



“Until **all of us** have made it,
none of us have made it”

- Rosemary Brown

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none of us have made it”**

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Rosemary Brown made history in 1973 when she became the first Black woman elected to provincial office in Canada. In 1975 she made history again when she became the first Black woman to run for the leadership of a federal political party in Canada. After coming in second, she continued to represent the riding of Vancouver-Burrard in the B.C. legislature for 14 years. During her time in office, she introduced legislation to protect equity-seeking groups. Following her time in politics, she became a professor of women’s studies at Simon Fraser University. Throughout her distinguished career, Rosemary Brown won many awards including the Order of British Columbia and the Order of Canada. We are proud to share that in 1989 she was recognized by YWCA, receiving a Woman of Distinction award.

Ms. Brown’s words are a call to action and remind us that progress has been achieved when it has been achieved for all. Until such time, we continue with our efforts to help all women and their families thrive in a safe and equitable community.

VISION

ALL of us thriving in relationship with a diverse, inclusive, and equitable organization.

BACKGROUND

In recent years, we have seen and heard the cries for equity grow louder. We have seen the impact of an economic downturn, racial injustice, environmental crises, and the pressure of a global pandemic. Our organization, like many others, is now poised to imagine and build an inclusive and sustainable future. Part of this work required us to not only learn from broader historical injustices but to reflect on our own history as an organization. We are proud of the many lives we have touched over the years and, we acknowledge that as a feminist organization, we must question existing power structures including our own. As the times evolved, so have we and working from the foundation built by women more than a hundred years ago, we now aspire to operate from a framework of Intersectional Feminism. The journey to get here involved many informal and ad hoc efforts and we are now approaching this work with consistency and coordination in mind. Inspired by the words of Rosemary Brown, we have developed this strategy for the benefit of all who engage with YW Calgary.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO US

We are pursuing an equity, diversity, and inclusion strategy because it aligns with our overarching mission to support women and their families, and we also recognize that inclusion and diversity are drivers of organizational performance.

RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

With humility, gratitude, respect, and reciprocity, we (YW) acknowledge the truth in our shared history and our journey to reconciliation on Moh-kins-tsis (Calgary), where the Bow and Elbow rivers meet. We consider these Indigenous Lands as a place of confluence where the sharing of resources, ideas and opportunities naturally come together.

We acknowledge that we are on the ancestral territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy, which includes Siksika (Seeg-see-kah), Piikani (Bee-gun-nee), Amskaapiiikani (Om-Skaa-bee-bee-Gun-nee) and Kainai (G-ai-nah) First Nations; the Îethka Nakoda Wîcastabi (ee-YETH'-kah nah-COH'-dah WHISK'-ah-tah-bay) First Nations, comprised of the Chiniki (Chin-ick-ee), Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations; and the Tsuut'ina First Nation. Moh-kins-tsis, where YW Calgary is situated, is also the homeland of the historic Northwest Métis and to Métis Nation of Alberta. (City of Calgary and Calgary Public Library)

Reconciliation is a process; therefore, we take the approach that this work is ongoing. We are committed to building respectful and effective relationships with Indigenous communities through a variety of different engagement strategies.



TERMINOLOGY

EQUITY:

In contrast from equality, which means that everybody has the “same”, equity refers to everybody “having what they need”.

DIVERSITY:

The presence of difference in any given setting (CEC, 2023).

INCLUSION:

An experience of being welcome and feeling like you belong.

INTERSECTIONALITY:

This is a framework where there is recognition of the different identities a person possesses and understanding the corresponding challenges and privileges that accompany those identities (Crenshaw, 1989).

SOCIAL JUSTICE:

This is the belief that everyone should have access to economic, political, and social rights and opportunities (NASW, 2023). We engage in social justice work when we open doors of opportunity for others, particularly those who have not had that opportunity before (NASW, 2023).

