **In 2009,**

→ **62** children and youth, ages 7-13, attended the YWCA / Kamp Kiwanis Summer Day Camp program during two weeks in the summer.

YWCA Summer Campership Program

Every summer, thanks to generous donors, the YWCA of Calgary is able to sponsor a number of children from economically disadvantaged families to attend overnight summer camps around the Calgary region. Being exposed to new adventures at summer camp enhances a child's self-esteem, builds new friendships, triggers different interests, challenges and restores confidence. This camp experience also provides time away from the stressors of home, a chance to be a child, and an opportunity to have fun. **In 2009,**

- **96** children were sponsored by the YWCA to attend week-long overnight summer camps in the summer;
- **16** children attended a specialized Equine Summer Camp in partnership with Healing Hooves;



Early Childhood Programming

YWCA Parent Link Corridor

The YWCA Parent Link Corridor is a unique program in that it builds on existing services, creates new programs for children ages 0-6 and their parents where required, and supports populations not currently served by other programs. Parents, caregivers, and children who access YWCA Parent Link Corridor programs benefit from a number of “bonus” services, offered by virtue of the fact that the YWCA Parent Link Corridor represents a three-way partnership between the YWCA of Calgary, Calgary Urban Project Society, and Calgary Family Services. **In 2009,**

- **702** children and **741** parents received **4,072** hours of early childhood, parent education and family support services from the YWCA Parent Link Corridor;
- **30** volunteers provided **410** hours of volunteer service to the YWCA Parent Link Corridor.

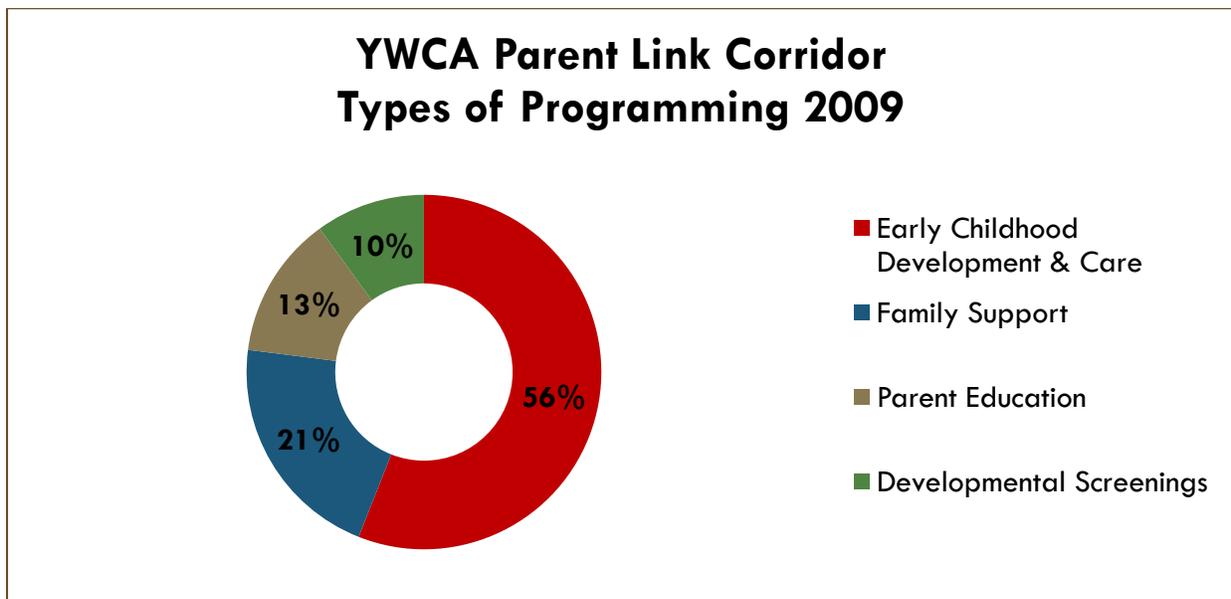
The YWCA Parent Link Corridor philosophy recognizes that a “one size fits all” approach does not work for families who are marginalized, struggling with poverty, addictions, homelessness, family violence, and other realities that set them apart from “typical” families. Many families who access the program lack basic needs such as food, clothing, medical emergency support, and travel support (i.e. cabs to hospitals or school, bus passes). As well, many children are not supported by community programs often because their parents are new to Canada and are challenged in navigating Canadian systems and social services.

The YWCA Parent Link Corridor provides direct parenting support for these multi-barriered families with counselling, referral and on-site supports.

Figure 9 illustrates the four distinct types of programming offered by the YWCA Parent Link Corridor.

