

# YWCA SERVICES SUMMARY

2008

The Issues, Facts, & Successes

Prepared for Fund Development & Communications

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## Overall YWCA Successes - 2008

- ✓ Total Individuals served by YWCA of Calgary in 2008 – 11,605 people (8% increase from 2007)
- ✓ Children Served in 2008 – 3,824 children (33% of clients above)
- ✓ Aboriginal clients served – 887
- ✓ Direct Client Service Hours – 104,513 hours
- ✓ 706 volunteers provided 7,909 hours of volunteer service

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# YWCA Services Summary

THE ISSUES, FACTS & SUCCESSES 2008

## The Issues

The issues of **family violence**, **homelessness**, and **poverty** are harsh realities in our community. 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 who witness family violence suffer from a variety of reactions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (Perry, 1999), fear, anxiety and depression (Dauvergen & Johnson, 2001). Many children struggle with acting out behaviours such as peer-conflict and aggression, while others isolate and withdraw (Perry, 2005).

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 (Valle, 2007; Statistics Canada 2006). Yet, it 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. Family violence can take many forms including intimidation, control, isolation, threats, and emotional, sexual, and physical abuse. The longer a woman stays in the relationship, the more frequent and severe the abuse can become. Family violence can happen to women of all races, ages, socio-economic classes and educational backgrounds.

Issues of family violence are often intertwined with concerns about homelessness and poverty. Two 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. As a result, many women and their children are faced with impoverished circumstances if they decide to leave their abusive partner.

The YWCA of Calgary delivers many critical services in our community to support women and children moving from unsafe, dependent environments to economically stable and independent ones. We represent a vital piece of Calgary's social and economic fabric, serving over 11,605 vulnerable women, children and men in 2008.

The YWCA of Calgary is committed to social change in our community and strives to break the cycles of family violence, homelessness and poverty. We believe that when women and their families are healthy, the community is healthy. But we cannot do it alone. The YWCA of Calgary continues to suffer from a lack of sustainable funding and donor support.

# Family Violence Prevention

## Our Work

Family violence crosses ethnic, religious and socio-economic boundaries. However, certain socio-demographic characteristics of victims and offenders are associated with higher rates of violence. Risk factors for increased spousal violence and homicide include being young (under 25 years of age), being female, living in common-law unions or recently separated, and being an Aboriginal woman (Johnson, 2006). Spousal rates of homicide among Aboriginal women are more than eight times higher than non-Aboriginal women (Johnson, 2006).

Making the decision to leave an abusive partner is not an easy one and only a small percentage of women report crimes of violence to the police. According to the Calgary Police Service in 2007, approximately 78% of spousal abuse incidents went unreported and over the past 5 years, more than 27% of all homicides in Calgary have been domestic in nature (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 emotion support, or lack of affordable housing and financial stability.

Family violence, while often intensified by anger, 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). Leaving the abusive partner may be the only way out, but breaking the pattern without support is often difficult.

## The Facts

### Prevalence

#### CANADA

- Out of the 38,000 police reported incidents of family violence in Canada, Alberta held the second highest rates at 18%, following that of Quebec and Nunavut at 20% (Bressan, 2008).
- It is estimated that only 36% of women report incidents of spousal abuse to police (Johnson, 2006).
- On the snapshot day, April 16, 2008, 4,273 women and 3,361 children were residing in various shelters across Canada; 299 women and 148 children were turned away (Suave & Burns, 2008).

- In 2006, 110 women were murdered in Canada by their abusive partner (Statistics Canada, 2008b).

#### **ALBERTA**

- From April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008, over 12,000 women and children accessed Alberta's shelters. Over 14,000 were unable to be accommodated (Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, 2008).

#### **CALGARY**

- In 2008, 13,496 domestic related calls were received by the Calgary Police Service (Calgary Police Service, 2009).
- The Calgary Police Service responds to about 1,000 calls for service related to domestic violence each month (Calgary Police Service, 2008).
- In 2008, 7 domestic related homicides were recorded by the Calgary Police Service (Calgary Police Service, 2009).
- The Calgary Police Service estimates that 78 percent of spousal incidents go unreported (Calgary Police Service, 2008).
- More than 27% of all homicides in Calgary over the past 5 years have been domestic in nature (Calgary Police Service, 2008).

