

YW90th Gratitude Report

YWCA NIAGARA REGION





**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT -
Past. Present. Always.**

I always look forward to our Annual General Meeting. I know that probably makes me a little unusual. The reason I do is because it is a time to look back on the year that has happened and see all the hard work that has been done and **it reminds me of what a wonderful community we have.** In an environment that has become increasingly difficult for vulnerable women and their families to navigate, this community continues to rally and support the work of the YW. We are forever grateful as we face the pressure of increasing demands on our services and a growing disconnect between the amounts of funding received and the resources that are needed to meet the needs.

It is the community of staff, volunteers, service providers we partner with, funders and donors who make this organization run and make it possible to serve and support the women and their families who cross our doors. It is this community that makes it possible for the stories that are written in this Gratitude Report to happen. This year, I am even more reflective as we celebrate 90 years of service. Having had the privilege of hearing stories from women over the years I can confidently say that our work together has had a significant impact on many lives over that time.

Thank you for making it happen.



Elisabeth Zimmermann,
Executive Director



1920s

YMCA and YWCA building was built at 56 Queen Street in St. Catharines



1930s

Focus on recreational and educational programs



1940s

YW was assigned "war jobs" such as a Room Registry Service



1950s

YM/YWCA was serving double the population from when we first opened the building in 1929



1960s/70s

Years of transition and of making decisions around future for YMCA/YWCA



1980s

YWCA became involved in providing housing, purchasing our Court Street building for Transitional Housing



1990s

The YW ran "Job Route for Women", the only pre-employment program in the Region that was offered exclusively to women



2000s

We began running Emergency Shelters expanding our services region-wide taking on a presence again in Niagara Falls

YOUR IMPACT

Daisy's journey began when she entered the Court Street Transitional Housing Program, after what she describes as a **long walk of feeling alone** and faced with many hardships. She felt completely supported from the day she moved into the YW's supported housing. "I finally was where I needed to be," explains Daisy.

While Daisy stayed with us at our Court Street building, she loved to participate in our Skills Development workshops. At a time in her life when she thought of herself as someone who had lost all of her skills, it meant the world to be in a group that was all about **celebrating your own strengths and beauty** and all that you have overcome.

Daisy successfully completed the Court Street Transitional Housing program, and then transitioned into the Off-Site Transitional Housing Program. During her time in the Off-Site program, she felt empowered by her Support Worker, who never judged. Today, Daisy has completed the Transitional Housing Program and has moved on to a place that she can now call her home.

Our support does not end there. One of the things that often makes all of the difference for the women and families we serve, is that **we are still there for them even after they have left our programs**. For Daisy, knowing that the support is still there for her, if and when she needs it, gives her the strength and the trust she needs to continue on on her path.

"I'm just one of many individuals in the Niagara Region who are in need of this type of Transitional Housing opportunity. Please keep in mind when you pass someone in public that you just never know their story."

DAISY'S STORY

**"I FINALLY
WAS
WHERE I
NEEDED
TO BE"**

566 women & 92 children

found a safe refuge in our Emergency
Women's Shelters

28 families & 59 children

were able to stay together during
this difficult time of their lives in our
Emergency Family Shelter Units

**172 men, 61 women & 123
children** stayed in our Emergency

Men's and Family Shelter

*Emergency Shelters for women,
men and families are located in
safe, home-like environments and
are available 24 hours a day, 365
days a year. Guests receive a
comfortable room, a warm bed
to call their own and three meals
each day.*



Past. Present. Always.

YOUR IMPACT

Pam had been having a rough time for years when she finally built up the courage to put herself first. She was searching for the perfect balance of support and independence when Pam found our Transitional Housing program in West Niagara. "My Transitional Housing Worker Cheryl showed me the house and **my eyes must have jumped out of their sockets**. It was so big and I could picture my family here. Yeah, we'll take it!"

Once Pam and two of her children moved in, the kids were uncertain. They had been through so much and were terrified of even shutting their bedroom doors, especially her youngest, Julie. "Living in survival mode, you're always worried about what's going to happen next, what other shoe will drop."

It has taken some time but 11-year-old Julie now feels comfortable closing her bedroom door. 14-year-old Josh had been struggling with ADHD but is now safely off his meds, **socializing and making friends at school** rather than being stuck in his room.

