

# Transitions

Women's Habitat Newsletter  
ISSUE #19 Summer 2016



## Our shelter, one year later

Last month our shelter had a celebration; we barbequed in our gorgeous backyard, we cooked in our fabulous kitchen, and as we cut the cake in our bright, beautiful dining room, we took a moment to remember everyone who made our shelter the stunning space it is today.

In 2014, after receiving overwhelming support from our community, we shut our doors and renovated from top to bottom. In June 2015, we re-opened and welcomed families; women and children who had made the brave decision to leave abuse and re-build their lives. One year later, 28 women and 36 children have stayed with us. They have received shelter, counselling and the support they need to create their own path. It is a privilege to serve these families and work with them to meet their goals; a privilege we would not have had without the support of our Shelter Renovation Capital Campaign donors. One year later that generosity is still saving lives. It is ending the cycle of violence and abuse in families and creating safer communities. It is rebuilding the bond between mother and child and providing families the opportunities they deserve to live their lives free from violence.

Today we continue our commitment to provide shelter that allows families to live with dignity and assistance that is women-centred and inclusive. Tomorrow and in the years to come we will be here until our vision of a society founded on equality where the inherent value of all women and children is recognized and celebrated, has been achieved.



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### Did you know?

Women's Habitat offers a 24-hour telephone crisis line. If you or someone you know is experiencing abuse call us for support at  
**416-252-5829**  
**TTY 416-2520361**



## Welcome Summer Students!

This year our agency was awarded a generous grant through the Government of Canada to hire three students over the summer months. In June we welcomed Molina and Jemeisha who were hired as Camp Counsellors to support our Girlz Space Summer Camp and Aleksandra who has been hired as our Program Support Worker. We are thrilled to have the support of these smart women. Welcome to the team!

*" I've been able to apply my leadership skills to educate younger girls on empowerment and self-confidence..."*

- Jemeisha Williams,  
Summer Student

## Getting ready to re-open our Outreach Centre

Since we opened our Outreach Centre in 2006 our services have grown immensely and our facility was unable meet the need. We offer programs every weekday and serve over 9,200 individual meals to women and children each year. We needed to renovate and provide a kitchen and program space that could appropriately accommodate our clients. Our community partners have supplied us the space to continue to offer services and our incredible donors and the Ministry of Community and Social Services have provided the financial support to go forward with this project.

It has been a long road. We began the renovation in early spring and expect to open our doors by September. We are thankful to our supporters and our community and are excited to share our beautiful transformation with all of you.

*We still need support! For more information on the Outreach Renovation Campaign contact: Lina Almanzan at [lalmanzan@womens-habitat.ca](mailto:lalmanzan@womens-habitat.ca)*





## Our summer supporters

We love summer in Etobicoke! Every year our amazing community organizes awesome events and we are always thrilled to join the fun. These are just a few of the incredible supporters we've been fortunate to partner with this summer.

### Kingsway Lambton United Church Flea Market

We were lucky enough, once again, to be one of the recipients of the proceeds of the Kingsway Lambton United Church Flea Market. We attended the market and picked up some fabulous items for the shelter (and a few for ourselves!). Thank you Kingsway Lambton United Church for your commitment and for hosting one of the best flea markets in the City!

### RBC United Way Days of Caring

After a long winter, our shelter's outdoor space needed a little TLC. RBC employees participating in the United Way Days of Caring initiative stepped up and offered a Saturday to plant, clean and beautify our backyard. Our residents and staff were thrilled. Thank you RBC for rolling up your sleeves and getting your hands dirty!

### Islington Golf Tournament

Women's Habitat has had a wonderful partnership with the Islington Gold Club for many years. We always have a great time at their charity golf tournaments. They continue to show their unwavering dedication to their community and once

### RIBFEST at Centennial Park

Each year we are honoured to participate in The Etobicoke Rotary Club's annual RibFest held at Centennial Park and this year was no different. Our staff and volunteers were out helping at the recycling stations, and of course sampling some famous ribs! Thank you Rotary Club of Etobicoke and congratulations on another successful, and GREEN, Ribfest!

### YPI Students at Etobicoke School of the Arts

Etobicoke School of the Arts (ESA) donates throughout the year to Women's Habitat through their White Ribbon initiative. In June we got a call from some of their wonderful students with great news; they had won \$5000 for us through a project they completed for the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative! Congratulations and thank you!!

*If you're hosting an event and want to invite Women's Habitat, please contact Ursula Krubnik [ukrubnik@womens-habitat.ca](mailto:ukrubnik@womens-habitat.ca)*



# Welcoming the Minister

We were honoured to host the Minister of Community and Social Services, The Honourable Helena Jaczek at our shelter this summer. Our Board and staff gathered together to share with Ms. Jaczek the history of Women's Habitat and our successes, our barriers and our latest initiatives. Two of our Girlz Space program graduates joined us and shared their experience attending a WH youth program and the support and life skills they'd received.

The Minister has had a busy summer, visiting community service agencies across Ontario. Her Ministry has also made some fantastic announcements in recent months which we've been privileged to attend, including a \$72 million investment in an anti-human trafficking strategy.



Ontario is a major centre for human trafficking in Canada, accounting for roughly 65 percent of police-reported cases nationally. At WH we have seen a sharp increase in the amount of clients who are survivors of trafficking. This new strategy is aimed at increasing awareness and coordination, enhancing justice-sector initiatives and improving survivors' access to services like ours.

She also announced that the province is ending the claw back of child support payments from social assistance. This means child support payments will be fully exempt from social assistance benefit calculations to help increase incomes for families who receive both social assistance and child support. This announcement is incredible; it will mean a great deal for many of our low-income clients.

We thank the Minister for her commitment to ending violence in our communities and look forward to her next visit.



