

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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YW Kitchener-Waterloo  
153 Frederick St., Kitchener, ON N2H 2M2  
519.576.8856  
[ykwk.ca](http://ykwk.ca)



# LEADERSHIP MESSAGE



Last year, Waterloo Region was thriving. Our economy was strong and our population was growing. Unemployment rates were low and development was booming. We were known worldwide as a hub of learning and innovation. But not all members of our community were benefitting, and for those who were being left behind, 2019 was a rough year.

The Region's homeless shelters couldn't keep up with exploding

demand. In 2018/2019 there were 107,340 shelter bed nights provided, which was an increase of 21% over the 88,511 bed nights in 2017/2018. Increased lengths of stay and increased depth and complexity of clients' needs, and overall lack of affordable and supportive housing options were the reasons. And as a consequence of inadequate shelter capacity, the number of unsheltered individuals also skyrocketed. One study conducted in the summer and fall of 2019 concluded that there were as many homeless people sleeping rough as there were sleeping in shelter beds.

The wait list for affordable housing grew from about 4,000 households a couple of years ago to almost 5,000. And female-led lone parent families, who have the lowest median income of all family types, made up the bulk of that wait list. Half of female-led families in Waterloo Region spent more than 50 percent of their income on rent, leaving them in core housing need and at risk of becoming homeless.

And the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives ranked Waterloo Region as one of the worst places in Canada to be a woman. We scored particularly poorly on measures of physical and economic security, with higher than

average rates of sexual assault reporting and a gender wage gap greater than in most of the country. Lack of access to childcare was one reason for women's unequal workforce participation, as the number of licensed childcare spaces fell an estimated 3,600 short of meeting the need.

**But as rough as things got for vulnerable people in 2019, they would have been worse if not for the work of the YW.**

In 2019, we provided emergency shelter to 409 homeless women and 185 children in our family shelter, and we operated two temporary winter shelters for hundreds more adults who would otherwise have been out in the cold.

We provided supportive and affordable housing to 68 women and 37 children living in low income and with histories of homelessness, and we began working on a five-year strategy to add significantly to our current permanent housing stock.

We opened two new employment and entrepreneurship programs and provided training and paid work experience that helped 32 young and Newcomer women facing barriers to employment find or create their own jobs.

We provided early learning and care to 1027 children and began planning the construction of a new, large childcare centre for 88 more infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers.

And with YWCA Cambridge, we launched a four-year advocacy initiative designed to raise awareness of and reduce violence against women in Waterloo Region.

That was last year, and in retrospect, it was a good year. But early this year, a pandemic swept the world, and Waterloo Region wasn't spared.



As I write this, our child care and before- and after-school programs have all been shut down by order of the Province of Ontario, and more than half our staff have been laid off. Our employment and entrepreneurship programs continue to deliver classes electronically, but our In Her Shoes store is closed.

Our emergency shelters and supportive housing programs, all declared essential services, continue to operate, but struggle to meet many of the new health and safety requirements that our pandemic response demands. Our fundraising events have been cancelled and, with the economy in collapse, our donations have dropped. And as difficult as the situation is for the YW, it's immeasurably worse for the vulnerable women and families we serve.

The massive layoffs that have occurred in the hospitality and childcare sectors disproportionately affect women. In times of economic and family stress, domestic violence rates rise, and women and children are usually the victims. Free and inexpensive sources of food for

female-led lone parent families living in low income are no longer available to them. Women who are unsheltered have nowhere to go to self-isolate.

We don't know – no-one knows – how long the pandemic will last, or what the future will bring for the YW. But we've been here in Waterloo Region for 115 years now, and we're not going anywhere. 2019 was a good year. 2020 won't be good, but the YW will be here, doing whatever we can to make it better.

**Elizabeth Clarke,  
Chief Executive Officer**



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

During 2019, YW Kitchener-Waterloo continued to demonstrate its strength, as an organization, in providing a range of services and support to those most in need in our community. As in prior years, there was an ever increasing need for our emergency shelter accommodation, supportive housing and child care facilities. In addition, our much-needed before and after-school services were expanded and, with the help of new funding, employment and entrepreneurship programs were offered to women and youth in our community. Given its expertise in providing support to women and families, the YW was increasingly called upon for thought leadership and to provide advocacy. During 2019, thinking to the future, the decision was made to sell the YW's administrative building with a view to setting up the organization to meet the changing needs of Kitchener-Waterloo in the future.

