



A TURNING POINT
FOR WOMEN



TURNING POINTS

news & views of YWCA Toronto >> Volume 4 Issue 2 Summer 2007



Life Skills:

TRAINING | COACHING | PUBLICATIONS

FEATURE ARTICLE

Photo | Barbara Stoneham



YWCA HOMECOMINGS

A message from the Chief Executive Officer

With fall in the air, thoughts of a new school year always come to mind. Even if back to school is far from your personal curriculum, as summer flowers give way to fall leaves, autumn is a time when we are reminded of the possibility of change and the process of learning new ideas. Since 1873, YWCA Toronto has been helping women and girls embrace the possibility of change by helping them to achieve equality, gain economic independence and live lives free from violence.

Learning continues to be at the forefront of our minds as Family Law Education for Women (FLEW) - a province-wide public legal education and outreach project - begins to produce materials and award community capacity-building grants. Funded by the Ontario Women's Directorate as a result of the successful No Religious Arbitration Coalition Campaign, the project's goal is to educate and enable vulnerable and isolated women in Ontario who are facing family law issues to understand and exercise their legal rights, and in turn make informed decisions. For more information about FLEW, visit our website at www.ywca-toronto.org and click on advocate for change.

This summer, YWCA Toronto was thrilled to celebrate a new housing initiative.

August marked the opening of our doors at YWCA Bergamot, a 68-unit apartment building and 62-space Early Learning Centre. This exciting initiative has allowed us to create safe homes and quality childcare options for single women and women-led families in the Rexdale community.

In addition to inaugurating this new building, we also acknowledged the history of 1st Stop Woodlawn which celebrated its 50th anniversary. To commemorate the building, which was originally made possible by a hardworking volunteer committee, we enjoyed tea and refreshments to recognize the commitment and support of five decades of volunteerism.

The mandate of Woodlawn Residence, as it was known in 1957, was "to give priority housing to students and girls in their first jobs, assisting young women away from home to become progressively

independent and learn to cope in the big city." Today, 1st Stop Woodlawn is a unique housing model, offering emergency shelter, transitional and permanent housing for women, with a range of specialized services for young women in particular. Fifty years after its cornerstone was laid, Woodlawn continues to assist women to live progressively and independently in the big city.

Also in this issue, I encourage you to read about recent YWCA activities, including the tremendous success of the 2007 Annual Women of Distinction Awards. It's not too early to begin thinking about next year's awards - consider nominating a woman you think inspires others for 2008! Find out about the acquisition of our newest program, YWCA December 6 Fund and meet our new board president, Dr. Gail Robinson. Whatever fall activities and events you have planned, make sure they include YWCA Week Without Violence. I look forward to seeing you there.

Heather M. McGregor

Photo | Barbara Stoneham



Welcome to our new YWCA TORONTO Board President

YWCA Toronto is pleased to announce the election of Dr. Gail Erlick Robinson as President of YWCA Toronto's Board of Directors in April 2007.

A Woman of Distinction™, and a champion in the field of women's mental health, we will benefit from her vision, commitment and strong leadership.

LIFE SKILLS: TRAINING | COACHING | PUBLICATIONS

For over thirty years, YWCA Toronto has worked with professionals across Canada to develop the principles of the NewStart model - an experiential learning methodology to teach Life Skills to adults. Life Skills offers professional development, skills enhancement, and personal growth rooted in experiential models of adult education. YWCA Toronto has contributed to the evolution of this community with new resources and materials which currently form the basis of our Life Skills Coach Training program.

In that time, YWCA Toronto has partnered with many individuals and groups to advance the benefits of the NewStart adult education model. What sets YWCA Toronto apart from the rest of the community is the quality, adaptability and far-reaching effects of the Life Skills Coach Training program and Life Skills publications.

Today, YWCA Toronto is a national training centre for Life Skills Coaching and Resources. We travel far and wide to communities of all sizes to deliver our training programs, and we sell our publications nationally and internationally.

In response to increased requests from professionals to bring Life Skills Coach Training to remote or financially-deprived communities, the YWCA Toronto team has coordinated a national network of trainers who are able to deliver the program in local communities across the country.

In 2006 we were contacted by the Urban Circle Training Centre in Winnipeg, which primarily serves the downtown aboriginal community. Our Life Skills Coach Training was attended by the Centre's entire staff, including front-line workers, administrative personnel, the Executive Director and community elders. The project was

highly inspiring and moving, acting as a testament to YWCA Toronto's principles of knowledge sharing and the promotion of local leadership. Plans are already in the works for phase two to begin this fall.

A new pilot project will commence this fall and will run to March 2008. Across Ontario, YWCA Toronto will partner with local organizations and deliver training programs in order to certify licensed agencies to deliver YWCA Toronto Life Skills Coach Training programs in their communities.



Photos | Barbara Stoneham

News of the "Ontario Training Tour" has spread quickly, as support group leaders, adult educators, non-profit organizations and private vocational institutions see its potential for local community growth. Our plans for this venture are to bring the YWCA Toronto Life Skills Training, Coaching and Publications to the entire country and eventually to other corners of the world, creating a community of professional Life Skills Coaches who will support and learn from each other by sharing their knowledge and the diversity of the communities they represent.

