



# turning IMPACT REPORT **points**

THE SECOND THEY NEED US



**YWCA**  
TORONTO

NATIONAL ADVOCACY.  
COMMUNITY ACTION.



**United Way**  
Greater Toronto  
FUNDED AGENCY

MARCH 2025

PHOTO: End of Year Campaign, Be There The Second They Need Us.



## A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

Addressing intimate partner violence (IPV) has long been a part of our work at YWCA Toronto. Even before second wave feminists brought IPV, as well as language such as “femicide,” into a larger social consciousness, our attention to this issue can be seen threaded throughout the Association’s history, often alluded to in broad terms such as “women’s issues.”

As you know, intimate partner violence has remained a challenge for women and gender diverse people into modern times. Last year in our province, one woman a week was killed by a partner, family member or someone she knew, and thousands more experienced physical, emotional and financial harm at the hands of an abuser.

While these numbers are upsetting, your enthusiastic support of our programs and service gives me a tremendous amount of hope for what is possible. Thank you for your incredible commitment, both to YWCA Toronto and to the women, girls and gender diverse people who come to us for support. Whether you volunteered, donated or otherwise stayed engaged, your generosity has meant that we can continue to be there for survivors when they need us the most.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light green rectangular background.

Heather M. McGregor

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**TURNING POINTS NEWSLETTER**

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# HALF A CENTURY OF SUPPORT AND ACTION

DURING THE MID TO LATE 20TH CENTURY, THE RISING FEMINIST AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CONSCIOUSNESS SAW YWCA TORONTO TAKE IMPORTANT ACTION TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV) AND CREATE SYSTEMIC CHANGE. BELOW ARE A FEW KEY MOMENTS IN YWCA TORONTO HISTORY THAT ILLUSTRATE HOW WE ADDRESSED IPV AND HOW THEY SHAPE OUR WORK TODAY.

**YWCA Toronto's Social Action Committee** forms to mobilize social change for women, particularly on issues related to Intimate Partner Violence.



**YWCA Toronto's Women's Shelter** opens in September 1991, the first and only violence against women shelter in Toronto's East York neighbourhood.



**Adventures in Sharing** launches, expanding on the expressive arts supports offered in the Here to Help program.

In 2023, YWCA Toronto leads a campaign that sees the City of Toronto declare IPV an epidemic, paving the way for more tangible action on a municipal level.

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

2020s



**YWCA Toronto's Breakthrough program** begins, marking our first community expressive arts program dedicated to creating a healing space for survivors of abuse.



**Here to Help**, a support program for mothers and their children who have experienced abuse, begins in 2001. Our **Advocacy and Communications** department, which leads our advocacy efforts and deepens the work of the Social Action Committee, launches the same year.

**Arise Shelter**, our second violence against women shelter, opens in 2003.

In 2007, YWCA Toronto assumes oversight of the **December 6 Fund**, an interest-free, micro-loan program to help survivors of IPV establish a new life free from violence.



NATIONAL ADVOCACY.  
COMMUNITY ACTION.



# DO NOT MISS YWCA TORONTO'S 2025 WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARDS!

AN EVENING OF CELEBRATION, INSPIRATION AND HOPE

Tuesday, May 27, 2025, 5:30p.m.  
Liberty Grand, Exhibition Place

**Early bird tickets now available!**

Scan the QR Code below to purchase Early Bird Tickets.  
To purchase a table, contact Anna Borges at 647.616.1528



[www.ywcatoronto.org/womenofdistinction](http://www.ywcatoronto.org/womenofdistinction)

## MAKE YOUR VALUES YOUR LEGACY



YWCA Toronto's Monarch Society is a special group of supporters who, through a legacy gift today, will transform the lives of women, girls and gender diverse people tomorrow.



To learn more about planning your legacy gift, contact Monika Sormova, Manager of Foundations & Planned Giving at [MSormova@ywcatoronto.org](mailto:MSormova@ywcatoronto.org) or 416.961.8101 x327.



## JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Become a member of YWCA Toronto in 2025.

Membership is so much more than the \$20 membership fee – it is about being part of a worldwide feminist movement, sharing your voice, and supporting women, girls and gender diverse people.

