



# ANNUAL REPORT

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

20  
22



# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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We are proud of our work in another year filled with challenges. Perhaps our successes can be attributed to an understanding that we must be as resourceful and resilient as the individuals and families we serve.

The first six months of 2022, programs and services were delivered virtually and we continued to pilot hybrid models to reach and include people. We re-launched summer and school based programs including Girlz Unplugged, Quest, and Youth Co-Unite, a program for LGBTQ+ youth and allies. We brought on new staff in Circles Muskoka and added a new role for a Case Aide to help with individual needs. The Covid Relief Fund and NESS Fund provided much needed immediate financial aid, personal care kits, and system navigation supports to over 95 households.

We revised policies, invested in HR support & resources, and installed a new digital system to improve internal and external communications. Our team participated in Mindfulness, a workplace wellness program, trained in Network for Neighbours (thanks to YWCA Kitchener Waterloo!) and we have 2 facilitators ready to deliver the Rent Smarts program.

October marked the official 25th anniversary of our community based charitable organization as a Member Association of YWCA Canada. We walked with NWAC at Sisters in Spirit and joined the YWCA Day on the Hill to advocate for a nation-wide definition of homelessness. Through community sessions we developed a Strategic Plan for 2023 – 2026. Through the coming year, we will be looking at ways to sustain and grow our impact for the next 25 years.

We've continued to engage in partnerships, including the District's IDEA (inclusion diversity equity and anti-racism) Advisory group through which we coordinated the first Hate Free Muskoka symposium with Bernie Farber, Michelle Emson, Kelly Brownbill and Shelly Skinner, and over 80 educators and advocates.

Our gratitude and appreciation to you, our funders, donors and supporters for championing the work of YWCA Muskoka across the region. Together we are building a healthier more inclusive community.

Sincerely,

**Isabelle Frati & Hannah Lin**

Board of Directors Chair, & Executive Director

## ***Vision***

A world in which girls, women and gender-diverse people thrive in a safe and equitable society.

## ***Mission***

YWCA Muskoka champions positive change for girls, women and gender-diverse people through education, leadership and advocacy.

# WOMEN'S PROGRAMS

**What we observed:** As society slowly transitioned to post-pandemic life, the YWCA heard from women who reported feeling lonely and disconnected from their friends. Some felt a sense of apathy when it came to socializing; they knew it was important for their mental health but were feeling out of practice. Suddenly, socializing felt like a lot of work. Our participants also expressed the need for purpose in their lives, a chance to remember who they were, and the confidence to offer their skills to the community.

**Our response:** The Woman in Wellness program helped individuals create a wellness plan for their lives. Women in Business and WIB Childcare programs trained women entrepreneurs to launch or scale their businesses. The Mindfulness Meditation course helped individuals learn relaxation strategies to help them cope with stress.

Accelerator and Money Mindset helped participants access the Canada Learning Bond examine their relationship to money, respectively. The Mix, Mingle, and Shop held at Hidden Valley featured 3 Muskoka women business owners sharing their successes and challenges. We also hosted an Art Therapy program with facilitator Janet Ho. This program brought healing, hope, and a much needed chance to gather with others.



Photo credit: Dress for Success Orillia and Barrie

## WORKING IN MUSKOKA: FOOD SERVICE

### A new YWCA program to increase economic resilience

**The problem:** The hospitality sector in Muskoka is experiencing a worker shortage. Folks are looking for decent work and more sustainable livelihoods.

**Our response:** We launched a culinary pilot program to improve the skill, ability, and hireability of community members entering or currently working in the food service field in Muskoka. Participants were supplied with key commercial food service tools, Safe Food Handling training and certification, and WHIMIS training.

**Our impact:** Of seven participants, one went on to pursue a career in food service, and two, who were already in the trade, were able to upskill and connect with others. Relationships were formed with local employers and the YWCA's Job Coach.

# SENIORS PROGRAMS

## What we observed

Many seniors expressed that technology was not accessible to them and there were not enough classes to help them navigate this rapidly changing world. Many participants had little to no experience using video conferencing platforms and needed guidance on how to join our virtual programs. Additionally, seniors were seeking connection, creativity, and a sense of calm after two years of experiencing increased isolation and loneliness.