EQUITY-SEEKING GROUPS:

Groups that experience, identify and address barriers to equal rights, services, and opportunities.

ADVOCACY:

Taking action to promote, protect, and support the rights of individuals, communities, and groups (NASW, 2023).

ALLY:

Someone who supports a marginalized community to which they don't belong.

ACCESSIBILITY:

An organization is accessible when people from diverse backgrounds can easily find and engage with it regardless of their characteristics and/or identities.

“My mission in life is not merely to survive, but **to thrive**; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humour, and some style.”

- Maya Angelou

PRINCIPLES

CULTURAL HUMILITY:

A commitment to continuously explore, critique and evaluate one's own beliefs and values while intentionally honoring the experiences, values, and customs of others.

(Tervalon, Murray-Garcia, 1998).

FALLIBILITY:

We understand that nobody is perfect. We acknowledge and learn from our mistakes.

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL:

We believe that individual experiences are often linked to broader social and political structures.

CRITICAL THINKING:

We evaluate situations and issues with all the available data in an analytical way. We are committed to knowing the difference between feelings and facts and acknowledge that both influence how we understand our circumstances and decision-making.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY:

Each of us are responsible for our own learning, behaviour, and contribution towards this work.

SHARED COMMITMENT:

The aims of this strategy require sustained effort and commitment from everybody throughout the organization.

ONGOING IMPROVEMENT:

We value continual growth and improvement.

ADAPTIVE CAPACITY:

We understand that change is ongoing. We balance unwavering centredness with flexibility and seize opportunities to effectively adapt to changes within and outside of the organization.

CONSTRUCTIVE DISRUPTION:

We challenge the status quo with the goals of change and social justice. We understand that with disruption comes discomfort.

RESULTS ORIENTATION:

We focus on making a difference in observable and tangible ways.

DIVERSITY WITHIN DIVERSITY:

We understand that there is diversity within diverse communities.



GOALS

OUR LEADERS

We lead by example and inspire others to contribute to an inclusive culture.

Leaders play a critical role in setting the tone for the organization and using their power and influence for the benefit of all. We rely on leaders to bring this strategy to life each day in ways that can be seen and understood by those around them. Outcome(s): **All**

OUR TEAMS

Our teams reflect and represent the diversity of the community where we work.

We aspire for our teams to share the characteristics of the broader community and work in the best interests of diverse community members. Outcome(s): **1, 2, & 5**

OUR TRUSTED VOICE

We leverage data and our reputational strength to advocate for change and social justice.

Making sustained change requires intervention at all levels. In addition to providing programs and services, we want to shift paradigms and influence larger systems. Outcome(s): **3 & 4**

OUR WORK

We integrate effective equity, diversity, and inclusion practices in our work throughout the organization to drive results.

Incorporating effective equity, diversity, and inclusion practices across all areas ensures that our work delivers results within and outside of the organization. Outcome(s): **1, 3, 4, & 5**

OUTCOMES

ONE

The organization is more accessible to people from equity-seeking groups.

TWO

There is diversity at all levels of the organization.

THREE

Our position on issues related to social justice, diversity, and equity are clearly communicated to those within and outside of the organization.

FOUR

We have relationships with diverse groups and organizations that are characterized by honesty, trust, and openness.