For more information about this exciting new initiative, visit us online at www.ywca-toronto.org/lifeskills, or call 416.531.3900

ANNOUNCEMENT WEEK WITHOUT VIOLENCE™

October 14-20th, 2007 will mark the 11th Anniversary of YWCA Toronto's Week Without Violence which focuses on the leadership of women and girls to promote realistic and sustainable alternatives to violence.

Events include:

- 5th annual **girlJAM**, October 15th, Lula Lounge, 6-10pm
- **bu! the power of being a girl conference**, October 20th, North York Civic Centre, 9-5pm
- A host of other free events, visit www.ywcautoronto.org for more details

Week Without Violence is YWCA's largest annual advocacy effort. This is an international initiative marked in over 90 countries around the world.

For further information check out
www.ywcautoronto.org

ANNOUNCEMENT

A \$10,000 cheque from **RBC Foundation** was presented to **YWCA Toronto** for the Teen Mothers' Program. The Foundation has been providing support to the program every year since 2002.



Pictured: (L to R) Lisa Gallacher, Regional Vice President, Royal Bank of Canada; Sally Palmateer, Director, YWCA Girls' and Family Programs; Kareem A. Ayyash, Branch Manager (Kingston & McCowan Branch), Royal Bank of Canada.

A GENERATION APART, A MOVEMENT TOGETHER

By Saron Ghebressellassie,
2007 Young Woman of Distinction

Reflecting upon the life of Julia M. Ruby, it strikes me that though separated by time, we are united in our efforts. We write, demonstrate and organize to challenge inequalities - from the right to vote to the right to affordable housing. Together but separately we have fought to end all forms of oppression so women can live independent lives free from violence. Julia M. Ruby was the embodiment of passion, commitment and inclusion. She recognized the global need for equality, which echoes my own desire to transcend borders and achieve international solidarity among women.

For over 60 years Julia M. Ruby was a catalyst for capacity-building and leadership opportunities for women, both at home and abroad. Her impact can be felt today rippling in all directions of our community.

The Julia M. Ruby Fund at YWCA Toronto provides the Young Woman of Distinction with a \$3,000 grant toward educational goals or leadership development opportunities. My goal of pursuing graduate studies in the field of communications has become a reality thanks to her generosity. This award holds more than monetary value as education is often the door to equity.

It is a great privilege to be a YWCA Toronto Young Woman of Distinction. It presents a critical responsibility to honour and continue Julia M. Ruby's commitment to advocating on behalf of women and girls. I am proud to be a part of this legacy.

For information on nominations for the 2008
Young Woman of Distinction Award, visit
www.womenofdistinction.ca

YWCA ELM CENTRE

Affordable and Supportive Permanent Housing for Women and Their Families

THE NEED FOR PERMANENT, AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS SIGNIFICANT

According to the 2006 Statistics Canada General Social Survey, 82% of women and children who stay in shelters are escaping violence; but shelters are only part of the solution

Without access to affordable, safe and permanent housing, women are often forced to return to their abusers, putting them at 50% greater risk of lethal abuse

Of the 70,000 people waiting for housing in the city of Toronto, more than half are women and single mothers

THE SOLUTION IS WITHIN OUR REACH

Through a competitive process, YWCA Toronto was selected by the City of Toronto to create 300 new units of affordable and supportive housing for women and their families in the downtown core, redeveloping a city block of land enclosed by Edward, Elm, Chestnut, and Elizabeth Streets. YWCA Elm Centre is due to open in 2010.

YWCA Toronto has been housing women since 1873. YWCA Elm Centre continues this commitment, by reducing the number of homeless women and their families. Next to the city, we are the largest provider of affordable, permanent housing for women in Toronto.

In partnership with Wigwamen Incorporated and The Jean Tweed Centre, the development will feature:

150 affordable units for single women and women-led families - including 45 units for women 50+ years of age

100 units for women with serious mental illness and concurrent disabling health issues, and their children

50 units for families of Aboriginal heritage, with 10 of these units designated for Aboriginal women fleeing violence

To learn how you can support this project, contact Christine Thompson, Special Giving Manager at 416-961-8101 x 361 or cthompson@ywcatoronto.org

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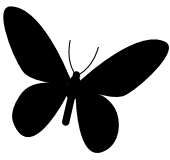
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Sandra Cave and Becky Curran
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The Fresh Start Monthly Giving Plan is an easy way for you to support YWCA Toronto throughout the year.

Your gifts are automatically withdrawn from your chequing account or charged to your credit card on the 15th of each month.

Why become a YWCA monthly donor?

- You will help YWCA Toronto continue to be a turning point in the lives of women and girls.
- Monthly giving is simple, cost-effective, and respectful of your time and privacy.
- You will receive our Turning Points newsletter, Annual Report, and invitations to events.

Giving is as easy as 1, 2, or 3:

1. Complete the other side of this form and return.
2. Register online at www.ywcatoronto.org.
3. Or call 416-961-8101 x 352.

Thank you for your support!