## Our response

Digital Smarts workshops increased seniors' confidence using the internet and staying safe while doing so. As a result, many began connecting online with loved ones all over the world. One participant was even motivated by Digital Smarts to purchase their first cell phone and explore new forms of technology. We offered Start in Art (in partnership with Muskoka Chautauqua and Sean Dawson, visual artist), and Chi Kung and Meditation. These programs enabled seniors to get creative, and learn gentle movement for healing and balance.

**“[Personal lessons using Zoom] opened up a whole new world to me. I immediately joined exercise, crafts and fun interest groups online. I have explored new apps, chat groups and online shopping with increased confidence.” - Digital Smarts Participant**



## Hate Free Muskoka

70+ community members learned to recognize & respond to hate. **64.3%** attendees shared that based on what they learned at Hate Free Muskoka, they were more likely to **take positive action** against hate.

# CASE AIDE

## What we observed

Many participants coming through YWCA Muskoka experience a range of intersecting needs that extend beyond the scope of our service. Most people are in situations where they could benefit from help with all the services available: funding, system navigation, consultation and referrals.

## Our response

To provide wraparound support, we introduced a Case Aide to our team. The Case Aide provides individual support to community members stepping forward with needs, or through referrals from other YWCA staff, and other community stakeholders or partners. The Case Aide also attempts to assist community members navigate systems (institutional, health, agency) within Muskoka and beyond.

**Our impact: The Case Aide has provided support to over 35 individuals.**



# YOUTH PROGRAMS

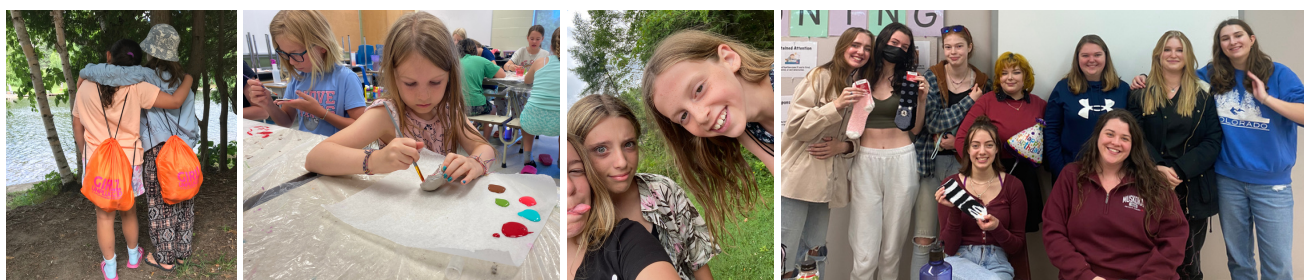
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**The problem:** A SickKids Hospital-led study\* showed that a large majority of children and youth, especially school-aged children, experienced harm to their mental health during the first wave of the pandemic. Social isolation was cited as one of the key factors affecting youth mental health. The same study reported that maintaining or adapting activities for youth would have a positive impact on children's mental health and well-being. \*Full report: <http://ow.ly/yfLV50NEHoX>

**Our response:** We continued to offer programs for youth, starting the year with virtual programs, then transitioning back in person at 13 schools this fall. We also opened the YWCA downtown classroom to host after school programs and ran a Girlz Unplugged/Quest combined program outdoors for youth in grades 5-9 at Wahta First Nation.

In addition to Girlz Unplugged and Quest, we piloted Youth Co-Unite, a lunchtime program for all genders at 3 local high schools. All three programs talk to youth about challenges and topics that matter to them including healthy relationships, coping skills, emotions, dealing with conflict, decision-making, setting goals and the importance of gratitude and mindfulness. Summer camp returned with the theme 'Dare to colour outside of the lines'.

**Our impact:** Campers embarked on a journey of owning their authenticity and not being afraid to let their true colours shine through. Each week, campers left with smiles on their faces, new connections, and a whole wrist full of bracelets. 16 received full subsidies to attend camp barrier-free.