- ➔ Early Childhood Development and Care programs provide a safe, fun and healthy play environment where parents can learn, observe and play with their children, and children are encouraged to explore and enjoy time in the playroom.
- ➔ Family Support programs provide information, knowledge and access to community resources as well as basic needs support. Parents are also able to build informal networks of support with one another which helps reduce barriers and isolation.
- ➔ Parent Education programs provide opportunities for parents to access current, relevant and empirically-based information on how to best support their child's optimal growth and development.
- ➔ Developmental Screenings are provided to parents and various child care centres to assess a child's progress in achieving developmental milestones. By providing this screening and assessment service, children who might be facing some developmental challenges are identified and referred as soon as possible to appropriate community health or social service agencies for further assessment, treatment and support if required.

FIGURE 9 - YWCA PARENT LINK CORRIDOR – TYPES OF PROGRAMMING



YWCA Child Care Centre

The YWCA of Calgary Child Care Centre has been in operation as a fully-licensed facility since 1998. Prior to this, the centre operated as a drop-in and pre-school room beginning in the early 1980s. The

YWCA Child Care Centre currently provides services to approximately 40 children monthly, ages 13 months to five years. With its location in the downtown YWCA of Calgary building, children have the added benefit of two outdoor playgrounds and recreational opportunities in the Fitness on 5th gymnasium. Full-time pre-school children have the opportunity for a weekly gym program.

In 2009,

→ **51** infants and young children attended the YWCA of Calgary Child Care Centre, located at our downtown site.

Child Care Parent Letter

"On behalf of our family we would like to express our sincere appreciation to the childcare family at the YWCA for the past four years. Our son entered as an infant and stayed until pre-school. To say we were fortunate is an understatement.

We found the staff to be mature, dedicated, caring, supportive and fair to our child's needs and development. The staff is also highly-qualified and genuinely engaged. We also appreciated the variety of programming, the representation of families from various socio-economic backgrounds (real life), parent communication and consultation, and program accreditation.

We would, and have, happily recommended the [YWCA Child Care Centre] to friends, colleagues and family not only for the excellent care, well-established programming and value but also for the experience our child had in shaping his future and developing perspective on the world. Thank you!"

- L and G, YWCA Child Care Centre Parents

ENMAX/YWCA Bright Lights Child Care Centre

The ENMAX/YWCA Bright Lights Child Care Centre opened in Calgary in August 2007 as a fully-licensed facility capable of providing high-quality child care to 70 children aged three months to five years. This beautiful and thoughtfully-designed facility, offering exemplary service to families and children, is the result of a creative and collaborative partnership between ENMAX and the YWCA of Calgary. The Centre's staff is made up of credentialed child care professionals and the Bright Lights Child Care Centre's environment provides a wide variety of opportunities for exploration, discovery and positive growth at all developmental learning stages. In March 2009, the Bright Lights Child Care Centre received full accreditation status from the Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Care Services. **In 2009,**

→ **102** infants and young children attended the ENMAX/YWCA Bright Lights Child Care Centre.



“Natural Beauty” - Bright Lights Child’s Art Work - Our children learn through exploration and discovery, and we allow the children to lead the programs with their interests. This art activity began when the teachers noticed that children would pick up leaves, stick and twigs and put them in their pockets during their daily walks; once back inside, the children would dump out their pockets to see what “treasures” they had accumulated. The children showed a lot of interest in these treasures so the teachers began planning based on their children’s interests -- art supplies were exchanged for all natural materials. The children created masterpieces with their gifts from Mother Nature and their imaginations went wild with their new outdoor play space. The children learned a lot from bringing the outside in. They gained a sense of accomplishment when they created something beautiful that they chose and collected, they learned empathy and respect when they had plants to take care of, and they also gained a greater appreciation for the outdoors and all the natural beauty that we are provided with everyday!

YWCA Child Care Centre at Bow Valley College (BVC)

The newest of the YWCA child care centres, the YWCA Child Care Centre at BVC will be opening in Calgary in August 2009 as a fully-licensed facility, providing services to 48 children aged 19 months to five years. This beautiful and creatively-designed facility, offering exceptional service to children and their families, is the result of a creative and collaborative partnership between Bow Valley College and the YWCA of Calgary, to primarily address the child care needs of Bow Valley College students and employees. The centre will provide high-quality child care based on child-centered, emergent curriculum within a collaborative framework that includes the child, the family, the Early Learning and Child Care program at BVC, and the YWCA of Calgary. **In 2009,**

→ **13** infants and young children attended the YWCA Child Care Centre at BVC, which opened in partnership with Bow Valley College in August 2009.

YWCA Life and Wellness

The Issues

The YWCA of Calgary believes the health and wellness of all individuals contributes to a vibrant and healthy community. Many factors can influence overall health—from genetics, personal coping skills, social, mental and physical environments, to the economic context of our lives. While Canadians are often touted as some of the healthiest people in the world, obesity and sedentary lifestyles are on the rise. Obesity rates have risen over the last five years and now over half of the Canadian population report having excess weight (Statistics Canada, 2008). Excess weight and wellness are directly related to levels of physical activity. Not surprisingly then, 47% of Canadians are physically inactive with girls, women, and seniors demonstrating the highest inactivity levels (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2009).

