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# KEY NOTES



North York Women's Centre: Opening Doors for Women

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## A Report from the AGM

The NYWC's 17<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting was held on September 25<sup>th</sup>. As always, the AGM was divided into its "fun" and "business" sections, both generating tons of news to report on.

On the "fun" side of things, those in attendance were treated to great food, generously donated by **Lauri Maki**. There was also the opportunity to participate in our annual Silent Auction. This year, our items were bigger and better than ever before, making for some great deals and buys! We also had the special chance of hearing from *two* guest speakers. The first was **Anna Willats**, a faculty member of the Assaulted Women's and Children's Counsellor/Advocate program at George Brown College and a long-time community activist on women's issues in Toronto. The second was **Pauline Mulder**, one of our volunteer facilitators. Both women spoke passionately about the work of the Centre and were an inspiration to the audience. In addition, we had our volunteer appreciation ceremony, with **Carmen Mancini** selected as our volunteer of the year. Unfortunately, Carmen was unable to make the AGM, but rest assured, she received her gift and certificate! The last "fun" part of the night was a special presentation in honor of **Iris Fabbro**, the NYWC's Executive Director who was celebrating her 10<sup>th</sup> year with the Centre. **Sheryl Brodey**, **Francine Morissette**, and the **NYWC Staff** spoke about Iris' history and continued commitment to the Centre, and all those in attendance thanked her for her many years of hard work.

On the "business" side of things, a special resolution was passed to endorse a new vision and mission statement for the NYWC. Please visit our website or contact the Centre for the exact reading. We also said farewell to some Board members, and elected new ones. A special goodbye and thank you goes out to Francine Morissette and **Pam Weir** for their years of dedication to the NYWC as former members of the Board. We would like to welcome **Daneal Charney**, **Barbara Farkas**, **Andrea Sanche**, **Robin Tameshtit**, and **Harpreet Thind** as newly elected Board members.

The new Board met after the AGM and elected a new executive. They are:  
Chair – Trisha Cipriani  
Vice Chair – Tanya White  
Treasurer – Nancy Bardecki  
Secretary – Aisha Heywood Delpeache

Overall, the NYWC's 17<sup>th</sup> AGM was a success – on both its fun and business sides. For all those in attendance, thank you for coming! For all those unable to make it, we hope to see you next year!

## NYWC's Volunteer Corner

Volunteering at the North York Women's Centre is an exceptional experience. Knowing that the Centre's core values are feminism, anti-racism, and social justice is great because the "doors

## ... volunteer corner cont'd...

are open" for all women regardless of difference. The NYWC had turned my strong interests in women's issues into a reality, as I know I can now help make a difference. Every day the Centre provides support, services, and community resources for many women that will in turn positively affect their lives. My contribution to the Centre is a small piece, however, with the more important piece being the NYWC's contribution to society at large.

~ *Lisa Guluzian, NYWC Office Volunteer*

My volunteer experience with the North York Women's Centre started in October 2007. I had signed up with NYWC to become a support group facilitator (there are groups for self-awareness, self-esteem, relationships, creative arts etc.), but first I needed to complete the facilitator training program. The training took place over four weeks and we learned communication, conflict resolution, and group building skills, among other things. As well, the facilitator training provided a place to discuss feminism, anti-racism, and ways to create an anti-oppressive environment for our groups. Through these talks, I found that the training matched the values and guiding principles of the NYWC.

Completing the training helped me improve my facilitation skills and made me feel like a valued member of the NYWC team. The NYWC staff and volunteers who ran the training did an excellent job of providing a healthy learning environment to practice new skills. I also enjoyed the training because I got to know many other women who I am looking forward to seeing again soon.

~ *Megan Hope, NYWC Group Facilitator*

## OUTreach in the Community

This year's North Toronto Community Fair was another great success. Every year various organizations including the North York Women's Centre participate in the fair. The community fair is an opportunity for the public to learn about the services that are offered by many agencies in the North York area.

This great event took place on October 25, 2007, at the Yonge & Eglinton Centre, and was organized by People & Organizations in North Toronto (POINT). At this year's event there were many people interested in learning more about the North York Women's Centre's programs and services, and some of them expressed their interest to participate in our programs.

If you are aware of any events taking place within North York or the greater Toronto area that you think the NYWC should attend, please contact Mulu Haddis at 416-781-0479 ext. 27.

## Exciting (Little) Big News!

After a long and frustrating journey by our Executive Director **Iris Fabbro**, the end has finally arrived! On November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Iris and her daughter **Kina (Karina) Ferrante** officially welcomed 14 month old baby **Tasia** into their family. For those who have yet to have the privilege to meet her, Tasia is full of energy and a very curious little girl – she loves getting into cupboards and pushing buttons. To celebrate this addition, a small baby shower was held on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, where it was clear that baby Tasia would be welcomed into the NYWC community with open arms! It was also clear that she would be spoiled by the community as well – with lots of clothes and musical toys to play with. Congratulations to Iris and her newly expanded family!

November 15<sup>th</sup> also marked the beginning of Iris' parental leave. She will be gone from the NYWC until Monday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

**Melissa Wong** will be taking over as Acting Executive Director during this period. **Mulu Haddis** will be taking on the bulk of Melissa's Program Manager roles, in addition to her volunteer coordinator responsibilities. If you have any questions about these temporary changes to the NYWC staff structure, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thanks, and congrats again to Iris, Kina and Tasia!

