

YW KITCHENER-WATERLOO ANNUAL REPORT 2023



KITCHENER-WATERLOO

WOMEN
CHOOSING
CHANGE



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Leadership Message



Dear friends, colleagues and supporters

As Board Chair and CEO, we are now well into our second year at the YWKW.

This time has been filled with much work - listening to our community, to those we serve, and perhaps as importantly, to the women we do not serve - to ensure our services are relevant and impactful. This work and these learnings have solidified our commitment to better serve women, gender diverse people, and families in our community.

The women and gender diverse people of Kitchener-Waterloo deserve better. Better access to timely, affordable, and quality childcare. Better supports for those living in supportive housing, as they seek to further reclaim their independence. And better emergency shelter supports for those experiencing homelessness.

We are proud to lead the YWKW at this transformational time, as our organization is **choosing change**, with a bold plan to re-design our emergency shelter services to deepen impact, improve cultural responsiveness, and leverage trauma-informed and evidence-based preferred practices to produce long-lasting outcomes.

Our vision is a new model where women are given more than just a roof over their heads, but the supports they need, while empowering them to continue to choose change. We are not just building a new emergency shelter; we are creating pathways for change.

- Jennifer Breaton, CEO

In 2024, we will sell our building at 84 Frederick Street and begin to build an enhanced shelter model that provides the necessary supports for the complex challenges that women experiencing homelessness face.

We all share a vision and a passion for a better future. Women and gender diverse people deserve dignity in an intentional space where they can seek shelter but also the supports and community that they need as they transition on the housing continuum.

- Karen Coviello, on behalf of the Board of Directors



KITCHENER-WATERLOO

A LEADING VOICE FOR CHANGE

At the YWKW, we work hard to ensure our services are designed to meet the needs of those we serve and in 2023, we launched a new employment and training program through the Federal Government's Women's and Gender Equity (W.A.G.E.) program to bring critical skills for independence to the women we support in emergency shelter and supportive housing.

We continue to focus on programming that gives women the tools for economic independence. We are a proud partner with the University of Waterloo through a partnership with WatSpeed, launching two new career accelerator programs via our (newly re-branded) Integrated Holistic Career Services. This year we also rolled out programs to support staff interested in upskilling their education through free university preparatory course work.

We continued our advocacy work focused on issues related to affordable and accessible childcare, housing, and gender-based violence. The YWKW co-led - together with YWCA Cambridge - a provincial coalition project across the YWCAs in Ontario to develop a coordinated advocacy strategy designed to broaden our reach and strengthen our collective voice.

As leaders, we would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and re-commit to our relationship with our supporters, especially our long-standing Club 84 members. The YW has a long history in our community and we are honoured that our valued supporters have chosen to walk alongside us on this Choosing Change journey.

In the coming year, we are excited to engage community in new and different ways and hope to see many of you at our 2nd Annual YW Golf Fore Change Tournament, and Rise Up Breakfast events.

In closing, we would like to offer our sincere thanks to our YWKW team. Across locations, sites, and programs, we know that they continue to show up - working at all hours, weekends, and holidays - to help support others. To each one of you - thank you for being part of our YW team, for supporting and standing up for women's equity, and for being there when the women and children of our community need us the most.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Breaton, CEO and Karen Coviello, Board Chair

The YW continues to be a leading voice for the right to affordable housing, access to quality childcare and accessible and equitable employment and training in Kitchener-Waterloo

1,909 Served in 2023

114
women

58
children

SUPPORTIVE & AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMS



Two supportive housing programs serving single women and women-led families who have been episodically or persistently homeless

Two permanent affordable housing programs - one 4-unit program for large families and one 10-unit program for mothers with children who have experienced homelessness.

Addressing the need for more affordable housing for families, the YW's new 10-unit affordable housing at 1480 Block Line Road Kitchener opened in March 2023.



The YW supports women on their journey to stable housing and independence by offering food support, recreation, on site health services and connections to community programs and services.



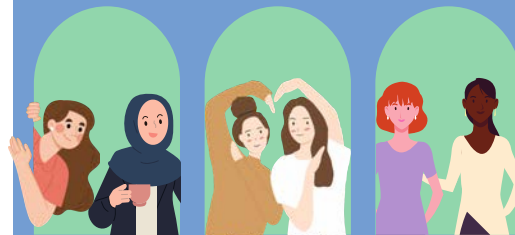
A 66+ bed emergency shelter serving cis women, non-binary and trans people

Outreach support for families who stay in off-site shelter locations

62,722
bed nights



EMERGENCY SHELTER SERVICES



484
adults

263
children

Women experiencing homelessness face complex challenges. The YW provides shelter, crisis support, basic needs, housing help, advocacy and connections to community supports based on the unique needs of each individual.

