



CARMEN'S STORY

For Carmen, her lowest point was not necessarily the beatings or verbal abuse she suffered at the hands of her common-law husband. It was being left with nothing when she finally got out of the relationship after 13 years.

“Somehow, he managed to get the house and the children,” she says. “And it felt like that was my punishment for leaving an abusive relationship. I had lost everything.”

She still had her job though, so she would wash up the best she could in the restroom at work, then sleep in her car in the parking lot after her shift was over — until it got risky. “One night, a coworker saw me, knocked on my window and asked why I wasn’t going home. I had to lie and say that I was getting some rest before the long drive.”

For more than a decade, she had poured her life into raising two kids, establishing a home and maintaining some sort of financial stability, despite her husband’s alcohol and drug abuse, gambling problems and prison terms.

“I stayed with him way too long,” she says. “When he was nice, everything was great. But when he was angry or high, he would punch me in the head, throw me on the floor and scream at me. He also stole my bank card and, when I changed my PIN, he would just take cash.

**“I realize that I had a choice,
and I could’ve chosen to leave,
but I didn’t know my options.”**

Fortunately, Carmen now has help from the YWCA of Calgary. As an outreach client, she is getting free access to counselling, legal support and education on family violence.

“We want to show her that she has choices,” says YWCA counsellor Guadalupe. “We are doing everything we can to help her put her life back together.”

“It’s brought me up from nothing to feeling like something,” adds Carmen, who is currently living in a stable home environment and hopes to get her kids back soon. “There are women and children in need for sure, and I’m happy this place is there to help.”

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WE WARM
WOMEN'S
HEARTS AND
HELP HEAL
THEIR SOULS



1,374 volunteers at the YWCA of Calgary provided, on average, 9 hours of volunteer service each.

HIGHLIGHTS

A lot can happen in a year. Especially a year that brought as many changes and challenges as 2009 did. Here are some of the highlights of the YWCA of Calgary's year...

The YWCA of Calgary opens a **third child care centre**. Located at Bow Valley College, the bright and new facility is fully licensed for 48 children.

101.5 Energy FM hosts the **Open Your Purse** fundraiser where women (and men!) bid on gorgeous celebrity purses in a silent and live auction. Fergie, Jann Arden and Elisha Cuthbert are among the celebrities to donate their gently-used purses to the event.

RBC partners with the YWCA of Calgary for the second annual RBC Keep a Roof Over Their Heads fundraiser in support of transitional housing for women and children in Calgary.

The YWCA of Calgary's **Home and School Support** programs achieve a four-year accreditation and an exceptionally high compliance rating in 214 standards from the Canadian Accreditation Council.

For the 10th consecutive year, the Calgary Herald selects the YWCA Sheriff King Home – the YWCA of Calgary's domestic violence emergency shelter – as a recipient of the **Calgary Herald Christmas Fund** in support of art therapy for children of trauma.

Vermilion Energy presents another \$625,000 cheque to the YWCA of Calgary as part of a combined \$4-million commitment the company and the "Friends of Vermilion" – business founders, board of directors, senior management and staff – made to the Vermilion/YWCA Skills Training Centre. The Skills Training Centre gives Calgary women training in carpentry and life skills so they can move their families out of poverty into independence.

Paul Kelly, CEO of **First Calgary Savings**, and **Team Realex** (Realex Properties Corp.) finish first in their respective categories for the second year in the YWCA of Calgary Walk a Mile in Her Shoes fundraising event.

Woman of Vision, a partnership between the YWCA of Calgary and Global Calgary, holds another successful luncheon at the Westin Hotel to honour the vision of 12 inspiring women.

Give the Gift of Safety – for a second consecutive year, a fundraiser at Golden Acre Garden Centre raises funds for women and children who are homeless at Christmas. CTV Calgary, 101.5 Energy FM, Trico Homes, and Oasis Wellness and Spa team up to help residents of the YWCA Mary Dover House.

Son Robbie, father Rob and grandfather Robert join forces as a fundraising team called **"The Three Wobbly Robs."** They gallantly wobble a mile in high heels to raise funds for the YWCA in support of breaking the cycle of domestic violence.

The **ChickWagon! Foundation** spurs Calgarians to raise nearly \$19,000 for the YWCA of Calgary.

The **Sam and Betty Switzer Foundation** support another year of marketing the Vermilion/YWCA Skills Training Centre.

Yellow Raincoat Benefit Consultant, Nancy McKenzie, purchases 41 items from the Gift for All Seasons booklet as gifts for her corporate clients, in support of the YWCA Mary Dover House.

With little to whine about, the **Wine-a-lot women of Elbow Valley** use their talents and time to build treasures for the YWCA of Calgary.