## STAFF AND BOARD

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**Board:** Isabelle Frati, Michelle Emson, Emanuela Heyninck, Kristyn Kennedy, Christopher Lajeunesse, Sheryl Manolakos, Allison Turnbull, Kim Williams

**Staff (in order of length of service):** Hannah Lin, Stacey Schat, Jiana Cutting, Liz Angell, Susan Lovell, Krishma Goraya, Amy Anderson, Kelly Jones, Laura Sundy, Amy Jones, Allison Holder, Justin Richardson, Jaime Chapman, Rick Van Der Ley, Christine Kropp\*, Macaulay Davison, Eva Moore, Nicole Leijh, Olivia Coleman, Lorie Roberts, Janet Ho, Rachel Nolan, Leanna Zylstra\*, Placement student: Karizma Mathes



\*subcontract coordinator/facilitator

# COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

## The problem

According to Muskoka Vital Signs, 13% of Muskoka lives in poverty and employment income is 21% lower than the rest of the province (\$26,918 versus \$33,946).

Muskoka's vast rural landscape and lack of public transportation make accessible housing even further from reach. Despite the pervasiveness of these issues in our community, support services are limited.

## Our response

We continued to offer Circles Muskoka, where individuals and families who identify as living in daily instability and low income are able to create community with folks across economic lines, access resources to move from surviving to thriving, and advocate for change.

Getting Ahead provided a space to access tools, resources, connection, and support so individuals could address real-time issues and work towards their long-term aspirations.

We hosted 5 Bridges out of Poverty workshops: for the community, Gravenhurst Against Poverty volunteers, Early ON staff and Georgian College students.

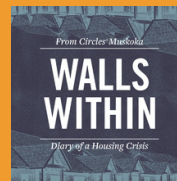
**"Since joining Circles my dreams and goals are becoming a reality. I've been supported in remarkable ways. I feel I've come a long way in my journey and can't wait to see where the next chapter leads." - Circle Leader**

**Our impact: We celebrated 2 Circles graduates and hosted 3 Getting Ahead graduations!**

While still facing many barriers themselves, Circles Muskoka participants hosted "Give back to the community" events where they helped build garden beds for the community food harvest in Gravenhurst, walked in MPSSAS's Take Back the Night, and made hand-painted cards to give to seniors.

6 Getting Ahead participants moved on to join the Circles program, 5 gained employment, 2 enrolled in educational programs, and 1 gained permanent housing. Participants have shown and reported added confidence, activity, and vitality as they make micro and macro changes to their approach to life.

**New! *Walls Within: Diary of a Housing Crisis* shares the first-hand stories & experiences of 5 families in Muskoka.**



Scan the QR code to hear their stories.



Photo credit: GAP



# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

**Your generosity enables YWCA to continue offering diverse programs across Muskoka.**

**Sponsors:** Bin There Dump That | Canadian Federation of University Women Muskoka | E.T.F.O. Trillium Lakelands Teachers' Local | Kim O'Grady, Broker, Chestnut Park Real Estate Brokerage | Lakeland Networks | Muskoka Builders' Association | Muskoka Chrysler | Muskoka Window and Door Centre | Northern Disposal & Sanitation | Physio Works Muskoka | Scotiabank Bracebridge | Suzanne Martineau My Muskoka Remax | Westside Fish & Chips | YWCA Canada

**Funders:** Canadian Women's Foundation | District of Muskoka | Elexicon Energy | Government of Canada | Government of Ontario | JTC Heersink Foundation | Kawartha Credit Union | Muskoka Futures | Ontario Trillium Foundation | RBC Foundation | Terence Haight Fund/Town of Gravenhurst | Town of Bracebridge | United Way Simcoe Muskoka | Women and Gender Equality Canada

**Third-Party Events:** Huntsville Santa's Pub Crawl | Muskoka Brewery | RONA Bracebridge | Shoppers Drug Mart Gravenhurst | Silver Slicers | Tim Hortons Bracebridge

**In Kind Contributors:** Accenture-Learning Exchange | CAP | Dress for Success | Faith Baptist Church | Gravenhurst Against Poverty | Henrietta's Bakery | Kiwanis Huntsville | Muskoka Community Church | Muskoka Shoebox Project | Pita Pit | Residents Against Muskoka Poverty | The HUB Muskoka | YMCA Simcoe Muskoka

**1180** People served.

**66** Volunteers engaged.



## ADVOCACY

In October, YWCA Muskoka joined YWCA Member Associations from across Canada to spend a **"Day on the Hill"** advocating for a gendered lens to be put on the affordable housing crisis. We met with MPs, Senators, and other influential organizations to advocate for two main asks as a national movement:

1. Increased funding under the National Housing Strategy for a grants-based system to fully fund shelter, transitional housing and permanent affordable housing specifically dedicated to women and gender-diverse people, including wrap-around services and supports;
2. Develop a national definition of homelessness that reflects the unique causes, conditions, and experiences of homelessness for diverse women, girls, and gender diverse people.

