



Y'S WOMEN

The YWCA of Greater Toronto is an association of diverse and caring women dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls through dynamic leadership, advocacy, and a range of unique and essential services that promote personal growth and economic independence.

Girls Kickin' Bootie
Hesper Philip-Chamberlain
making her mark in life

Counselling, Education & Group Work

Girls Speak Out

Find your voice. Discover who you are. Workshops for girls aged 9 - 16. Call Amy 416. 266. 1232 ext. 30.

Girls' Night

Relationship dilemmas, or feeling stressed out? Come and vent about what's on your mind. Twice-weekly workshop for girls & young women aged 12 - 24. Call Sara 416. 266. 1232 ext. 14.

Teen Moms

Support group for teen & young moms aged 14 - 22 and their children. Meals & T.T.C. tickets provided. Call Amy 416. 266. 1232 ext. 30.

Teen Moms Supper Club

Sumptuous meals & gift bags at the Loblaws Cooking School in Scarborough. For pregnant & parenting teens. T.T.C. tickets provided. Call Paula 416. 266. 1232 ext. 15.

Housing & Shelter

Stop 86

Temporary, emergency housing in a safe, supportive environment. Crisis intervention counselling provided by staff. For young women aged 16 - 25. Call 416. 922. 3271.

Anna Hilliard Housing

16 units of permanent rental accommodation for teenage parents. Call 416. 360. 1565.

Camping & Outdoor Education

Residential camp for girls on the beautiful Georgian Bay. Call 416. 961. 8100 ext. 351.

Camp Tapawingo

Y's Women

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YWCA of Greater Toronto

Improving the lives of women & girls since 1873.

President Anne Sado
Executive Director Heather McGregor

Join the
YWCA of Greater Toronto
at **Pride Toronto 2002**
on Sat. June 29 - Sun. June 30



Contact: 416. 961. 8100 ext. 308, or
mliwanag@ywcator.org



YWCA of Greater Toronto hosts the national YWCA Annual Members Meeting (AMM) on June 20 - 23, 2002. This year's theme, "World Within A City" celebrates Toronto's diverse communities with a city-wide scavenger hunt and a range of cultural events for delegates. This year the AMM will tackle a 4 day agenda that includes Youth Engagement, Advocacy, By-law issues and Homelessness.

Logo design by Melanya.



Party for Women & Girls

Does your workplace have an event each year - a baseball match or a holiday party?

Your events are excellent opportunities to raise funds or gather toys and household items for women and children starting new lives.

Please call our Event Co-ordinator at 416. 961. 8100 ext. 318 to get more information on how to make your event a charitable giving opportunity.

Pamper Yourself

Watch for Nefara Natural Therapies Take Care of Yourself Week!

This new and innovative partnership between the YWCA and Toronto's leading natural health spa will run for the first week in December - with a percentage of proceeds from all spa treatments and therapies going to the YWCA of Greater Toronto.

Pamper and take care of yourself - and support vital programs and services to help other women take care too!

Did you know that your donation to the YWCA could be worth twice its value?

Have your



GIFT MATCHED ...

Many corporations have Matching Gift Programs in place. That means that your personal donation to the YWCA is matched by your employer - a \$500 donation for example, becomes \$1000 for programs and services that benefit women and girls in Toronto. Your gift goes twice as far. If your employer has a Matching Gift Program in place already - capitalize on it.

If you would like to learn more about developing a Matching Gift Program, please contact our Director of Resource Development at 416. 961. 8100 ext. 366.

4th Annual Women's Golf Tournament

Monday, August 26th, 2002
Cardinal Golf Club
2740 Hwy. 9
Richmond Hill, Ontario



Tee'd off yet?