#### **Women – General**

- Abused women in shelters are most likely 25-34 years old and in a marital or common-law union (Taylor-Butts, 2007).
- Women experience higher rates than men of sexual assault, stalking, serious spousal assaults and spousal homicide (Johnson, 2006).
- Women are twice as likely to be physically injured as men, six times more likely to require medical attention, and five times more likely to be hospitalized. Women suffer from more severe acts of spousal assault and are more likely to be killed (Johnson, 2006).
- The psychological impact of spousal assault includes lowered self-esteem, depression, anxiety, shame and fear (Johnson, 2006).
- Economic costs of violence against women are estimated to be in the billions of dollars. This includes costs related to health, criminal justice, social services and lost productivity (Johnson, 2006).

#### **Immigrant/Visible Minority Women**

- Abused immigrant and visible minority women face additional barriers such as language, isolation, immigration status and a lack of information about Canadian laws (Smith, 2004).

- Immigrant and visible minority women are the least likely to report abuse to police and are the least likely to access social services (Smith, 2004).

### **Aboriginal Women**

- Rates of spousal violence are three times higher for Aboriginal women than for non-Aboriginal women. Aboriginal women are also significantly more likely to experience the most severe and potentially life-threatening forms of violence such as being choked, having a gun or knife used against them, or being sexually assaulted. They are also eight times more likely to be murdered by their partner (Johnson, 2006).
- Part of the explanation for these higher rates is that the presence of risk factors is high among the Aboriginal population. The Aboriginal population is younger than the general population, has lower incomes, has higher levels of alcohol abuse and is more likely to live in common-law relationships. Other factors include the breakdown of family life resulting from the residential school experience, and the impact of colonization on traditional values and culture (Johnson, 2006).

### **Children**

- Almost 40% of women assaulted by spouses said their children witnessed the violence against them, in many cases the violence was severe (Johnson, 2006).
- Being in a home where violence is occurring can cause serious anxiety for children. The earlier they experience anxiety, the more likely they will act aggressively with other children (Moss, 2003).
- Exposure to family violence can affect a child's brain development, emotional well-being, ability to learn and ability to connect with others and make friends (Government of Alberta, 2007).
- Children who witness family violence are more likely to exhibit physical aggression, such as fighting and bullying, and struggle with anxiety, depression and fear (Dauvergne & Johnson, 2001).
- Women often turn to shelters to protect their children from witnessing or directly experiencing family violence. 41% were protecting their children from psychological abuse, 26% from physical abuse, 19% from threats, 16% neglect and 5% from sexual abuse (Taylor-Butts, 2007).
- In 2003, neglect (30%), exposure to domestic violence (28%), and physical abuse (24%) were the 3 most common forms of substantiated child maltreatment in Canada (Trocme, Fallon, MacLaurin, Daciuk, Felstiner & Black, 2005).

## **Our Programs**

The YWCA of Calgary believes in helping women, children, and men - regardless of their role in 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.

### **Shelter-Based Programming**

#### **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, outreach/follow-up support, basic needs, community referrals and advocacy. Walk-in crisis counselling is also available to women in the community.

#### **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. One of the future goals of the program is to provide programming on week nights and weekends.

#### **Community Liaison Counselling**

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.

#### **Outreach Counselling**

The Outreach Counselling program is a community-based preventative service that is accessible to women and 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 have been impacted by family violence but who choose not to access the services of a shelter.

#### **Children's Art Therapist**

This position offers both group and individual art therapy to children and youth residing at the YWCA Sheriff King Home Shelter and at the YWCA Mary Dover House residence. They work collaboratively with Child Support Staff and the Children's Outreach Counsellor to identify children and youth who would benefit from this intervention.

## **24-Hour Crisis Line**

The 24-hour crisis line provides emergency assistance to victims of family violence by trained shelter counsellors at the YWCA Sheriff King Home.