It has long been known that serious physical health issues result from inactivity including obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and certain cancers such as colon cancer (Segar, Jayaratne, Hanlon and Richardson, 2002). Yet, research examining the health benefits and risks specific to girls and women expand this list to include osteoporosis, poor body image, eating disorders, estrogen-related cancers, menopausal symptoms, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome and psychosocial health problems such as depression, anxiety, and low-self esteem (Reid, Dyck, McKay and Frisby, 2000). With such clear evidence of health risks and benefits to exercise, why are girls and women more likely to not participate in physical activity?

Advocates for women's health suggest that women face specific barriers to participating in physical activity and recreation. In general, these barriers revolve around the juggling of family, home and work responsibilities of which many women are primarily responsible (Segar, Jayaratne, Hanlon and Richardson, 2002). Demands of child-rearing, domestic responsibilities and full-time work severely limit the amount of time and energy women have available for recreation and personal time. Further, women often express that they prioritize the needs of all others over their own. Yet, according to Hoebeke (2008), additional obstacles are present for women with low socio-economic status -- the population demonstrating the highest rates of physical inactivity and the highest risk for health-related issues. Lack of transportation, child care, money, social supports, low self-esteem and fatigue, resulting from the stress of impoverished situations, are abundant for women on low-incomes and account for their high levels of physical inactivity.

Through physical activity girls and women can reduce their risk for a myriad of physical health problems (Reid, Dyck, McKay and Frisby, 2000), decrease depression, anxiety and psychological distress (Azar, Ball, Salmon and Cleland, 2008), increase feelings of personal empowerment, body awareness and self esteem (Concepcion and Ebbeck, 2005) and reduce social isolation (Reid, Panic and Fisby, 2002). Initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of young girls and women in physical activity worldwide argue that the outcomes from involvement in recreation can extend even further: building life skills, creating social networks, challenging gender norms and uniting communities all result when girls and women participate equally (Fassihi, 2009).

Our Impact

The YWCA of Calgary believes in a holistic approach to life, health and wellness - empowering women to make positive lifestyle choices and to rise above crisis and barriers. The YWCA Fitness on 5th fitness facility offers a multitude of programs and services for community members, volunteers, staff and YWCA clients.

In 2009,

- The YWCA Fitness on 5th facility provided **1,471** subsidized fitness passes to YWCA clients.
- YWCA Fitness on 5th personnel provided **108 hours** of fitness assessment, instruction and nutritional counselling to Vermilion/YWCA Skills Training Centre trainees – integral to the physical preparation required for the demands of a career in the construction trade!
- YWCA Fitness on 5th served **1,020** members in 2009.
- The YWCA Fitness on 5th membership retention rate in 2009 was **85%**, compared to the industry average of 45%.
- In 2009, two YWCA Child Care Centres benefitted from **400 hours** of access to the YWCA Fitness on 5th gymnasium during inclement outdoor weather.
- **50** volunteers provided **1,046** hours of fitness programming to Fitness on 5th members.
- YWCA Fitness on 5th was **chosen to host** the 21st Annual AAYWCA Fitness Leader Retreat in May 2010 at the YWCA of Calgary downtown building.
- YWCA Fitness on 5th **Personal Training** revenues increased in 2009 despite the economic downturn, indicating the desire for high quality one-on-one fitness instruction and support.

YWCA Fitness on 5th Programs and Services

- 45,000-square foot fitness facility with cardio, weight, balance and functional training equipment
- Adult Aquatics in the 25-metre, six-lane saltwater pool (Closed April 1, 2010)
- Adult group fitness classes – expanded in 2009

- Three squash courts
- Full-size gymnasium
- Four aerobics studios with wood-sprung or aerobic flooring (available for hourly rentals)
- Yoga and Pilates fitness classes
- AFLCA and CanFitPro certified fitness class instructors
- Personal training, fitness assessments, body composition and fitness centre orientation

YWCA Fitness on 5th Health and Wellness Services

- Hands on Massage Therapy - quality massage therapy since 1989
- Myo Sport Physiotherapy - professional and personalized physiotherapy services
- Fifth Avenue Chiropractic – offers treatment for many types of injuries

The YWCA Fitness on 5th facility is committed to offering physical fitness and recreation opportunities to all YWCA clients through the provision of subsidized fitness passes. Table 2 summarizes the number of subsidized fitness passes provided to YWCA clients by program area in 2009.

TABLE 2 - YWCA SUBSIDIZED CLIENT FITNESS PASSES 2009 – PROGRAM AREA

YWCA OF CALGARY PROGRAM	Number of Subsidized Client Fitness Passes
Vermilion/YWCA Skills Training Centre	234
YWCA ESL Program Services	941
YWCA Sheriff King Home	81
YWCA Mary Dover House	215
TOTAL CLIENTS	1,471

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