While sourcing sufficient funding and donations to meet the needs of the community continues to be a challenge, the YW was in a strong position as it closed the 2019 year due to the dedication of its staff and volunteers as well as its steady and insightful leadership. This strength, as an organization, has allowed the YW to continue to serve and offer support to the most vulnerable during recent months as Kitchener-Waterloo, like the rest of the world, has been and continues to be, impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although our child care and before- and after-care programs are closed due to provincial requirements, our team is working extremely hard delivering front line shelter services and support, in changing and challenging circumstances, to the population that find this healthcare crisis most difficult to cope with. Although words cannot possibly do this justice, their service and commitment are to be respected, admired and appreciated.

In time, the impact of the pandemic will inevitably abate and the YW will move forward with providing its full range of programming to support women and families again, although it may look different for a while. Over the next year, the YW will look to the future following the recent closing of the sale of the administration building. We recognize that this is a significant opportunity for bold and innovative thinking and we will develop a plan with a view to providing flexibility for servicing the future needs of the community.

Jill Birks,  
PRESIDENT

# OUR MISSION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES



YW Kitchener-Waterloo works to improve the lives of women and girls by offering early learning and care; before- and after-school programs; newcomer support; youth development; emergency, supportive, and affordable housing; entrepreneurship and employment training; and collaborative community leadership.

We envision an equitable world where women, families, youth, and children thrive in inclusive communities.

**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.





## CARE FOR NEWCOMER CHILDREN DOAA'S STORY

There's not a lot standing between Doaa and a bright future. She's an Egyptian-born civil engineer who has also taught mathematics. Three years ago, she immigrated to Canada from Saudi Arabia, where she lived with her husband, Haitham, and teenage son and daughter.

**"We decided to come to Canada to get better jobs and a better education for our kids," she explains.**

But first Doaa had another lesson to learn: English. And it wasn't going to be an easy goal to accomplish. Doaa and Haitham's daughter, Leena, was born shortly after the family's move to Canada.

"I couldn't go to school with a baby," she laughs.

Fortunately, Doaa's brother and his wife knew about a program that could help. They introduced her to the Care for Newcomer Children program at YW Kitchener-Waterloo. The childminding program—a free service for infants, toddlers, and preschool children of parents

attending Conestoga College's on-site Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada classes—helps Canada's youngest newcomers adjust to life in their new home, while their parents learn important language skills.

For Doaa, the opportunity to join the YW program was a game-changer. "Without a safe and caring place for Leena, I wouldn't have been able to go to school or focus on my studies."

She also credits the YW childcare staff with helping to identify a delay in her daughter's speech development and connecting her to a program and a therapist who could help.

All of these experiences have left Doaa feeling grateful for her new home and excited about a future that she hopes includes even more education.

"This is just the first step," she says, "to making a good life for my family."



## IN HER SHOES ESTHER'S STORY

There's something ironic about the fact that Esther's promising online Canadian business is rooted in selling skills she learned on the street and in a refugee camp a world away.

After graduating from high school in rural Liberia, West Africa, in the early 1980s, Esther moved to the city, where she sold trinkets in front of the supermarket. Years later, she made and sold tie-dyed clothing while she lived in a Sierra Leone refugee camp with her three children.

Today, Esther is capitalizing on those selling skills, thanks to an innovative employment program at YW Kitchener-Waterloo. At In Her Shoes, Esther was introduced to the many facets of running a business, from marketing and inventory to payment, shipping, and customer service—all for free.

She learned about the program at a local community centre and immediately set out to register—with help from her 14-year-old grandson.

"I didn't know how to use a computer," Esther explains.

Since immigrating to Canada in 2006 and working part time as a dietary aid, she'd rarely used a keyboard and had never sent an e-mail or used social media.

All that changed at In Her Shoes. On her very first day in class, Esther opened an e-mail account. By the time the program ended eight weeks later, she had developed a business plan and logo, launched her business, Esther's Creations, on Facebook, and starting selling her handmade, tie-dyed T-shirts on Kijiji and Facebook Marketplace.

**"This program is very important for women," she says. "It opened my eyes. I learned so many things."**

Esther is now taking a computer class. She was inspired to improve her computer skills so that she could feel confident working on her online business. She calls the entire experience a "good dream."