## **Community-Based Programming**

### **Family Violence Programming for Children, Adolescents and Parents**

#### **Paths of Change: Counselling Program for Children**

This program helps children and adolescents age 4-13 understand the family violence they have witnessed, 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 3 times per year and is held on Saturdays to accommodate families' schedules.

#### **Paths of Change: 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 8-week program takes place 3 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.

#### **Paths of Change Community Parenting Program**

This program uses a positive parenting framework to support parents in building better relationships with children. Groups are offered in a variety of community locations and are free of charge to 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 3 times per year.

#### **Families & Schools Stopping Abuse (FASSA)**

This program is an early intervention group counselling program for children who have witnessed family violence. It is provided through 5 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.



### **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 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 trauma counselor.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Equine Camps**

Two one-week summer equine day camps are offered at the Healing Hooves ranch. These camps provide equine facilitated therapy to children age 7-11. All of the children who attend have experienced significant trauma and challenges in their lives, including family violence. Most of the children have suffered numerous losses, family stress, separation and divorce, and/or socio-economic challenges.

## Family Violence Programming for Women and Men

### **Paths of Change: Group and Individual Counselling Programs for Women**

Our Paths of Change Women's Service 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 encouraged to begin healing from the effects of the abuse. 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. Individual counselling however, is only available on a limited basis.

### **Paths of Change: Group and Individual Counselling Programs for Men**

Our Paths of Change Men's Service 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. Individual counselling however, is only available on a limited basis.

## Visitation Services Programming

### **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 & 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 family violence in the intimate relationship.

## Our Successes in 2008

- 736 women and children (347 women and 389 children) fleeing family violence were sheltered and provided with 7,300 hours of counselling support.
- Served 3,804 women, children and men through integrated and specialized family violence programs; for approximately 25,000 hours of direct service.
- Responded to 1,959 crisis calls on our 24-hour crisis line; and 3,176 information calls regarding all YWCA family violence programs
- 1,238 men and women wanting to break the cycle of violence participated group counselling;
- 112 children received 2,305 hours of individual prevention, assessment, intervention, and counselling services;
- 295 children participated in supported group counselling delivered on-site and in community schools.
- 65 families received family counselling services in their home and/or on site;
- 339 parents participated in family violence parenting groups delivered in 7 community locations and onsite at the YWCA;
- 263 women and their families were supported in the community for follow-up and outreach counselling, support and advocacy;
- 171 men and women received just over 3,000 hours of family violence counselling support through individual trauma and multi-cultural counselling;
- 146 parents and 101 children accessed our Visitation Services Programs;
- 357 supervised visits were provided to families accessing the Visitation Services Programs;
- 150 monitored exchanges were provided to families accessing the Visitation Services Programs;

## Our Continuing Challenges

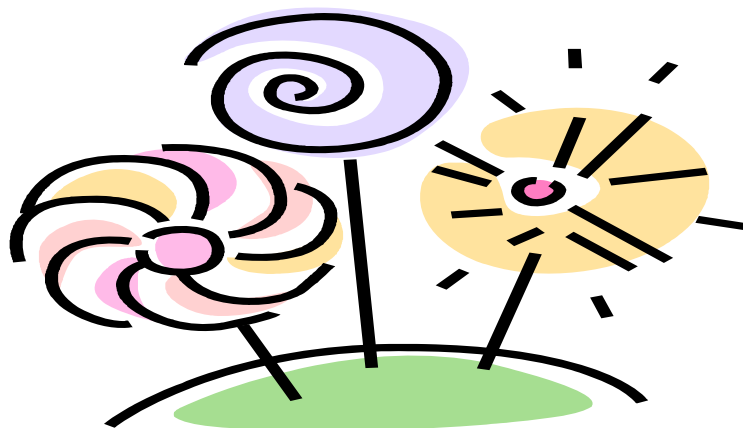
- 1179 women and 472 children who requested shelter were turned away due to lack of space at the YWCA Sheriff King Home Shelter in 2008;
- 15 days is the average length of time a family stayed at the YWCA Sheriff King Home Shelter in 2008.