Through her first year in the program, Pam has already been connected with many services in the area. She's finally been able to secure her family. Her oldest son John graduated from high school, has found a job, and his own place. Her second eldest, Jake, will be graduating shortly and is on the same track as John, visiting regularly.

"Now that everything is going well with the kids, I can relax and focus on all of the things I can finally do. The best thing I have ever done was come to the YW."

Pam's next goals are full-time employment and obtaining her own vehicle. When asked where she sees herself in the future she says, "Here. I'm settled. I love this community and it's where I want to be. Everyone is so friendly and helpful and the kids really like it here too."

PAM'S STORY

**"THE BEST
THING I HAVE
EVER DONE
WAS COME
TO THE YW"**

24 women were able to start over
in our On-Site Transitional Housing
33 women worked towards their goals
in our Supported Transitional Housing
187 women found a place to call home
in our Off-Site Transitional Housing

Transitional housing is offered in three stages, step by step decreasing the staff support while increasing the client's independence. Accompanied by Transitional Support Workers, the residents set goals and develop the skills they need to move forward.

Past. Present. Always.



**“I BELIEVE THAT I AM ALIVE TODAY
BECAUSE OF THE SUPPORT OF THE YW.”**



Past. Present. Always.

YOUR IMPACT FIGHTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Over the course of our 90 years in Niagara, it has always been at the heart of our work to stay close to the needs of the community. **One of the challenges Niagara is facing today is an ever-growing industry of human trafficking.**

Since we began offering our Sex Trade On My Terms (STOMT) program, many women have shared with our Outreach Workers that they have experienced exploitation. They also shared their **struggle to find the right services** for their unique situations. To better support survivors, we lead the initiative to develop a region-wide Emergency Response Protocol, which was signed and implemented earlier this year.

We could not do this important work without your on-going support. It is you, our donors, funders, volunteers and advocates who enable us to respond to the needs of the people we serve.
THANK YOU!

To take our advocacy work for survivors one step further, we are training local firefighters and police officers to help them recognize signs of human trafficking.

“The successes have been immediate,” explains Krystal Snider, Program Manager for our Skills Development Department. “Very early on we got a call from a firefighter within days of the training we provided. They were able to identify and report a suspicious motel room.”

1005 students & 510 adults
benefitted from
our Skills Development Workshops

872 women
shared their experience in
Women's Addiction Recovery Mediation

489 clients
accessed STOMT

Skills Development programs provide workshops for clients in our programs and youth all throughout Niagara. Topics include budgeting, anger solutions, healthy boundaries, identifying depression, accessing community resources and goal setting.

IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF YOU

On behalf of our Board of Directors and staff members, we want you to know that none of these success stories would be possible without **YOU**. It is you, our donors, volunteers, advocates and supporters, who have made the YW what it is today. Whether you have been following our work for decades or weeks, we thank you for putting your trust in us to serve those in our community who need it the most. **No statistic or story can fully explain just how many lives have been touched by the YW** over the course of 90 years. We do know, however, that none of it would have happened without your support.

As we launch into a new year, we are rolling out a new strategic plan as well. It is the result of consultations with guests and clients, board and staff members, volunteers and donors. **The vision statement that we have developed is at the heart of our work, it is the foundation and it is our guide.** Thank you for your tireless support, thank you for strengthening our community, thank you for putting an end to inequity.

YWCA Niagara Region Vision:

An equitable society where women and families thrive.



Past. Present. Always.



Income

- Donations & Fundraising
- Earned Income
- Government Funding
- United Way



Expenses

- Skills Development
- Administration
- Fundraising & Marketing
- Transitional Housing
- Emergency Shelter
- Housing First



Board of Directors

Jennifer Bonato (President), Laurie Andrews (Vice President), Carolyn Teutenberg (Treasurer), Kelly Snow (Secretary), Cindi LoForti Lepp (Past President), Misette Critelli, Julie Rorison, Joanne Heritz, Margaret Andrewes, Yuware Usuanlele, Kathy Summers, Alex Pedersen, Jennifer Warren, Louise Veres

Mission

To be the change agent for community transformation ending gender inequity and social injustice.

Vision

An equitable society where women and families thrive.

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