We also joined the Native Women's Association of Canada for the annual **Sisters in Spirit Vigil** to honour the lives of missing and murdered Indigenous women, gender-diverse, Two-Spirit, and transgender people.





# FINANCIAL HEALTH

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## REVENUE

Government Grants - \$396,562  
Foundations & Program Partners - \$331,500  
Fund Development - \$121,020  
Special Events - \$7,510  
Fee for Service - \$18,937  
Membership & Other - \$3,201  
Total revenue: \$878,730

## EXPENSES

Project Costs - \$669,357  
Operating - \$94,763  
Admin Wages & Benefits - \$90,076  
Fund Development - \$16,495  
Board Costs - \$1,351  
Total expenses: \$872,042  
Excess of revenues over expenses: \$7,688

*Audited by Pahapill and Associates Professional Corporation, Chartered Professional Accountants.*

## DEC 6 LOANS & THE NESS FUND

### YWCA Muskoka's continued response to gender-based violence

**The problem:** In Canada, every 6 days a woman loses her life to gender-based violence. Survivors of gender-based violence frequently say that not having enough money was one of the primary reasons they stayed in abusive situations. Without help to flee, survivors have few options available to them to protect themselves and their families.

**Our response:** Since 2013, YWCA Muskoka's December 6th Loan Fund has assisted 77 women. In July, YWCA Canada introduced the National Emergency Survivor Support (NESS) fund which provides survivors of gender-based violence who are currently in abusive living situations, current residents of emergency shelters or those living in precarious housing conditions due to experiences of violence, with financial support for essential, immediate needs.

**Our impact:** In Muskoka, the NESS Fund distributed \$25,550 in grants to 15 women fleeing violence and attempting to secure stability after leaving unsafe homes or family situations.

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**Covid Relief Fund:** We continued this financial aid project into 2022, supporting **30 households**. Funding helped families access groceries, child care, housing and rent, transportation, gas and utility bills, legal fees, and so much more.



**Walk a Mile in Their Shoes** was re-envisioned as a community partnership with Muskoka Pride. People of all genders and all ages walked a mile in solidarity with women, girls, and gender diverse people: those at highest risk of experiencing gender-based violence. Together, we raised over \$21,000 for gender-based violence prevention programs including Quest, Youth Co-Unite and LGBTQ2+ youth programs.