## Emma's Story

*Emma is a 4 year-old girl who was referred to the Sheriff King Home Children's Domestic Violence Counseling Program by a Child Welfare worker. Emma's parents had been separated for over a year and during the separation Emma witnessed physical abuse (pushing and shoving) and verbal abuse (name calling and profanity) perpetrated by her father upon her mother.*

*At the time of intake, Emma showed some aggressive and oppositional behaviors towards other children and even adults. During the first 5 play therapy sessions, Emma had difficulty separating from her mother and coming into the play therapy room with her counselor. She would also get angry when the play therapy sessions were over. Over time however, Emma's aggression decreased and she began to play out themes using various animal puppets in the playroom. For the next 10 sessions Emma typically demonstrated play where the "Mommy" and "Daddy" puppets were fighting with each other. At one point, she even explained to her counselor that the parent puppets were thrown out of the house leaving the children by themselves.*

*During the 15th play therapy session, Emma's mother was trained in filial therapy by the Sheriff King Family Counselor. This form of therapy teaches child directed play skills to parents. Emma's Mom reported that her parents also had a dysfunctional relationship and that they never played with her as a child. Consequently, Emma's Mom did not know how to play with her child. Over the next 5 sessions Mom learned to let Emma direct the play, empathize with her daughter's feelings and set appropriate limits and boundaries in the playroom. These skills increased the attachment between Mom and Emma and their relationship grew.*



# Poverty & Homelessness Reduction

## Our Work

Issues of poverty and homeless continue to be extensive despite a booming Alberta economy in recent years. In total, 77,595 children – one in every ten – live in poverty in Alberta (based on the 2006 federal consensus) (Kolkman, 2008). Female lone-parent families consistently account for the highest rates of poverty in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006). While many are employed or rely on social assistance, this limited income continues to confine single mothers with children to well below the poverty line and increases the risk of homelessness. On any given night in Calgary 197 families will sleep in a shelter, including 190 families with children (City of Calgary, 2008). In addition, the effect of poverty and homelessness on children is profound. Children who live in poverty are almost twice as likely as non-poor children to die in childhood. They are also more likely to have physical and mental health problems, perform poorly or drop out of school, and engage in dangerous behaviours in their teens (United Way of Calgary and Area, 2005).

Recent immigrants to Canada are especially vulnerable to poverty and homelessness. Despite high levels of education, many New Canadians face higher unemployment and poverty rates than the general Canadian-born population (Statistics Canada, 2006). This is often a result of a lack of Canadian work experience and understanding of Canadian workplace culture. Consequently, many immigrants, both professional and skilled laborers, must take lower paying jobs.

## The Facts

- On May 14, 2008, 4,060 men, women and children were counted homeless including, 197 homeless families. This is an increase of 18.2% from 2006 (City of Calgary, 2008).
- On May 14, 2008, 384 children and youth under 18 years old were counted homeless and needed a place to sleep (City of Calgary, 2008).
- Homeless women are at a greater risk of experiencing violence. Of 97 homeless women interviewed in a Toronto study, 37% had been physically assaulted in the past year, and 21% had been sexually assaulted one or more times (Khandor & Mason, 2008).
- 4.8 million Canadians lived in poverty in 2004 (City of Calgary, 2006).
- Overall poverty levels for the City of Calgary as of 2005, were at 17% for adults and 20% for children (City of Calgary, 2005).
- Women, lone parents, unattached seniors, recent immigrants and Aboriginal people are the most likely to be living in low-income households (Shiell & Zhang, 2004).
- Affordable rent limits are based on 30% of gross annual household income as set by the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC). In April of 2009, the Alberta minimum wage was 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. The average monthly rent for a *bachelor* apartment in 2008, was \$778 per month; a discrepancy of \$320 per month (City of Calgary, 2009).