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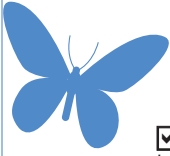
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To make a donation online, visit
www.ywcatoronto.org

Receipts are issued for all donations of \$10 or more.
Thank you for your support!

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TURNING POINTS

news & views of YWCA Toronto

FRONT COVER FEATURE

Life Skills: Training, Coaching, Publications

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Dr. Gail Robinson

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Call for 2008 NOMINATIONS

YWCA Toronto's Women of Distinction Awards™ acknowledges the achievements of six women and one young woman (under the age of 25), whose contributions have improved the lives of other women and girls.

Nominate a woman whom you feel is a role model, has broken barriers, opened doors or carved a new path.

For details and application criteria, please visit our website www.womenofdistinction.ca

2007 Holiday Season ADOPT A FAMILY Campaign

Share the spirit of the season by participating in the 2007 holiday season Adopt a Family Campaign! Rally your friends, family and co-workers and help women-led families by donating much-needed grocery and gift cards.

To participate or receive more information, please contact volunteercoordinator@ywcatoronto.org

ANNOUNCING A New YWCA Toronto Program!

YWCA
December 6 Fund

We are pleased to announce that as of April 1, 2007, the December 6 Fund of Toronto has become a YWCA program.

The December 6 Fund was established in 1990 and grew out of the December 6 Coalition which held commemorative

events each year to mark the Montreal Massacre in 1989 of 14 women engineering students at *L'École Polytechnique*. The Fund raises monies and public awareness about violence against women and was the very first provider of interest-free loans to women leaving abusive situations. An annual banquet in December along with other fundraising initiatives has allowed the Fund to grow to the extent that in 2005/6, 79 women received interest-free loans totalling \$52,900. Most of the women are from the GTA, with a small number from the Region of Peel, supported by the United Way of Peel Region. We are thrilled the Fund approached us.

The YWCA December 6 Fund will continue this strong tradition. Once a loan is repaid, the money is then reallocated to assist another woman in need.

Since the Fund's transfer in April, we have worked very hard to ensure that there has been little delay or disruption to the women applying for loans. We have created a loans coordinator position and are hard at work to meet the fundraising commitment to the Fund. This year's banquet will be held on December 8. We hope you will join us

The YWCA December 6 Fund presents an exciting opportunity for us to extend our advocacy work about violence against women, help more women to leave violent relationships, and to establish women and their children in situations of greater safety and self reliance.

YWCA December 6 Fund Banquet

Ontario Federation of Labour Building Banquet Hall
15 Gervais Dr. (Don Mills and Eglinton)

Saturday December 8, 2007, 5:30pm

Individual Tickets \$50, Table Sponsor \$700

Tickets on sale November 16

For more information or to purchase tickets visit www.ywcatoronto.org/december6_fund or email events@ywcatoronto.org



www.ywcatoronto.org/blog

YWCA Toronto and YWCA Canada's delegation at World Council 2007



The 25th & 26th World YWCA Council was held this year in Nairobi, Kenya. From July 1-11, representatives from the international YWCA movement gathered to discuss the situation facing women throughout the world and the programs and initiatives that are making a difference in their lives. World Council is an opportunity for participants to meet women from diverse cultures and experiences and to shape the future direction of the YWCA movement. Raine Liliefeldt, our Marketing and Media Co-ordinator, captured the experience on the YWCA Toronto blog, which became the online bulletin board for participants and member associations alike. Pictured above, YWCA Toronto and YWCA Canada's delegations.

27th ANNUAL WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARDS

YWCA Toronto would like to take this opportunity to thank all our sponsors, corporate partners and supporters for making the 27th Annual Women of Distinction Awards presented by Sun Life Financial a huge success! Your support helped us to raise over \$600,000 for our 30-plus programs and services across the GTA.

It was an evening of celebration and reflection. Mayor Miller helped us honour the Women of Distinction and the work they have accomplished with kind words and encouragement for a better future for women and girls in our great city. Our host, Suhana Meharchand of CBC, brought energy and laughter to the evening. Guests enjoyed the Challenge to Change a Life competition created by our co-chairs and donated generously, helping us surpass our goal - thank you!

A sincere thank you to the Women of Distinction Committee, and the YWCA Toronto volunteers and staff who made the night possible with their hard work and dedication. Congratulations to this year's Award recipients: Kiki Delaney, Saron Ghebressellassie, Sharon Hampson, Darlene Lawson, Ann Medina, Tamam McCallum and Talat Muinuddin.



FEELING CREATIVE?

Support YWCA Toronto!

A special thank you to all the donors and volunteers who have found creative ways to support YWCA Toronto and give back to their community. Here are a few examples:

Canadian Tire generously donated their time and flowers to the 1st Stop Woodlawn and Bongard garden.



A Creative Collective ART SHOW raised almost \$4,000 for YWCA Arise Shelter for women fleeing violence.



53rd Division raised \$900 for YWCA Toronto's women's shelters during their Police Week Barbeque.



The holiday spirit and artistic wrapping skills of more than 70 volunteers helped raise over \$2,000 for YWCA Toronto from the in-store gift wrapping station at the Bay in December 2006.



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