**Together, we can create  
lasting change in our community.**

Contact Nalini Singh at  
[NSingh@ywcatoronto.org](mailto:NSingh@ywcatoronto.org)  
or 416.961.8101 x360.

# DONOR LOVE



Photo of Joan Wright (far left), her husband Robert Wright and their daughters An, Karen and Janice. Not pictured is their daughter, Sarah.

Joan Wright has been a dedicated member of YWCA Toronto's community since she was ten years old. "I went to Camp Tapawingo for six wonderful years," she recounts. "I just loved it; I made good friends." This experience at camp sparked not only an early love of the outdoors but also a life-long involvement with YWCA Toronto.

As an adult, Joan spent many years giving her time, energy and care to YWCA Toronto as a member of the Board of Directors. "I loved being on the board," she says, "and I loved all the work we were doing."

She often rallied her friends, four daughters and husband, Robert, to help with everything from painting buildings at Camp Tapawingo to fundraising for major capital projects, including the monumental construction of YWCA Toronto's Elm Centre and Winona's Place in the early 2010s.

In 2019, when our 1st Stop Woodlawn Shelter and permanent housing building's antiquated heating and ventilation was in desperate need of an upgrade, Joan and Robert stepped forward to assist, making a significant gift to replace the system. Now, thanks to their generosity, residents at Woodlawn have much improved air quality as well as air conditioning throughout the building, which has been critical to the health of many residents during increasingly hot summers.

"I think your work is just fantastic ... It's just such a needed thing," Joan says when asked why she and her family have remained involved with YWCA Toronto across multiple generations. "We still donate, and we always will." We are so grateful for all that Joan and the Wright family have contributed to YWCA Toronto and to the women, girls and gender diverse people we serve.

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## In Memoriam - Judy Ireland (1942-2024)

Last year, we lost an important member of YWCA Toronto's community, Judy Ireland. Not only did she work with the Association for more than a decade—first as a compassionate teacher empowering sole-support mothers with job readiness skills and then creating change as a Social Action and Advocacy Coordinator—but she also remained involved with YWCA and feminist movements throughout the rest of her life. She was an incredible person, and we hold so much gratitude for all that she contributed to our feminist movements.

Additionally, we would like to thank every one of Judy's friends and loved ones who made in memoriam donations to YWCA Toronto at her request. These donations will help us continue the kind of work Judy championed.





PHOTO: End of Year Campaign, Be There The Second They Need Us.

# THE SECOND THEY NEED US

*When a woman or gender diverse person is facing intimate partner violence, time is critical. The sooner YWCA Toronto can be there to support them, the sooner they can find safety, heal and rebuild their life.*

We aim to be there **the second they need us**—the theme of our year-end campaign, which resonated with so many of you. You acted with your own urgency, finding ways to give despite the postal strike and increasingly difficult economic times, ultimately helping YWCA Toronto raise an impressive nearly \$125,000 to support the women, girls and gender diverse people who rely on our services and programs.

Central to our campaign this year were the stories of two YWCA Toronto participants, Mez and Judy. Mez shared her experiences about our expressive arts program, Breakthrough, and how it gave her a supportive space to navigate her trauma, and Judy shared how receiving affordable housing changed her life. Both stories were full of hope and resilience, and we thank you for making possible these kinds of transformative supports.

We would like to extend a special thank you to two generous donors who provided matching gifts of \$25,000 each towards our Giving Tuesday and year-end efforts. We are so grateful for these donations from Martine M. Irman and our anonymous donor who exemplify generous leadership in philanthropy and paved the way for hundreds of subsequent donations.

We would also like to thank you for taking our “Which Barrier Breaker Are You?” quiz. Not only did your enthusiastic participation mean we could highlight the achievements of noteworthy feminists and Women of Distinction alumnae Sherry Brydson, Amy Go, Roberta Jamieson and Jean Augustine, but it also contributed \$1 to the campaign for every person who completed the quiz.

Thank you to everyone who donated or engaged with our campaign. Your generosity and commitment mean that YWCA Toronto can be there for individuals in urgent need the second they need us.