- In order to rent a *bachelor* apartment in Calgary in the private rental market, without over spending on shelter, a person would need to earn a minimum wage of \$14.96 per hour, which is an hourly shortfall of \$6.16 over the current minimum wage of \$8.80 (City of Calgary, 2009).
- A 2002 Calgary Homeless Foundation study found that 50% of the absolute homeless population was working in some capacity (full-time, part-time or occasionally) and that the biggest barrier to having a permanent home was the high rents (Gardiner & Cairns, 2002).
- In 2008, the waitlist for subsidized housing through the City of Calgary's Calgary Housing Company averaged 3,000 applicants (Calgary Housing Company, 2009).
- Women made up 66% of minimum wage earners in Alberta in 2007 (City of Calgary, 2007).
- In 2006, average household expenses for low-income families in Calgary were 30% more than what they earned; a 10% increase from 2001 (City of Calgary, 2006).
- 42,883 people received food hampers in Calgary in 2005 (City of Calgary, 2006).
- 10% of the 309 homeless people surveyed in 2002, were women fleeing domestic violence (Gardiner & Cairns, 2002).
- More immigrants are arriving here without the ability to speak English or French. In 2004, over 50% of the recent immigrant population was unable to speak either English or French (City of Calgary, 2005).

## Our Programs

The YWCA of Calgary provides safe and affordable housing for women and children in crisis or transition. We empower women and young girls to triumph over physical and sexual violence, addictions, and prostitution—to focus on healing and economic stability. We celebrate the diversity of Canada's new immigrants and work to enhance language and life skills for integration into the Canadian workplace. We guide and support women in their search for a better future.

### Housing Programs

#### **YWCA Mary Dover House**

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. Residents also have access to common kitchens & lounges, laundry facilities, phone

service, an indoor playroom with group programming for mothers and children, an outdoor playground for children, donations and volunteer programs, VON nursing support, monthly access to a Family Law lawyer and a full-scale fitness centre at YWCA Fitness on 5<sup>th</sup>. Residents may stay for up to 12 months in the program, although the average length of stay is 3-4 months.

In addition, the YWCA Mary Dover House provides **6 emergency beds** (the Dorm) available for single homeless women where the maximum stay is 14 days and there is no cost to the residents. During their stay at the YWCA, the women are provided with housing, support and community referrals as required.

### **VON Nursing**

The Victoria Order of Nurses (VON) provides a registered nurse to clients accessing the YWCA shelter, housing and outreach programs

## **Education & 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.

- **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 study in either part-time or full-time classes, in the morning, afternoon or evening.
- **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 Seniors 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).
- **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, the 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.

## Vermilion/YWCA Skills Training Centre

The Vermilion/YWCA Skills Training Centre in Calgary is a pre-employment/pre-apprenticeship training program administered through a partnership of Vermilion Institute and YWCA of Calgary. It seeks to help underemployed or unemployed women, men and youth achieve independence and financial sustainability through career success in the construction industry. The program receives funding from Service Canada, Alberta Employment and Immigration (AEII) and through corporate and private donations.

## Our Successes in 2008

- 206 women and 124 children were sheltered in the YWCA Mary Dover House Transitional Housing program in 2008.
- 144 women were provided with emergency shelter in the YWCA Mary Dover House Dorm in 2008.
- 345 YWCA clients were provided with subsidies in order to attend the YWCA Fitness on 5<sup>th</sup> Centre.
- Just over 2,700 new Canadians received English as a Second Language Instruction through the YWCA ESL programs.
- YWCA ESL staff members are able to offer customer service and assistance to clients in Cantonese, Mandarin, French, Spanish and Portuguese;
- 1,470 students attended English for New Canadians (ENC);
- 1,168 students attended Language Instruction for New Canadians (LINC);
- The Canadian Employment Skills (CES) program graduated 64 students in 2008;
- Most CES clients are 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;
- CES Program success is measured by the number of participants working in jobs within their profession six months after program completion. In 2008, the success rate for CES participants was more than 90%;
- The Vermilion/YWCA Skills Training Centre provided 57 students with approximately 22,000 hours of classroom education and practical, hands on work experience.