FURTHERING
OUR REACH



Last year, our advocacy initiatives reached **THOUSANDS.**

826
children

4 childcare centres
227
children

7 before & after school programs

408
children

Care for newcomer children

93
children

Youth program

98
youth

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Educators create a safe learning environment for children using play and social interaction tailored to their personalities and learning styles. Through a play-based curriculum, they enhance their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development by providing opportunities for learning and practice.

INTEGRATED HOLISTIC CAREER SERVICES

121
women

Two employment and entrepreneurship training programs, one serving youth with barriers to employment and one serving women who are pre-Canadian citizens.

43
youth

Technology skills training for those who wish to secure employment in roles which require specialized technological expertise.

A program to increase digital literacy and employability, focusing on marginalized communities across Canada.

Finding strength in the face of difficulty takes courage and ambition. We provide coaching, guidance, and experience to build a career. Our programs help local women and gender diverse people find their next opportunity and remove barriers to economic security.



We strive to foster social and systemic transformations aimed at eradicating gender-based violence, advancing gender equity, ensuring affordable and accessible childcare, and expanding access to affordable housing.

Financial Reports

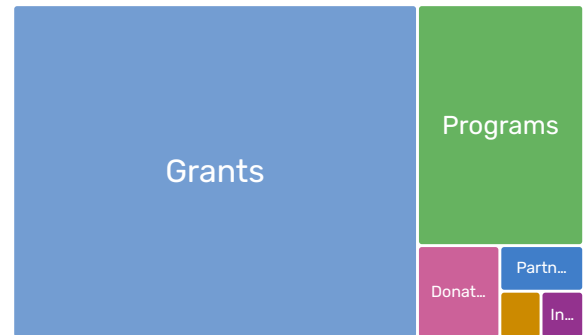
SCHEDULE OF OPERATING FUND BALANCES

for the year ended December 31, 2023

Revenues

Programs	\$ 2,376,121
Grants	
Federal Funding - Operating ...	1,220,532
Provincial Funding	40,069
Regional Funding	6,619,975
Corporations and Foundations ..	<u>242,509</u>
Total Grants	\$ 8,123,085
United Way	\$ 140,000
Donations and Special Events	\$ 414,067
Interest	\$ 113,719
Partnerships Contracts	\$ 267,136

Total Revenues \$ 11,434,128



Expenses

Salaries and Benefits	\$ 7,906,713
Occupancy Costs	\$ 1,438,001
Financial Costs	\$ (8,124)
Program Costs	\$ 758,362
Office Administration	\$ 678,213
Interest on Long Term Debt	\$ 22,125
Other	\$ 91,715

Total Expenses \$10,887,005



Excess of Revenues over Expenses Before Other Items	\$ 547,123
Other Items (including amortization and gains on long term investments)	\$ (578,778)
Excess of Revenues Over Expenses for the Year	\$ (31,655)
Interfund Transfers	\$ (1,031)
Change in Net Assets	\$ (32,686)
Net Assets - Beginning of the Year	\$ 19,072,123

Net Assets - End of the Year \$ 19,039,437

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

for the year ended December 31, 2023

	2023	2022
Assets		
Current		
Cash and cash equivalents	540,503	946,105
Short-term investments	465,916	447,997
Accounts receivable	856,420	1,344,416
HST recoverable	518,626	824,261
Prepaid expenses	17,676	15,671
	2,399,141	3,578,450
Long-term investments	1,145,564	1,049,110
Tangible capital assets	17,760,901	16,814,122
	\$21,305,606	\$21,441,682
Liabilities		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	796,006	1,003,546
Deferred income	913,164	603,937
Current long term debt - mortgages	128,280	314,624
Current long term debt - other	29,452	28,298
	1,866,902	1,950,405
Long term		
Other long term debt	307,505	338,655
Asset retirement obligation	91,762	80,499
	399,267	419,154
	2,266,169	2,369,559
Net Assets		
Externally restricted	642,753	559,726
Internally restricted	18,172,629	18,785,552
Unrestricted	224,055	(273,155)
	19,039,437	19,072,123
	\$21,305,606	\$21,441,682

To view the Audited Financial Statements, visit:
<https://ywk.ca/publications-resources/>

Recognizing our supporters

CLUB 84 DONORS

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Thank you to the individuals, businesses, foundations, groups, and organizations who generously donated \$20 or more in 2023. We are profoundly grateful for your support. We also wish to thank those donors who have chosen to remain anonymous.