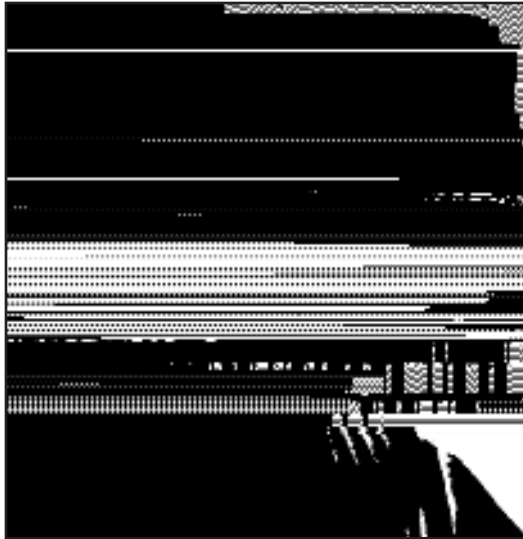
Full day format
Individuals \$ 175
Foursomes \$ 600

Sponsorship opportunities available
Kate Maynard, Event Co-ordinator
Tel: 416. 961. 8100 ext. 318
E-mail: kmaynard@ywcator.org

YWCA Develops a Photobank

We have been hard at work to show you the faces behind the programs at the YWCA. Thanks to Helen Papas, a documentary photographer who volunteered her time, you will now see more of us in all our publications.





Teen Pregnancy “ It can be very lonely ”

A conversation with
“CASSANDRA”

Teen pregnancy is on the increase in Toronto, but Cassandra* never thought it would be her. “I never thought I would get pregnant,” she says. “I wasn’t using birth control, but I never really thought about it.”

It wasn’t until she was three months pregnant that she realized the situation she was in. “As much as you talk about birth control in high school, most of the people I knew who were sexually active didn’t use it. Only smart guys use condoms - not very many do.” And statistics show that as of 1996, 51% of all Canadian girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are having sex.

Cassandra was 18 years old, and in the middle of a co-op program when she became pregnant. Now she’s at home with an 18-month-old baby girl, her college plans on hold for now. “I don’t have the freedom I had before,” she explains. “Before, all you’d think about was your friends and partying. Now, I worry about money for my baby, work, the future of my baby and me, and drama with the baby’s father.”

And drama with babies’ fathers is what

a lot of teen moms can get more than enough of, according to Amy Best who runs the YWCA Teen Moms group in Scarborough. “About 15% of the baby’s fathers stay involved in a meaningful way after birth,” she says. “A lot of girls try to create the family they never had, like any mom, they want a dad for their kid. But instead they get a lot of controlling behaviour, guys not working and living off the girl’s cheque.”

Cassandra agrees: “He wasn’t helping me, he wouldn’t work, he just sat around and played video games. I take action - that’s just me. I said, ‘no way’, and he had to go.”

Not all teens that become pregnant decide to continue the pregnancy. Statistics Canada says that in Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec, abortions are the most common result of teen pregnancy. But even given better access to that particular choice, more young women are electing to keep their babies. “You might not have friends that have kids,” Cassandra warns. “It can be very lonely.”

Cassandra is like a lot of teen moms -

she’s resourceful and determined to give her baby the best chance in life. She got help from the home visit from Public Health after the birth of her daughter. “A lot of girls don’t want to have that visit,” she said of other young mothers she knows. “But for me it was the best thing. She gave me tons of information. That’s how I found out about programs to help with parenting and the Teen Mom’s drop in. They gave me access to workshops, computers, printers, gift packages. You can go after school and have a meal with other young moms. I go up to two times a week. It’s my time. I didn’t know how to cook, and they gave me dinner.”

Cassandra is a devoted mother and knows that she is a good parent. But she thinks there should be more birth control more easily available to teens. “Sex ed doesn’t give you enough,” she says looking back on her experience. “You look at those movies they show in class and they don’t relate to you.”

Amy Best gives out flavoured condoms after dinner at Teen Moms. “Oh ya,” she says, “we have a good laugh. The

**Cassandra’s name has been changed to protect her privacy.*

girls are embarrassed at first but I say if you're going to have sex you need to be safe. They usually take a second helping."