## Luanne's Story

*Luanne and her two children came to Mary Dover House from one of the domestic violence emergency shelters. She was taken to the shelter by the police after her husband assaulted her. Luanne was illiterate in both her native language as well as English. Luanne was connected to the YWCA ESL classes and in time her English skills improved and she began to walk with her head held up as she gained confidence.*

*Luanne's two children were traumatized by their experiences of witnessing family violence and their behaviours were demanding and aggressive. Luanne and her children attended the various programs provided by the Parent Link Corridor (located within the YWCA building) for parenting and family support. Her children were also referred to a special needs preschool program through the Salvation Army Children's Village. Gradually the children began to adjust and Luanne began to parent them in a more calm, effective and loving way. With assistance from her YWCA Mary Dover House resident counsellor, Luanne applied for and was offered subsidized housing through Calgary Housing.*

*With the support of her YWCA Mary Dover House resident counsellor and a support worker through her community, Luanne has moved to a place of greater self-sufficiency and independence.*



# Child & Family Services

## Our Work

Many young children and youth in our society suffer negative life experiences. Coupled with a lack of appropriate supports and an unstable home life, these children are at increased risk of developing a range of social, emotional, psychological and physiological problems. Some enter the child welfare system because of violence and abuse at home while others remain in their abusive homes where the cycle of violence continues. Still others live in varying unhealthy family environments, ranging from the socially and emotionally disadvantaged, to the extremely impoverished or unstable. All can be an inevitable path to later drug use, violence and other antisocial behaviour.

In Canada, exposure to domestic violence is the second most common form of *substantiated* child maltreatment (Trocmé, Fallon, MacLaurin, Daciuk, Felstiner & Black, 2005). According to the 1999 General Social Survey on Victimization by Statistics Canada, children heard or saw domestic violence in an estimated 461,000 households. This represents 37% of all households with spousal violence (Dauvergne & Johnson, 2001). Children exposed to family violence, in particular, experience a broad range of reactions including post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep disorders, separation anxiety, aggression, or withdrawal (Perry, 2005; Perry, 1999). A number of children suffer behavioral and emotional difficulties—depression, anxiety, anger, and fear (Dauvergne & Johnson, 2001; Moss, 2003). In these environments children learn that violence is an acceptable response to conflict and is appropriate within the family structure.

Early intervention is the key for vulnerable children and youth. The YWCA of Calgary strives to build positive relationships with troubled children and their families—helping to identify the root of negative responses and build on the child's strengths. We encourage families to grow and heal together—and to strive for better communication, parenting, and problem-solving when dealing with crisis and conflict.

## The Facts

- 20% of Calgary's children live in poverty (City of Calgary, 2005).
- Children who live in poverty are almost twice as likely as non-poor children to die in childhood. They are also more likely to have physical and mental health problems, perform poorly or drop out of school, and engage in dangerous behaviours in their teens (United Way of Calgary and Area, 2005).
- Aboriginal youth experience higher rates of poverty, social exclusion, health concerns, family breakdown, and child welfare involvement (Cooper, 2006).
- The demand for childcare has risen both provincially and nationally due to increasing employment of lone parent families, and the employment of both parents in 2 parent families (City of Calgary, 2005).

- Families with low incomes , particularly single parent families, are more likely to leave children alone, in the care of other children or in other inadequate childcare arrangements when the risks of staying home may involve the loss of employment (Heyman, 2006).
- “Critical hours” refers to the time when children and youth are not in school. Children who are frequently alone during the critical hours have lower self esteem and exhibit stress, anger, loneliness and depression. Significant links have also been found with high risk behaviours such as alcohol, drug and tobacco use, early sexual activity, involvement in crime and low academic achievement (Calgary Children’s Initiative, 2006).
- As of 2007, there were 154 licensed day cares in Calgary; 8,955 children were in licensed day cares and approved day homes while 42, 127 child were in private, unmonitored childcare (United Way of Calgary and Area, 2007).
- 4,048 children received child welfare services from 2003 to 2004 (United Way of Calgary and Area, 2007).
- Only 71.5% of students in Calgary’s public school system graduate from high school within four years of starting Grade 10 (United Way of Calgary and Area, 2007).
- Almost 40% of women assaulted by spouses said their children witnessed the violence against them, in many cases the violence was severe (Johnson, 2006).
- Being in a home where violence is occurring can cause serious anxiety for children. The earlier they experience anxiety, the more likely they will act aggressively with other children (Moss, 2003).
- Children who witness family violence are more likely to exhibit physical aggression, such as fighting and bullying, and struggle with anxiety, depression and fear (Dauvergne & Johnson, 2001).