And one that was probably unimaginable to a young woman growing up in West Africa four decades ago.

# 2019 IN REVIEW



## INSPIRING HOPE

The YW Kitchener-Waterloo has been delivering hope for more than a century. And we plan to keep bridging the gaps in our community with innovative programs that are helping to realize our vision of an equitable world where women and girls thrive. One woman, one child at a time, we're helping to make our community and our world a better place.

## PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH- 43 GIRLS

**GIRLS' PROGRAMS (2 PROGRAMS) ..... 43 GIRLS**

In 2019 we offered two free-of-charge programs providing recreational, social, personal growth and leadership development opportunities for pre-teen and teen girls.



## PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

**CHILD CARE CENTRES (4 SITES) ..... 268 CHILDREN**

Four full day programs serving infants, toddlers and preschool-age children, offering a play-based, emergent curriculum. Early Childhood Educators develop children's thinking and learning, creating opportunities to play where children can learn, practice and extend their skills, supporting growth in cognitive, social, emotional, language/communication, and physical developmental domains.

**BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS (9 SITES) ..... 662 CHILDREN**

Eight sites delivering care for children aged eight to 12. One site delivering care for children aged four to 12. The programs support children's development through programming that combines student interest and developmentally appropriate activities.

**CARE FOR NEWCOMER CHILDREN ..... 97 CHILDREN**

A centre providing culturally appropriate care and supervision to infant, toddler and pre-school children of parents attending Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada classes. Using a play-based curriculum, staff develop children's thinking and learning, creating opportunities to play where children can learn, practice and extend their skills, grow in cognitive, social, emotional, language/communication, and physical development.

**SUMMER CAMP ..... 662 CHILDREN**

A nature-based, outbound day camp experience for children aged five to 13. Activities include sports and games, canoeing, archery, swimming, drama, campfires, and singing.



## PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES

**EMERGENCY SHELTER** ..... **594 PEOPLE**

**409 ADULTS (INCLUDING 368 WOMEN AND 41 MEN) AND 185 CHILDREN**

A 66-bed emergency shelter in Kitchener serving women, non-binary and trans people, and families who are experiencing homelessness. The program provides basic needs, crisis support, housing help, advocacy, information and referral to longer term community supports and services.

**SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (TWO SITES)** ..... **81 PEOPLE**

**58 WOMEN AND 23 CHILDREN**

Two permanent, affordable supportive housing programs in Kitchener and Waterloo serving women who have been episodically or persistently homeless and their children. Low to medium level food support, financial inclusion support, medication support and recreation support are offered.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING (TWO SITES)** ..... **24 PEOPLE**

**10 WOMEN AND 14 CHILDREN**

Two permanent, affordable housing programs in Kitchener and Waterloo serving women and large families with low income.

**EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS** ..... **32 PEOPLE**

**16 WOMEN AND 16 YOUTH**

Two employment and entrepreneurship training programs, one serving youth with barriers to employment and one serving women who are Newcomers to Canada.



## COMMUNITY SERVICES

### ADVOCACY

A four-year strategy and campaign, hosted and led by the YW in partnership with other women-serving agencies, effecting social and systemic change towards ending gender-based violence and increasing gender equality.

### COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE

A five-storey office building offering rents and shared facilities and equipment to local charities on a cost-recovery basis.

**“I was stuck with no idea how to pull my feet out of the muck.”**

Five years ago, Lisa-Marie had a job, an apartment and a dream of owning her own business. And then suddenly everything changed. She had a car accident that left her injured, unable to work and dependent on her abusive partner. When she ended the relationship, she had no choice but to move to an emergency shelter, homeless, alone and with no idea how to turn her life around.



# CLUB 84: 40 YEARS OF GIVING

**H**eather Lackner's 45-year relationship with YW Kitchener-Waterloo began with her father and mother.

Newly immigrated from England in the 1920s, Sidney McLennan was just 15 when he left home to live at the YMCA at the corner of Queen and Weber Streets until he was 23.

When World War II broke out, Sid worked for the YMCA as director of physical training and recreation, helping to prepare Canadian soldiers for deployment.

Those early experiences shaped every experience that followed, including fatherhood.

"He never, ever stopped telling his story as evidence of why we needed to give back to our community in any way we could," says Heather.