We would like to acknowledge and re-commit to our relationship with our supporters, especially our long-standing Club 84 members.

The YW has a long history in our community and we are honoured that our valued supporters have chosen to walk alongside us on this Choosing Change journey.

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Deaun Moulton
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Merre-Lyn (Mimi) Dow
Kaela Holland
Leejay Levene
Sidney and Elizabeth McLennan
Helen Pearse
Beverley Thom
Irene Wray
Carol Southwood and her parents Joyce and Alan

IN HONOR

Melissa Durrell
The Fievoli Family
Robyn Kent
Jennifer Li
Stephanie Pink
Natalie Poracki
Erica Weinberg
YW Block Line Road
Tenant Support Workers

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Elmira Maple Syrup Festival
Hockey Helps The Homeless
Jim and Sue Hallman Family Fund
Marianne and Jim Erb Family Fund
Mary Wicks Fund
Ontario Trillium Fund
Royal LePage Shelter Foundation
The Gordon Linkletter Family Fund
ToastyToes Waterloo Region
Unifor Social Justice Fund
Victoria D'Agostino Children's Benefit Fund
Government, Federal, Provincial, Regional

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Leadership & Governance

2023-2024

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*Resigned during the 2023-2024 term

WE ALL SHARE A VISION
AND A PASSION FOR
A BETTER FUTURE

MISSION, VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Mission Statement

YW Kitchener-Waterloo is dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls by providing services and programs that support physical and mental wellbeing and economic choice and independence.

Vision Statement

We envision an inclusive and equitable world where women are empowered to choose change.

Guiding Principles

- We respect the dignity and worth of individuals.
- We value diversity among people.
- We acknowledge the holistic nature of human needs—body, mind, and spirit.
- We respect the fundamental right to self-determination.
- We ensure that women are respected, their voices are heard, and their issues are addressed.
- We focus clearly, but not exclusively, on women and girls.
- We act with integrity and are accountable to our community.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Strengthen our voice and leadership to increase the profile of the YW and drive positive change in the community
- Integrate support systems and remove barriers to expand and improve our services
- Be the best place for women to work

Jackie's Story



Ian M. Stewart Photo

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IS A PREVENTABLE EPIDEMIC

During the 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence November 25 to December 10, we shared stories of incredible resilience.

Many of the women and gender-diverse people that we serve continue to survive despite perpetual violence and many bouts of hopelessness.

THIS IS JACKIE'S STORY

Story by: Liz Monteiro

Violence has permeated parts of Jackie's life and left marks that may never be erased.

Jackie was just 17 and raising her own son, living with her mother in the United Kingdom when her 14-year-old brother died in Toronto in 1986.

Darren was viciously sexually assaulted by a man who would later be convicted of the harrowing crime and sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole for 25 years.

Twenty-five years later, Jackie would experience the agonizing pain of losing a loved one to violence again. Her son, Cory, 27, was fatally stabbed by an unknown assailant in Fort McMurray, AB days after Christmas in 2011.

Cory, who had moved out West to take advantage of the economic boom, was trying to stop a man from assaulting two others, said his uncle at the time.

Jackie recalls how Cory wanted to come home for Christmas but money was tight and most of her extra money had been spent on Christmas. She told him she would get him back home in a few months.

"I beat myself up forever," she said. "If I had the money to bring him home, he would be alive today."

Five years before Cory's death, Jackie lost her three-month-old daughter, Savannah, to leukemia.

"I got into cocaine then. I was spiralling," Jackie said. "No one should have to bury their children."

"I wasn't healed from one, and then it happened again."

Jackie attended grief counselling and coped as best as she could. She worked at various jobs, including Swiss Chalet, NOMA light company, landscaping and as a drywall tapper for a union.

She fell off scaffolding while at work and waited three years before having hip surgery. Jackie relied heavily on prescription medications for the pain associated with the fall and with osteoarthritis, a degenerative joint disease.

Jackie moved to Cambridge to join her partner who had previously left Toronto with their daughter to be closer to family in the Galt area. Jackie and Beau were both receiving disability benefits.

Beau was struggling with Cory’s unexpected death and using alcohol to cope, Jackie said. He would later die of alcohol-related issues.

Jackie knew she couldn’t pay the rent on disability benefits and had to give up her home. Her daughter, who had graduated from Glenview Park Secondary School, went to live with an aunt.