## A Word From Our Students

After starting my placement at the North York Women's Centre back in September, I've had the pleasure of being in the office from Mondays to Wednesdays, offering information and referral services, co-facilitating support groups as well as doing outreach and developing workshops. Since September I've co-facilitated groups such as Assertiveness, Building Self-Esteem, Stress to Strength, Breaking Free and Panic to Power. I've also become part of the Centre's Fundraising and Program committees, gaining a better understanding and appreciation for the mechanics of how the Centre is run as well as continues to offer great services.

Since beginning at the North York Women's Centre, I've been consistently amazed by the amount of time and effort both staff and volunteers put in to ensure that quality programs and services continue to be offered. Furthermore I've been deeply touched by the wonderful women that attend groups, as well as call and drop into the Centre. I look forward to the rest of my time at the NYWC, where I hope to learn more about the Centre and the women involved in its services.

~ *Kameela Mahadeo, York University placement student*

I want to start by thanking all the staff and volunteers at the NYWC for making me feel so welcome and comfortable here. I'm a 3<sup>rd</sup> year social work student at Ryerson University and I began my placement at the NYWC in September. So far, it has been a terrific learning experience. I've had the opportunity to co-facilitate two support groups: Sharing Stop-Over, an ongoing drop-in group where the participants can discuss whatever is on their minds for that day, and Anger and You, a group that focuses on anger as a positive emotion and where women can learn new and effective ways of dealing with their anger. I've recently been involved with the creation and planning of a new self-esteem group for young women.

I've also been able to do community outreach, including an exciting presentation about the NYWC to POINT (People and Organizations in North Toronto). In addition, I recently joined the volunteer committee and I look forward to bringing these exciting opportunities to other women.

For three months I've been spending two days a week at the Centre. In that time, I have had so many wonderful experiences and met so many wonderful women that I can't wait to return in 2008.

~ *Elise Hannan, Ryerson University placement student*

## An Update On Our Facilitator Training Program

We are now in our second year of our grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation that has allowed us to extend our Facilitator Training Program. Since beginning the project, we have had the opportunity to offer three sessions of our facilitator training program at our satellite locations and have had the great benefit of gaining thirty-six new volunteer facilitators. These new facilitators have been donating their time and energy to facilitate our support groups and create a safe space for our group participants. Our new volunteers will allow us to continue to expand and develop our programs into high-need neighbourhoods.

For each training session, we have had an overwhelming number of applications and are impressed by the number of women wishing to gain skills and also give back to their community. We are planning two more sessions for the upcoming year. If you are interested in learning more about this program, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, **Mulu Haddis**.

## Thank You to our Supporters

We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their recent donations to the North York Women's Centre.

### Silent Auction and AGM Donors

Andrea Kawano  
Bad Dog Theatre Company  
Buddies in Bad Times Theatre  
CN Tower  
Daneal Charney  
Dave and Busters  
Druxy's Inc.  
Dufflet Pastries  
Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre  
Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts  
Leon's Furniture  
Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People  
Louis Chu  
M.A.C.  
Mulu Haddis  
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Richtree Market Restaurants  
Second City  
Second Cup  
Shoppers Drug mart  
Soulpepper Theatre  
Tanya White  
The Keg  
The Laugh Resort  
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Toronto Maple Leafs  
Via Rail Canada  
Winners  
Yoga Centre of Toronto

### \$500 and over

The Anglican Church of St. Philip the Apostle  
Nancy Bardecki

### \$200 and over

The Armour Heights Presbyterian Church -  
Women's Association  
Robin Tameshtit

### \$100 and over

Mekdes Abebe

Mary Benedetto  
Aisha Heywood Delpeache  
Paulett Ramsey

### To \$99

Sheryl Brodey  
Lora Chan  
Trisha Cipriani  
Natalie Comeau  
Julie Levin  
Maureen Richards  
Tanya White

## Community News

We invite all members of the NYWC community to come visit us and see our **new doors, sign and streetlight** (at Caribou and Bathurst)! These were recently installed in a campaign (with the help of Ontario Trillium Foundation funding) to make the NYWC safer for all the women who access our services. What a success!

The NYWC would like to welcome **Elise Hannan** and **Kameela Mahadeo**, our new social work placement students from Ryerson University and York University respectively. They will be with us until April 2008, so please stop in and say hello to the new additions to the NYWC team!

We would also like to welcome our new volunteers. Please join us in saying hello to **Andrea Brunswick, Angela Cavalluzzo, Lisa Guluzian, and Ellen Shi**, our new office and committee volunteers, as well as **Serena Burke, Khrystabel Di Pelino, Marilyn Hope, Megan Hope, Azra Hussain, Sadiyya Ibrahim, Hilary Moore, Padmaja Raghu Krishnan, Barbara Larriviere, Ellie Nikbakht, Patricia Robertson, Georgia N. Stewart, Leslie Wagner, and Ying Zhou**, our new group facilitators. We thank you for your interest in the NYWC and look forward to having you involved with the Centre!

Last but not least, we would like to send out an early congratulation to NYWC volunteer **Hira Bokharee** who is expecting her first child in December, 2008.