Her mother, Elizabeth McLennan, gave back to the community by becoming a member of the Board of Directors of YW Kitchener-Waterloo.

So when the YW Board invited

Heather to join in 1974, she saw it as her destiny. She has had an indelible impact over forty years, serving in many executive roles and founding the YW's giving club, Club 84, named in honour of the YW's, then address— 84 Frederick Street, which today is the YW Emergency shelter. Club 84 began with Heather's request to 84 friends to give \$84 to the YW every year.

**"We reached our goal in absolutely no time, so we decided to go for the moon," Heather remembers.**

Heather is especially proud of the Club's impact on young women who, she says, are too often trapped in a cycle of poverty, abuse, and poor self-esteem.

She likes to use her father's story to prove that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Years after his stay at the YMCA, Sid McLennan went on to serve as a three-time mayor of the City of Kitchener.

"It just illustrates what people can achieve when given a chance," smiles Heather.



Heather Lackner: center image

# IMPACT OVERVIEW

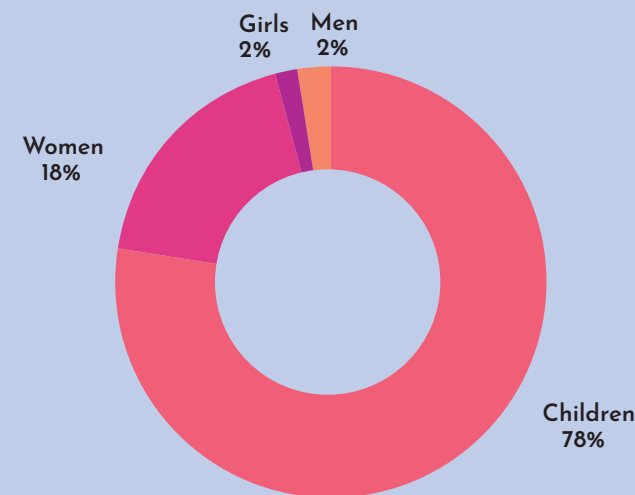
Our programs and services have transformed the lives of more than 11,000 women and girls in the last five years.

Here is how we positively impacted the lives of women and families in 2019:



Many social programs and services in our community, including those related to homelessness, employment, leadership development and childcare, fail to take into account the unique needs, preferences and circumstances of girls and women. This is especially true for women who are further marginalized as a result of language, race, religion or culture.

With the support of our community, we're working hard to close the social service gaps with programs that level the playing field. We're proud to disrupt the status quo, to get people talking and acting about the need for essential, non-judgemental services that meet girls and women where they are at and allow them to see themselves as empowered and engaged.



## HOW WE SERVED OUR COMMUNITY

In 2019, the YW Kitchener-Waterloo operated 2 girls programs, through which 43 girls were served. A major source of support we offer the community is childcare and housing, through which 1,911 children, 59 youth, 452 women and 41 men were served, respectively.

# SUPPORTIVE HOUSING



Long before other community agencies recognized stable housing, the YW Kitchener-Waterloo pioneered the supportive housing model and customized it especially for women and women-led families who have experienced persistent homelessness and require support to live independently.

First introduced in 2000, the apartments in each of the YW's three supportive housing residences provide affordable rents and on-site supports that allow women to maintain their housing, participate fully as parents and community members, and take essential steps toward fulfilling their dreams.