## **Our Programs**

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 Programming**

#### **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 behavioral problems. The COMPASS program also offers Positive Choices groups for children and parents in community schools. The goals of this program are to increase behavioral, 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.

### **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 age 6 – 15, and in grade 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 8-12 weeks.

### **Youth Advocate Program**

The Youth Advocate program is an early intervention program with direct one-on-one support to youth age 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 collaborates with the North of McKnight Community Resource Centre to provide an after-school youth drop-in program called the ChillZone, where adolescents can hang out safely, develop a sense of belonging, make new friends, receive support if needed and have an opportunity to develop leadership and social skills.

### **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 designed to help children and youth between the ages of 7-14 grow socially, emotionally and physically. Recreational activities, music, crafts, swimming, games, a campfire & nutritional meals and snacks are some of the highlights of camp.

### **YWCA Summer Campership Program**

Every summer, thanks to generous donors, the YWCA of Calgary is able to sponsor 100 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.

## **Early Childhood Programming**

### **Parent Link Corridor**

The 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 Parent Link Corridor programs benefit from a number of “bonus” services, offered by virtue of the fact that the Parent Link Corridor represents a three-way partnership between the YWCA of Calgary, Calgary Urban Project Society, and Calgary Family Services. The 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 Parent Link Corridor provides direct parenting support for these multi-barriered families with counselling, referral and on site supports.

### **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 program operated as a drop-in and Pre-school room beginning in the early 1980's. The YWCA Child Care currently provides services to approximately 40 children monthly, ages 13 months to 5 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 5<sup>th</sup> gymnasium. Full-time Pre-school children have the opportunity for swimming three times a week, along with a weekly gym program.

### **Bright Lights Child Care Centre (Enmax/YWCA)**

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 3 months to 5 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 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.

### **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 5 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.

## **Our Successes in 2008**

- 715 students in grades 1-9, and their families, received Family School Liaison counselling, support services and recreational opportunities in 2008;
- 565 children and their parents received counselling support, parenting education and access to community resources from the COMPASS program;
- 87 parents and children attended COMPASS Positive Choices groups;
- 95 youth received support and mentoring from the Youth Advocate program;
- 339 youth participated in Youth Advocate after school drop-in groups;
- 59 children and youth, ages 7-13, attended the YWCA / Kamp Kiwanis Summer Day Camp program during two weeks in the summer of 2008;
- 96 children were sponsored by the YWCA to attend weeklong overnight summer camps in the summer of 2008;
- 12 children attended a specialized Equine Summer Camp in partnership with Healing Hooves;
- 619 children and 627 parents received early childhood, parent education and family support services from the Parent Link Corridor;
- 56 children attended the YWCA of Calgary Child Care Centre, located at our downtown site;
- 116 infants and young children attended the ENMAX/YWCA Bright Lights Child Care Centre;
- In August 2009, the YWCA Child Care Centre at BVC will be opening in partnership with Bow Valley College, providing quality child care services to 48 toddlers and pre-schoolers.

## Sam's Story

*Sam is a four year old boy who was referred to the COMPASS program by the YWCA play therapist and family counsellor. Sam displayed high anxiety, severe separation anxiety; he was defiant, aggressive, hyperactive and unfocussed in his play activities. Sam comes from a low income, single parent home with a history of domestic violence. His mother has been diagnosed with mental health illness and has a high level of anxiety. She has received counselling for domestic violence and was referred to a mental health therapist.*

*At the time of the referral Sam was not attending play school due to finances and his mother's anxiety about sending him to ECS. This writer worked with the play therapist and family counsellor with Sam and his mother in child-directed play, allowing Sam to express his feelings of frustration and fears. This writer also helped implement routine and structure in the home to help reduce Sam's anxiety and defiance, and worked with his mother on positive discipline, age-appropriate expectations, follow through on consequences. The family was provided with a number of recreational activities such as zoo passes, tickets to a play, hockey games etc. in order to build Sam's and his mother's self-confidence and address their issues of anxiety.*