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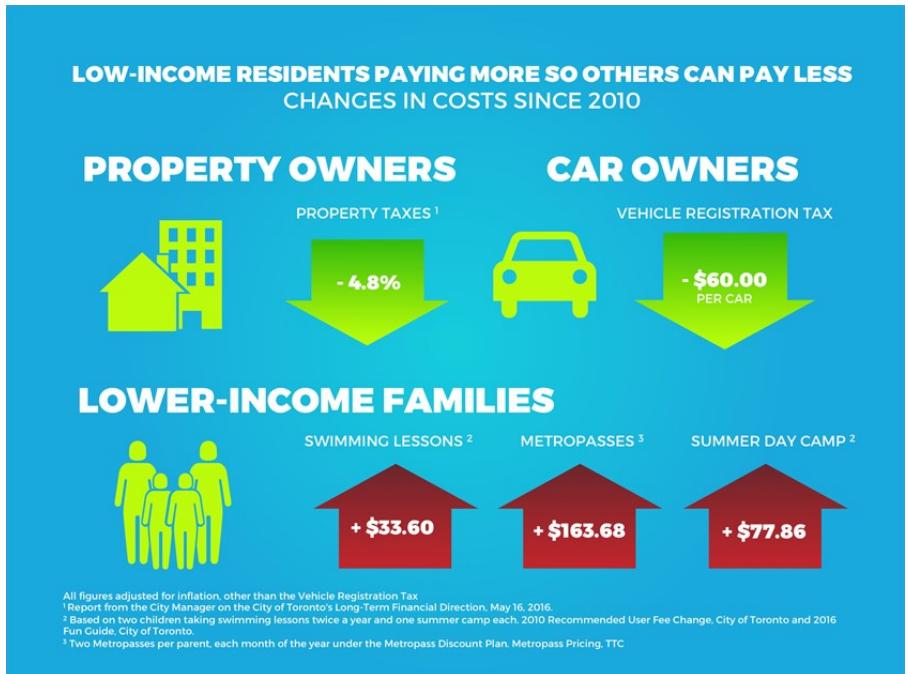


# Closing the Fairness Gap

Women's Habitat has been working with community allies to urge City Council to keep their commitment to poverty reduction. Our Community Program Manager, Leila Sarangi, spoke at a City Hall press conference on July 11<sup>th</sup>, to share the devastating impact high user fees and city service cuts have on low-income women and children.

Over the past two years, we spoke to over 2000 women across the city and heard clearly that the issues that need to be resolved to alleviate poverty are housing, jobs and childcare, in addition to other services including transit and recreation. We also heard the City promise to implement the recommendations of their Poverty Reduction Strategy when they unanimously adopted it last year.

So we were concerned when the City put forward a 2017 budget plan that considers a 2.6% cut across all divisions, with no new investments in poverty reduction initiatives. Statistics show that one in four Torontonians are poor. When Women's Habitat talk about poverty in Toronto, we are talking about women's poverty. With a persistent wage and income gap between women and men which is larger if she is racialized or indigenous, women are generally the poorest members of households, the poorest people in a neighbourhood, and the poorest citizens of a city. The recent revelation that Toronto has the highest child poverty rate in Canada is really an indicator of our city's rate of poverty among mothers. This budget plan will not be putting women or Torontonians on the path to prosperity.



**"The lack of affordable and safe housing is the number one reason why women cannot leave abusive relationships..."**

Housing is a critical issue that we deal with on a daily basis. The lack of affordable and safe housing is the number one reason why women cannot leave abusive relationships, it's why there are 175,000 people on the social housing waitlist, and it is why our shelter system is backlogged. And this backlog will mean our emergency shelter system will continue to turn away 300 women and their children each night.

We can look to examples outside of Toronto where investments into childcare directly led to broad economic returns in Quebec and have resulted in nearly equal workforce participation in Sweden's proportional system.

This 2017 budget plan will put low-income women and Torontonians further behind. Higher user fees and service cuts means the poorest in our communities will pay more and access less, we still won't be addressing the City's revenue problem, and the fairness gap between those who can afford to live in this city and those who face barriers to prosperity will continue to widen and polarize.

We are urging the city to close this fairness gap by implementing fair revenue tools and making real investments into the Poverty Reduction Strategy in this budget.

*For more information on Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy, please contact Leila Sarangi at [lsarangi@womens-habitat.ca](mailto:lsarangi@womens-habitat.ca).*

# The Toronto Women's Collective is back!

After a bit of a hiatus over the winter and spring, the Toronto Women's Collective is happy to announce we'll be back at a new summer pop-up location very shortly! Look out for our container over the next couple of weeks at the [Community Market at The Well](#), at [the corner of Front and Spadina](#). We'll post the pop-up schedule on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) soon. In the meantime, the market is full of vendors and open 7 days a week from 11 am to 8 pm, so stop by their sunny spot for great food and shopping! A big thank you to our partners at Scadding Court Community Centre for putting the Community Market at The Well together: [check out their website](#) for more information about other community markets they've coordinated across the city.



## About us...

The Toronto Women's Collective is a collective of women micro-entrepreneurs working together to build and support our growing businesses. You can find us at markets across the city offering a variety of goods and services, like one-of-a-kind handmade goods, vintage and gently used clothing, fashion accessories, art, delicious food, and much more! We're always offering something new, so you should probably follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) to stay up to date about the awesome stuff we're selling, when we're selling it all, and where!

## Keep in Touch!



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[www.womens-habitat.ca](#)

## Women's Habitat of Etobicoke

140 Islington Avenue  
Etobicoke, ON M8V 3B6

416-252-7949 ph

416-252-1520 fax

416-252-0361 TTY

416-252-5829 CRISIS LINE 24/7