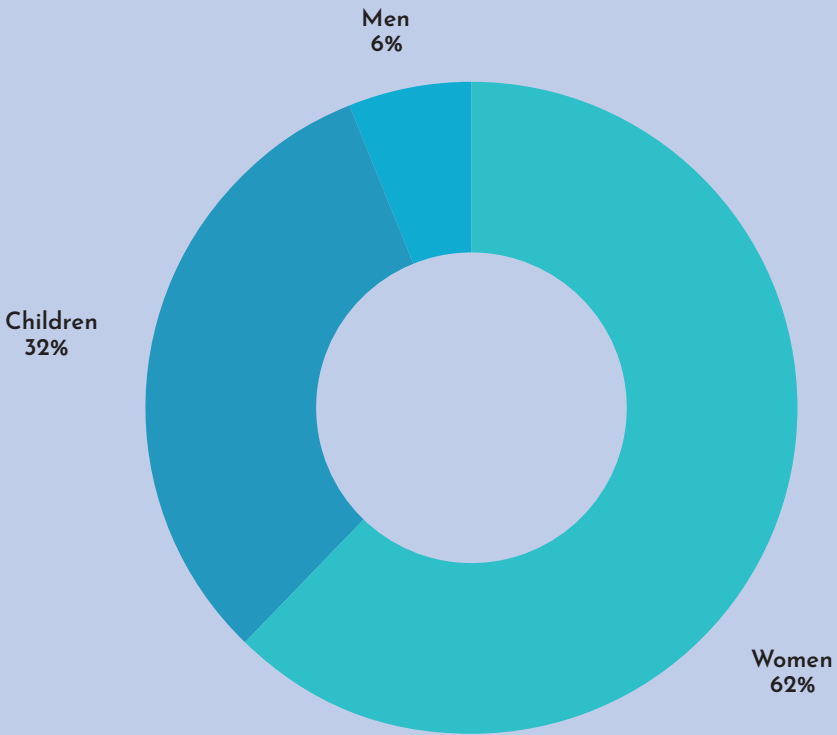
The primary cause of homelessness among women is inadequate affordable housing and insufficient income.

# EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Employment is a significant hurdle for many women in our community. When women are unable to secure well-paying work, they are at higher risk of poverty, illness, even homelessness. Finding strength in the face of difficulty takes courage and ambition. In Her Shoes is an eight-week employment program that provides women and youth, transgender and non-binary people who are visible minority newcomers between the ages of 16-65 with entrepreneurship, e-commerce and digital marketing skills.

Women are less likely than men to be employed. They are also more likely than men to work part-time.



### SUPPORTIVE HOUSING SERVICES

Percentage of women and children who accessed our Supportive Housing, Affordable Housing and Emergency Shelter services.



### EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Percentage of women and girls who attended our Employment Programs.



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Sheila Russek	Jennifer Smith	Sya Van Geest	Nataliya Yermolova
Shama Saleh	Kathryn Smith	Margaret VanderMeulen	Anonymous (57)
Bronwyn Salmon	Barb Smola	Julia Villemaire	
Kimberley Sanderson	Eleanor Snyder	Janet Waito	
Jim and Mary Sauve	Stuart and Ann Snyder	Maria Wallenius	
Linda Savage	Tim and Teresa Sothern	Maureen Walsh	
Gordon Schembri	Norm Southwood	Tenzin Wangkhang	
Larry and Mary Ann Schmidt	Gloria St. Marie	Erin Ward	
	Elaine Stamp		

**Donations Made in Honor**

Heather Lackner  
 Elizabeth Bianchi  
 Jennifer Racicot  
 Amy and Chad Tailby  
 Kieran, Kat, Kiara, and Keilidh Green  
 The Outhet Family  
 Laura and Ralph Licari  
 Mary Stevens and Fred Johnson  
 Kris and Doug McGee  
 Wilma Balvert  
 Carolyn and Bill Pegg  
 Rose and Ron Lauber  
 Marg McVey and Jim Parker  
 Jane Robinson  
 Robyn Kent  
 Emma and Ali Schultz  
 YW Duke Street Childcare Centre Staff  
 Addy’s First Birthday on behalf of Melissa and Mike Martin  
 Alan Bowler

**Donations Made in Memory**

Sidney and Elizabeth McLennan  
 Raffaele (Ralph) Matarazzo  
 Mr. David Harper  
 Audrey Hannigan  
 Tammy McGee  
 Enid Kirby  
 Mr. Michael Ellis  
 Gary Wilkinson

**Funders**

Douglas Thompson Foundation  
 Elmira Maple Syrup Festival  
 Hockey Helps The Homeless Kitchener-Waterloo  
 Ontario REALTORS Care Foundation  
 Royal LePage Shelter Foundation  
 KWCF - The Gordon Linkletter Family Fund  
 KWCF - The Jim and Sue Hallman Family Fund  
 KWCF - The Waterloo Region Record - Lyle S. Hallman Foundation Kids to Camp Region of Waterloo  
 The May Court Club of Kitchener-Waterloo  
 United Way  
 Zonta Club of Kitchener-Waterloo  
 Government; Federal, Provincial, Regional

