



AMY GO
Access & Opportunity

CREATING a path for internationally trained women

2009 YWCA Woman of Distinction



Amy Go is an exceptional leader, committed to immigrant women's rights and their successful integration into the Canadian workplace. A skilled collaborator, she brings people and organizations together in times of crisis and beyond, thereby ensuring women access and opportunity. **Amy Go** is the 2009 YWCA Woman of Distinction for Access & Opportunity.

Amy is a leader of vision and action. In 1999, only 33% of internationally trained nurses who had immigrated to Canada were passing the registration exam to work in Ontario. Outraged by this disturbing figure, and empathetic to the plight of the nurses who were struggling to secure work in their field, she collaborated with the College of Nurses in Ontario and three other organizations do something about it. She was integral in the conception and development of a project aimed to support women in getting registered and working in their profession, co-founding CARE. A centre for internationally educated nurses, Creating Access to Regulated Employment is an organization to help internationally trained nurses navigate their path to succeed in Ontario. Since its doors opened in 2001, CARE has helped over a thousand women from over 70 countries to get licensed and then gain employment in the health care field. Today, CARE is a government funded program recognized as the most successful bridging program for foreign trained nurses. Now, with the support of CARE, 80% of participants pass their exam on the first try. Amy remains dedicated to the organization as Chair and shares her knowledge of immigration, health and long term care, ensuring the services remain current.

Best known as the Executive Director of the Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care in Markham, Ontario, Amy is a leader dedicated to building strong partnerships to help women fulfill their dreams and provide for their families. She brought Yee Hong Centre and Georgian College together to create a Registered Practical Nurse certificate program with built-in support for candidates not proficient in English. She also started the first partnership with the York Region School Board to provide Personal Support Worker training. Over half of the Health Care Aides in Yee Hong's new long-term care centres are graduates of these programs.

Amy is also a leader in the Chinese (Canadian) community. The span of her involvement has borne witness to historic milestones not only for Chinese Canadians, or Chinese women, but for all. At the helm of the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC), an organization devoted to ensuring the rights of Chinese Canadians are fully recognized and protected, Amy lobbied for the first employment equity legislation in Canada, then organized and hosted the first national

conference for Chinese Canadian Women in 1990. Amy was part of the movement for redress on behalf of the surviving Head Tax payers and their families. The Head Tax was a fee charged for each Chinese person entering Canada from 1885 to 1923. It was followed by the Chinese Exclusion Act from 1923 to 1947 which banned Chinese from coming to Canada. Both government regulations prevented Chinese women from reunifying with their husbands in Canada. As a result, they bore the burden of supporting families that were financially destitute and through war time. Her presidency at CCNC culminated in the organization of the first rally to Ottawa with payers and families of Head Tax payers who suffered from decades of discrimination as a result racist laws passed by the Canadian Government. In 2006, Prime Minister Harper offered both an apology and compensation.

Amy Go's commitment to women is unfaltering, investigating and addressing quality of life issues for women, and in particular immigrant women. She played a major role in the leadership of National Action Committee on the Status of Women, and as past Secretary and Chair of the Justice Committee, she helped coordinate the first women's march against poverty in Ottawa which saw more than 35,000 women rally on Parliament Hill. She encouraged Chinese Canadian women to participate in the national mainstream movement in solidarity. Appointed by the Provincial Government to review Social Assistance Legislation for its impact on sponsored immigrants, Amy was also recently invited to join the Task Force on Modernizing Income Security for Working Aged Adults.

Amy Go's commitment to diversity and creating opportunity within the Canadian healthcare sector is undisputed, as is her compassion and commitment to helping newcomers find their way.