FIVE

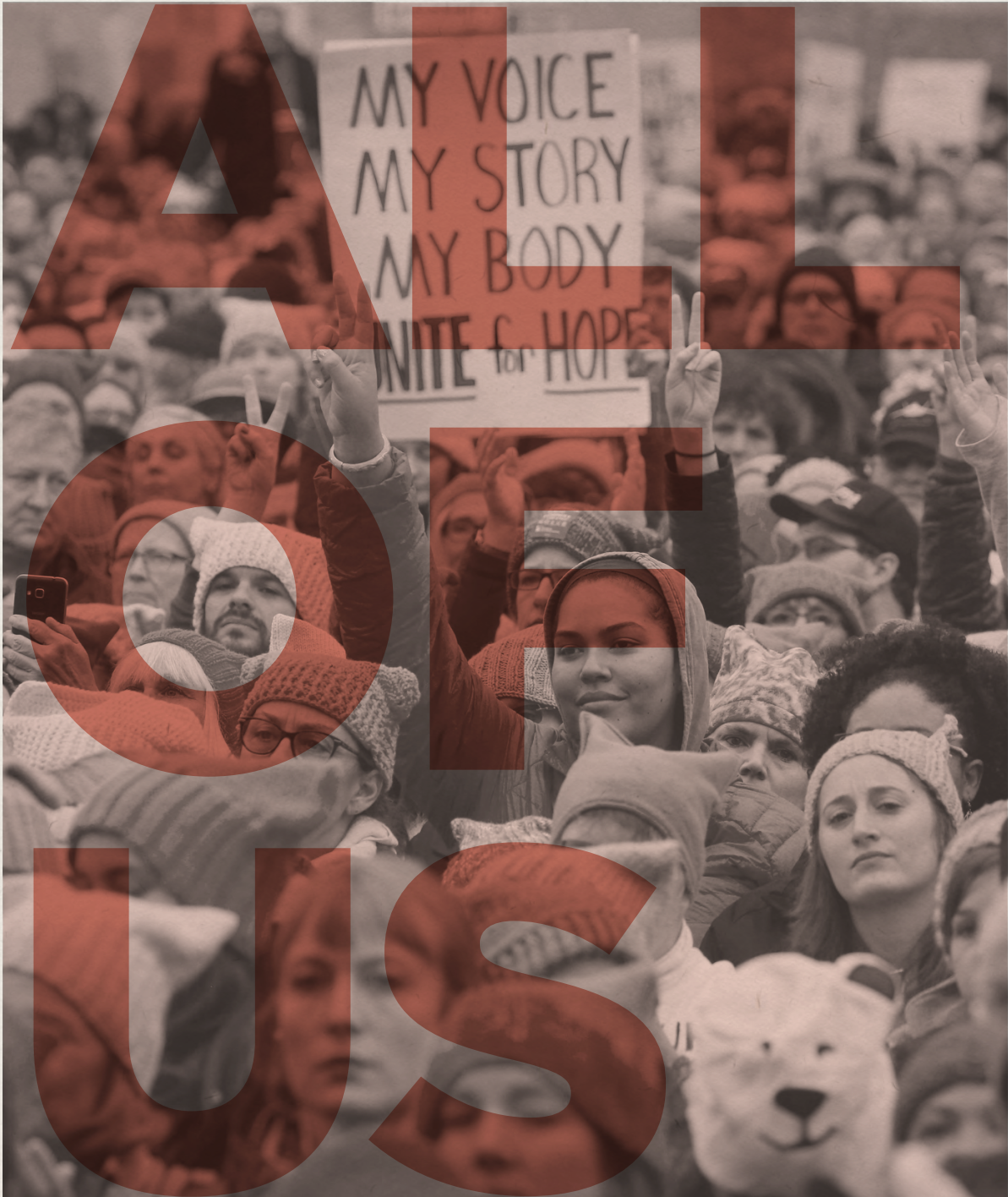
We use a variety of engagement methods to create opportunities for belonging.

“AN INVITATION TO A BRAVE SPACE”

Together we will create *brave* space
Because there is no such thing as a “safe space”
We exist in the real world
We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds.
In this space
We seek to turn down the volume of the outside world.
We amplify voices that fight to be heard elsewhere,
We call each other to more truth and love
We have the right to start somewhere and continue to grow.
We have the responsibility to examine what we think we know.
We will not be perfect.
It will not always be what we wish it to be
But
It will be *our brave space together,*
And
We will work on it side by side.

- by Micky Scottbey Jones





“In our world, divide and conquer
must become define and **empower.**”

- Audre Lorde