The **Peanut Butter Classic**, an annual women's golf tournament, tees off for the YWCA of Calgary.

Planning begins for the **YWCA of Calgary's Centennial year** in Calgary – 100 years of service to Calgary women.

Many we helped.

Others we missed.



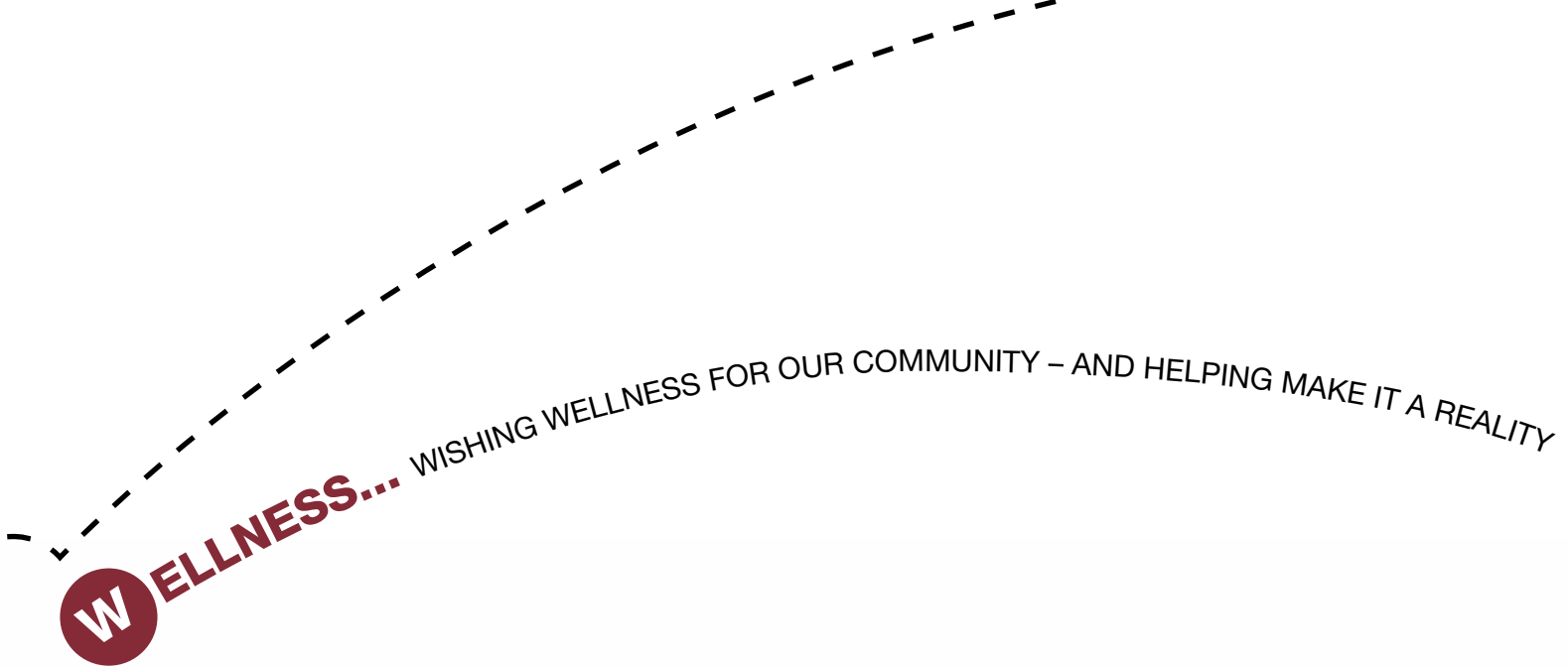
166 infants, pre-toddlers and preschoolers played their way through the **YWCA of Calgary's three child care centres.**

YWCA Mary Dover House welcomed **339 women** and **111 children.**

The YWCA of Calgary's emergency shelter – **YWCA Sheriff King Home** – welcomed **746 women and children** with a safe haven.

YWCA Mary Dover House had to turn away **778 others.**

The YWCA of Calgary's emergency shelter – **YWCA Sheriff King Home** – had to turn away **1,050 women** and **340 children** in 2009 because of a lack of resources.



A healthy community is built by investing in people.



The YWCA Fitness on 5th facility helped **1,471 internal YWCA clients**

by providing **\$88,000 worth of fitness subsidies** to access its

health and wellness facilities through subsidies. With the help of nearly **\$30,000**

in donations, 158 children and youth experienced the fun and

excitement of summer camp.

2,615 new Canadians received **12,571 hours of**

ESL instruction at the YWCA of Calgary, helping them to integrate

and find work in the community.