A lot of girls feel pressured to have sex, and to have sex without birth control. Being able to say what you really want and how you want it takes a lot of self esteem and most girls suffer from low self esteem in high school. "It's a very difficult time of life for girls," says Amy. "The expectations of girls are very high, and at the same time their options compared to boys are limited. Girls are expected to be thin and beautiful, and they are still expected to measure their self esteem by who their boyfriend is," Amy continues.

Add to all this pressure the stigma of becoming a mom before you've finished high school. "People look down on you so much," Cassandra shares. "My co-op program said they didn't want an unmarried mother working there. But why should having a baby ruin my

chances?"

Cassandra worked hard just to prove her worth to those who would judge her. "It was exhausting - I had to show them I could do it."

"When I used to see people my age with kids I would look down on them," Cassandra recalls. Now she knows the truth about 'those kinds of girls': They have hard choices to make, and a tough road ahead if they choose motherhood. But if they get support and keep strong, they too can reap the rewards of motherhood.

Amanda Dale



Amanda Dale is the Director of Advocacy & Communications Department and Editor of Y's Women.

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416. 924. 4762

The BOUTIQUE currently needs volunteers to join its dedicated group who raises funds to support YWCA community development projects world wide and promotes social and economic justice globally.

YWCA of Zambia Protest Leads to Arrests



Photo: E. Mandellman

More than 20 members of the ruling party in Zambia, Movement for Multiparty Democracy, have been arrested following a YWCA led protest against the public stripping of women.

In January 2002, young men took to the streets of Lusaka in Zambia and stripped women who were wearing short skirts and trousers. They claimed that they were instructed to enforce a less provocative dress code.

"Asking for a dress code for the country is an infringement on the rights of women," said Mary Mulenga, Executive Director of the YWCA of Zambia. The women's movement will not "sit back and allow men to take the law into their own hands whenever they feel like doing so," she said during a protest outside police headquarters in Lusaka, which preceded the arrests.

Common Concerns March 2002 Issue 113



photo: John Scully

Young Woman of Distinction

“ Every one of us has a role to play ”

A conversation with **HESPER**

Hesper Philip-Chamberlain is 18 and faces a lot of exciting choices in her life. Hesper is the recipient of the YWCA's Young Women of Distinction Award for 2002, and by all accounts she is well suited to the challenge of so much attention.

Since the announcement of her award Hesper has received all kinds of requests for her time and thoughts. She has been invited to speak on Citytv about the issues facing young people. She has had in-depth interviews with both The Toronto Star and The Toronto Sun who have published articles on her. She has been praised by countless adults who admire her achievements. She has won other awards as well: the 25-Year Club Sr. Scholarship from York Board Alumni for accomplishments in visual arts, the Harry Jerome Award for Academics from the Black Business and Professional Association, and the Youth Impact Award from the Rotary Club of Etobicoke, for meritorious service to youth.

But Hesper is quick to point out that she can put all this welcome attention in its

place: “There are some things that will never be lauded, things that our society doesn't value that may be valued later. What seems trendy now may not be what's important in the long run,” she offers sagely.

From speaking with Hesper it is clear that she is someone who wishes to have her energy directed towards those things with lasting importance, not passing trends. In high school, she adapted the words of the Cervantes character Don Quixote into a kind of credo for how she lives her life: “The [woman] who fights for [her] ideals is the [woman] who is alive.”

As early as elementary school, Hesper was writing letters to fight for respect and equal treatment for women, girls, and Black South Africans. She has also fought for animal rights. She has been an active volunteer in advocacy groups fighting for student rights, women in Afghanistan, and against corporate influence in the classroom. She ran a successful campaign in her local high school against a rule that banned students from wearing headgear.

Hesper saw that this marginalized the cultural expression of those groups that wear headgear, including young African women and Rastafarians.

Hesper has not confined her concerns for justice to those who have lockers next to her. “I wrote to Nelson Mandela when we researched Apartheid in school, naively asking him to change things [in South Africa] that hadn't already been changed,” she says. “I saw all these things about the world that could be improved and my voice could be heard, with an element of creativity, by writing letters,” she says.