That’s when Jackie began living in a tent off Highway 24 in Cambridge. For about four years, she experienced chronic homelessness and was introduced to illicit drugs.

“It was very scary at first. It was traumatic,” recalls Jackie, who often went to The Bridges shelter for meals.

Despite living outdoors with strangers, Jackie said she met many people who helped her along the way, some even calling her ‘Mom.’

“I have met a lot of good people, people who lost their families, and people who lost their way. There are so many stories out there,” she said.

She would come to Kitchener and stay at the YW Kitchener-Waterloo emergency shelter for women on Frederick Street. Jackie recalls feeling terrified because she had never been at a shelter.

Jackie, 54, uses a walker and now has her own apartment at the YW Block Line housing development which opened in Kitchener in April, 2022. It is home to 41 women who have experienced chronic homelessness.

“It’s a good feeling to make my own spot. I’m safe and free from the elements,” she said. “It’s nice to have a kitchen and sit at a table and eat a meal.”

Jackie said she is grateful to be safe, warm and living with other women.

“I still have bad days, days where I break down. I’m lucky I made it out the other side.”

Jackie lights up when she talks about her daughter, who lives in Kitchener and is now raising three children with her partner. They see each other often and Jackie is proud of the woman her daughter has become. Her three grandchildren make her want to keep on living.

Her daughter often tells her mom that she is the strongest woman she knows.

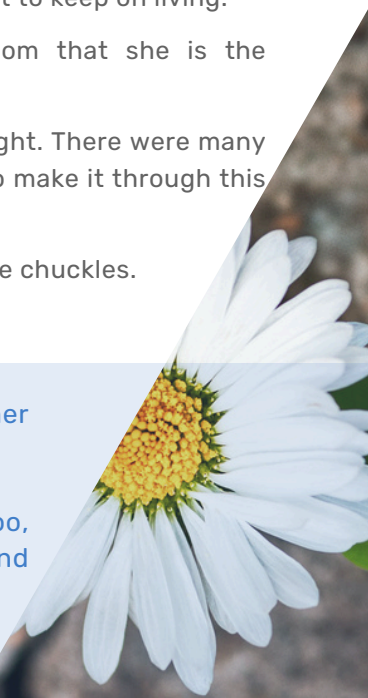
“I’m glad she looks at me in that light. There were many times I thought ‘How am I going to make it through this day?’”

“At least I did something right,” she chuckles.

The housing development operated by the YW on Block Line Road is home to 40 other women, each with their own story when it comes to gender-based violence.

During the 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence, the YW Kitchener-Waterloo, and other YW’s across the country, called on governments to work with us to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls.

Jackie’s story is one of the many stories that highlights the struggles that are faced by many women, gender-diverse people and Two Spirit individuals, and how ending gender-based violence is linked to safe, affordable and reliable housing.



A Look Back at 2023



ADVOCACY

The YW are leaders in advocacy and host and participate in many community events, locally, provincially and nationally including the United Way Waterloo Region Communities' March of 1000 Umbrellas, the Coldest Night of the Year hosted by Ray of Hope, the Habitat for Humanity Women Build Week, Take Back the Night - A Call to End Gender-Based Violence, and YWCA Canada's Day on the Hill. On December 6th, the YW commemorated the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women with a breakfast and vigil.



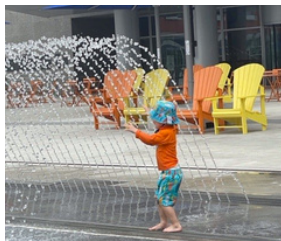
BLOCK LINE ROAD CELEBRATIONS

In March we celebrated the opening of our new affordable housing for 10 women and their children, while in May, tenants at the supportive housing next door celebrated the one year anniversary of its opening.



PROGRAMS

- Staff and participants in career services participate in an art therapy session
- Youth playing a game at the Fearlessly You program
- A child at Duke St Childcare playing in the water park in front of city hall
- Making burritos in the tenant cooking program at Block Line Road Supportive Housing
- Students in the YW Youth Development Program at Westmount Public School create Valentine's Day Cards for local Meals on Wheels clients



EVENTS

Pictured are just a few of the **many** events hosted by the YW last year:

- April Block Line Road Art Showcase
- February Tea & Talk with Erin Kloos
- April Rise Up Breakfast with Come Back Snack's Emily O'Brien
- May Tea & Talk with Luisa D'Amato
- September Golf Fore Change Tournament





KITCHENER-WATERLOO

WOMEN CHOOSING CHANGE

YW Kitchener-Waterloo
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Charitable registration number: 11898 7643 RR0001