*With the mother's written consent, a specialized preschool/ECS program was contacted that would be able to meet Sam's learning needs and address his behavioural issues. This worker also was able to help address some of the financial concerns of the family, including getting Sam a much needed new mattress and bedroom furniture. This writer also referred Sam to Access Mental Health and assisted his mother with following through on this referral. As a result, Sam was seen by the Anxiety and Mood Disorder clinic at the time of closure. He is attending ECS and displays increased self-confidence; he is better able to express his emotions, in particular, frustration and anger and is less defiant and aggressive.*



# Community Health & Wellness

## Our Work

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, social, mental and physical environments, to the economic context of our lives and coping skills.

Physical inactivity is an enormous health issue in Canada with 47% of Canadians considered physically inactive (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2009). Those with the highest inactivity levels include women, girls, and seniors (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2009). 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 for both men and women over the last five years, and now over half of the Canadian population report having excess weight (Statistics Canada, 2008).

Poverty is one of the leading barriers to achieving health and wellness, affecting women's ability not only to access an affordable fitness facility, but also to buy nutritious food for their families. A recent study by the Canadian Medical Association revealed that low-income single mothers often compromise their own nutrition to feed their children (McIntyre, Glanville, Raine, Dayle, Anderson, & Battaglia, 2003).

## The Facts

- In 2008, 51% of Canadian adults reported having excess weight. About 17% of Canadians aged 18 or older reported weight and height that put them in the obese category, up from 15% in 2003 (Statistics Canada, 2008a).
- 19.3% of youth, ages 12-17 are overweight or obese (Statistics Canada, 2008a).
- Alberta Health Services reports that 54.7% of men and 38.1% of women are overweight or obese (Statistics Canada, 2009).
- In 2008, only 51% of Canadians were at least moderately active during their leisure time. This is equivalent to walking at least 30 minutes a day or taking an hour-long exercise class at least three times a week (Statistics Canada, 2008a).
- After age 20, the percentage of women who were at least moderately active stabilized at about 47% then dropped to 37% at age 65 or older (Statistics Canada, 2008a).
- In 1978/79 a combined overweight/obesity rate of 15% was documented for 2-17 year olds in Canada. By 2004, about 1.1 million boys and girls in this age group, or 18%, were overweight, and another half a million, or 8%, were obese. This means that more than one-quarter (26%) have a combined overweight/obesity rate (Shields, 2006).
- Over the past 25 years, the overweight/obesity rate among adolescents aged 12- to 17 has more than doubled. (Shields, 2006).



- In 2004, over a third (36%) of children aged 6 to 11 spent more than 2 hours a day watching television, playing video games and using the computer. These children were twice as likely to be overweight/obese (Shields, 2006).

## **Our Programs**

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

### **YWCA Fitness on 5<sup>th</sup> Programs & Services**

- 45,000 square foot fitness facility with cardio, weight, balance & functional training equipment
- Adult Aquatics in the 25 metre, 6-lane Saltwater Pool (Family Swim - Weekends 1-4pm)
- Adult Fitness Classes
- Three Squash Courts
- Full size gymnasium
- Fitness Studios (available for hourly rentals)
- Yoga & Pilates
- Leadership Courses (Standard First Aid, CPR, Master, Bronze Medallion, Bronze Cross)
- Personal Training, Fitness Assessments, Body Composition & Fitness Centre Orientation

### **YWCA Fitness on 5<sup>th</sup> Health & Wellness Services**

- Hands on Massage Therapy
- Myo Sport Physiotherapy

## **Our Successes in 2008**

- YWCA Fitness on 5<sup>th</sup> served 1,160 members in 2008.
- 1,332 subsidized fitness passes were distributed to YWCA clients and other low-income Calgarians in 2008;
- In 2008, 16 volunteers provided 780 hours of fitness programming to Fitness on 5<sup>th</sup> members;

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