For Hesper, contributing to the lives of others is not work or extra-curricular, it is life. She has volunteered in the Out of the Cold program for homeless people, and tutored younger students as well as provided childcare at a First Nations daycare.

Hesper has also done very well in school, with an unusual and exciting mix of school experiences. When she was eight years old, she spent a year in her mother's birthplace, Tobago, going to

school there so that she could experience what it was like to be part of a Black majority. Hesper has also attended The Linden School, Toronto's first feminist school for girls, located just around the corner from the YWCA's Head Office. Last year she challenged herself to take the tough International Baccalaureate diploma, and not only made it, but came through second in her class and graduated with 92% in her OACs.

Although clearly Hesper has gained recognition for her choices, she is adamant that her path is not the only one to be taken: "Although some things get recognized, everyone is of equal value. Every one of us has a role to play."

She speaks with great insight about the cost of being a high achiever - that people never expect you not to do well at something, or they think that you're invincible. In the face of great success and recognition, Hesper is beginning to

"I've always had a drive and a sense of purpose, but now I think some things are hard to fit into a box and plan."

relax her approach to life a little: "I've always had a drive and a sense of purpose, but now I think some things are hard to fit into a box and plan. I've recently had to accept that I can't figure everything out in my mind -- and that's an okay way to be." *Amanda Dale*



YWCA
Issue 9 Fall 2002
News & Views of the YWCA of Greater Toronto
Y ' S W O M E N

Next issue:

YWCA | week
WITHOUT
violence

**Deadline for contributions:
August 7**

YWCA supports hockey girls



Jennifer Dodds signs her hockey jersey for YWCA sponsored Willowdale Redwings

The Willowdale Redwings girls made it to the Provincial Tournament and placed sixth overall.

"The YWCA should be proud to know you made a positive impact on these young ladies season with your generous support," says Paul Dodds, father of one of the players.

Visit YWCA Head Office to view the Willowdale Redwings team plaque.

YWCA Member Makes History

YWCA member, Roslyn Dundas has become the youngest woman elected to Australian parliament. At the recent territory elections in the Australian Capital Territory, the 23 year old was elected to the Legislative Assembly.

Roslyn is a member of her local YWCA in Canberra and previously co-ordinated national young women's development work at the YWCA of Australia.

*Common Concerns
March 2002 Issue 113*

"Young people are not just the future. We are part of the now."

- Roslyn Dundas

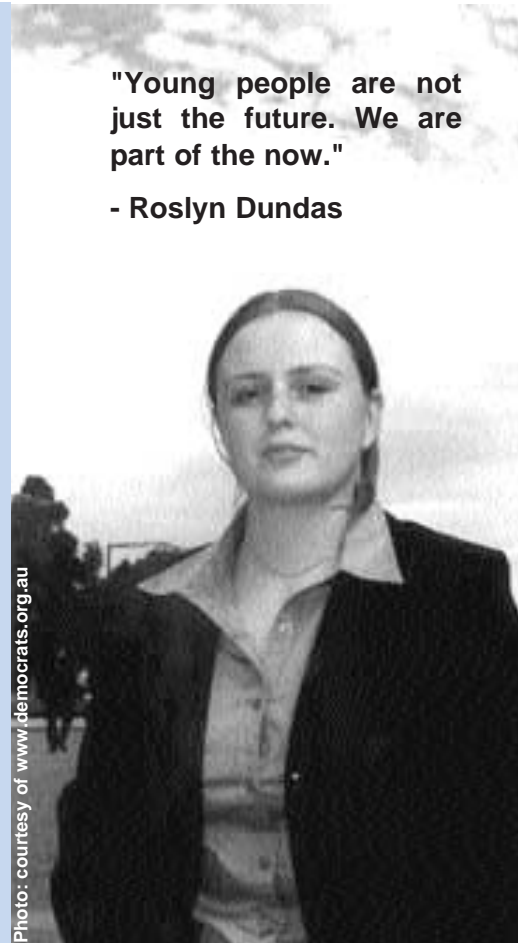


Photo: courtesy of www.democrats.org.au

YWCA Donors

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