# DONORS

Alanna Crawford | Allison Gibson | Amanda Smith | Amy Anderson | Amy Back | Amy Clennett | Amy Jones | Amy Norris | Anita Wan | Anne Grant | Anne Noonan | Anonymous | Augustine Family Fund at Toronto Foundation | Bala Cranberry Festival | Barb Mason | Barbara Burton | Barry & Jean Stock | Ben Belfry | Betty Rintoul | Beverley Stewart | Bill Coke | Bill Van Ryn | Blake & Tracey Edwards | Bonnie Dart | Bracebridge Lions Club | Brackenrig Nursery and Maintenance | Bradley Hammond | Brenda Ranger | Brenda Hay | Brennen Connor | Brett Cole | Bria & Co. Cookies and Cakes | Brian Forsyth | Brock Gouweloos | Bruce Mumford | Bruce White | Butterwick Building Co. Ltd | Carik Carman | Carol Corriveau-Truchon | Carol Hartwell | Cassandra Sparks | Cassidy Thedorf | Catherine Bedford | Catherine Lindgren | Cathie Grinnell | Cathy & Gord Dale | Cathy Howard | Chantelle Miller | Chris Minor | Chris Ridler | Christ Church of Windermere | Cindy Blakely | Cindy Pierce | Cindy Tubman | Claire Jordan, Kala House of Colour | Claire Purvis | Clare McLean-Wilson | Client First Canada | Colleen Nisbet | Cora Abrams | CyberGrants for TD Bank Employee Donation Program | D. Ruth Robertson | Dale Milburn | Dan & Adrienne Mumford | Dana Seguin | Daniel Sundry | Danielle Anstett | Danielle Beaudoin | Danielle Lamoureux | Dave Murphy | Dave Rogers | David Anstett | David Cotterell | David Crawford | David Cutting | David Wray | Dawn & Ed Novak | Dean Ronson | Deanna Lavigne | Deb Loshaw | Debra Morrow | Dena Cole | Denis & Penny Grenier | Diana Greavette | Diana Saunders | Diane Berdan | Diane Kennedy | Don and Vilenna Currie | Don Eastwood & Pat Sims-Eastwood | Don Furniss | Donna Armstrong | Donna Kearney | Donna Keystone | Donna Sullivan | Dorothy Johnstone | E Jean Polak | Ed Rynard | Edward & Susan Gouweloos | Elaine Hassard | Eleanor Flynn | Elexicon Energy | Elisa Leslie | Elizabeth (Beth) Ward | Elizabeth Prosser | Elizabeth Rothwell | Elspeth Hogg | Emanuela Heyninck | Emily Brown | Enbridge | Evelyn Archibald | Family Place Restaurant & Pizza | Flower Child | Francesca Fernandes | Frank Mastinsek | Frank Palmay | Gail Parcell | Garry Best & Sons Carpentry | Gayle Dempsey | GBS Contracting Services / General Building Services Inc | Ginette Grewal | Giselle Bloch | Glen Huard | Glen Yacula | Goodwin Family Fund at Muskoka Community Foundation | Gord Mitchell | Gravenhurst Against Poverty (GAP) | Gravenhurst High School Gay Straight Alliance | Gravenhurst Women's Centre | Greg Rasmussen | Hannah Lin | Harden Environmental | Heather Burnett | Heather Lee | Heather Lin | Heather Modesto | Hilltop Interiors | Honor Fiorini | Iain Johnson | Ian Turnbull | Ingrid Bahen | Isabelle Frati | J Schmidt | Jaclyn Rockwell | Jacqueline Stirrup | Jaime Chapman | Jane Hunt | Jane Young | Janet Lumsdon | Jason Cole | Jason Nickle | Jason Sifft | Jean Heys | Jeannette Mills | Jen Ryan | Jennifer Fernandes | Jennifer Tucker | Jennifer Walters | Jessica Clark | Jessica Stevenson | Jiana Cutting | Jim & Cheryl Hammond | Joan German | Joan Burnett | Joan Carson | Jo-Anne Bruce | Joanne Twist | Jodee Tonge | Joe McCormick | Johanna Sanchez | John & Denise Cooper | John McDonald | Joy White | Joyce Stehouwer | JTC Heersink Foundation | Judi Brouse | Judith Farrant | Julie Carthew | June Salmon | K & D Hart | Karen & Rick Terry | Karen Bonnell | Karen Davis |

**We thank you all for your continued support  
as advocates and allies for positive change.**

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**YWCA Muskoka | Annual Report 2022**

# **WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE YWCA MOVEMENT?**

## **Become a lifetime member**

At the Community YWCA of Muskoka, membership is open to all persons - YWCA embraces members from all age groups, all genders, and from all walks of life! Available on a sliding scale.

## **Become a monthly donor**

A long-term solution that allows our organization to plan and allocate appropriate resources throughout the year and beyond to best serve girls, women, and gender-diverse people in Muskoka.

## **Subscribe to our e-newsletter**

Stay up-to-date on upcoming programs, workshops, and events. Delivered to your inbox monthly.

## **Participate in a program**

A variety of workshops, programs, and events are offered.

## **Volunteer**

There are volunteer positions for almost any field of interest.

# **[WWW.YWCAMUSKOKA.COM](http://WWW.YWCAMUSKOKA.COM)**



**YWCA**  
MUSKOKA

NATIONAL ADVOCACY.  
COMMUNITY ACTION.

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## CONTACT US!



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UNIT 4. P1L 1S3



### WEBSITE

[WWW.YWCAMUSKOKA.COM](http://WWW.YWCAMUSKOKA.COM)



### CHARITABLE BUSINESS NUMBER

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