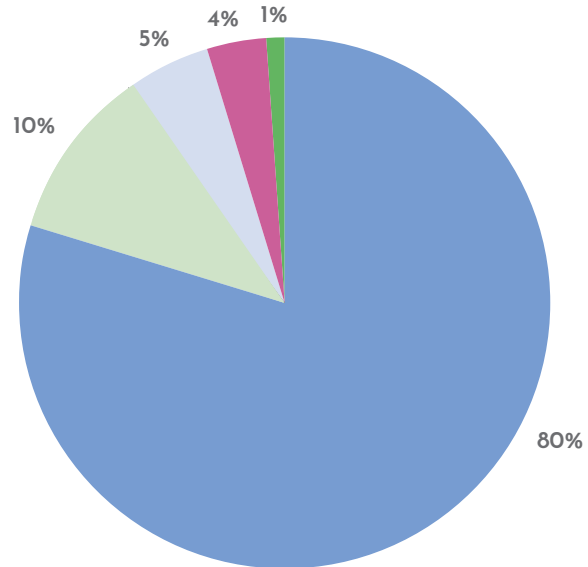
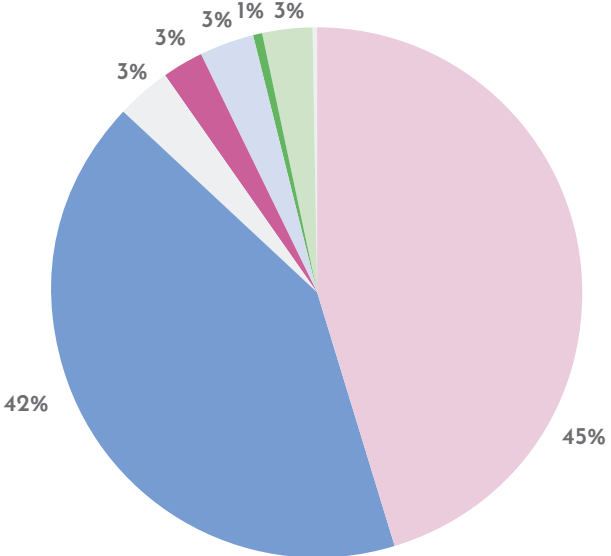
# SCHEDULE OF OPERATING FUND BALANCES

For the year ended December 31, 2019

REVENUES		
Programs	45%	\$3,799,213
Regional funding	42%	3,509,912
Government funding	3%	265,016
United Way	3%	220,000
Donations & special events	3%	274,902
Interest	1%	53,702
Partnership contracts	3%	261,170
Other	0%	165
<b>Total Revenues</b>		<b>8,384,080</b>

EXPENSES		
Salaries and benefits	80%	6,361,933
Occupancy costs	10%	827,179
Financial costs	0%	6,411
Program costs	5%	417,280
Office administration	4%	287,224
Other	1%	75,503
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>7,975,530</b>

Excess of revenues over expenses for the year	408,550
Interfund transfers	(541,614)
Fund balances, beginning of the year	9,490
<b>Fund balances, end of the year</b>	<b>\$ (123,574)</b>



# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As of December 31, 2019

	2019	2018
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash	\$ 624,909	\$ 556,287
Short-term investment	398,267	382,949
Accounts receivable	263,766	264,662
Inventory	0	2,373
Prepaid expenses	22,588	21,294
	1,309,530	1,227,565
Long-term investments	1,035,118	847,283
Tangible capital assets	7,541,384	7,918,175
	<b>\$9,886,032</b>	<b>\$9,993,023</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; FUND BALANCES</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	729,614	856,564
Deferred revenue	410,558	299,568
Current portion of mortgage payable	679,372	245,873
Current portion of other long-term debt	24,414	23,454
	1,843,958	1,425,459
Mortgages payable	672,087	1,351,322
Other long-term debt	410,684	435,103
	<b>2,926,729</b>	<b>3,211,884</b>
<b>FUND BALANCES</b>		
Externally restricted	618,541	642,190
Internally restricted	6,464,336	6,129,459
Unrestricted	(123,574)	9,490
	6,959,303	6,781,139
	<b>\$9,886,032</b>	<b>\$9,993,023</b>



# WOMEN CHOOSING CHANGE

**YW Kitchener-Waterloo**

153 Frederick St., Kitchener, ON N2H 2M2

519.576.8856

[ykw.ca](http://ykw.ca)

