

MARCH 2022

PHOTO: Winter Station, THE HIVE



turning IMPACT REPORT **points**

CELEBRATING RESILIENCE
IN ACTION AND ART

THANK YOU FOR
GIVING CHANGE



NATIONAL ADVOCACY.
COMMUNITY ACTION.





A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

Heather M. McGregor

Heather M. McGregor,
YWCA Toronto Chief Executive Officer

With the spread of Omicron, 2022 began on a much less optimistic note than many of us had hoped for. While I felt it was important to acknowledge in this issue of Turning Points some of the challenges women continue to face—such as ongoing domestic violence and a lack of child care supports—I also wanted to celebrate the continued resilience that both survivors and our community members have shown during what has been a grueling two years.

In this issue, you will find a story about THE HIVE, an art installation dedicated to the community-wide resilience of our residents at our temporary shelter at The Beach. THE HIVE symbolizes the power of community-level action in the face of adversity. I encourage you to visit Woodbine Beach to see the installation.

I also want to share with you the story of Hope, one of our participants who overcame a horrendous situation to be reunited with her son. She was brave and kind enough to share her story as a part of our year-end campaign. I hope you find Hope's strength as inspiring as I did.

Lastly, I want to express immense gratitude to everyone who contributed to our year-end fundraising campaign. It was hugely successful, and we cannot thank you enough for the humbling level of commitment you have shown to YWCA Toronto and our participants. Your donations mean we can continue to support some of the most vulnerable women, girls and gender diverse people in our community as we move forward in 2022.

TURNING POINTS NEWSLETTER

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CELEBRATING RESILIENCE IN ACTION AND ART

PHOTOS: Sami Pritchard, *THE HIVE*

Every February, the Winter Stations architecture and design competition transforms Toronto's lifeguard towers into beautiful and thought provoking works of art. YWCA Toronto was honoured this year with a sculptural piece dedicated to celebrating the resilience of the residents of our temporary emergency shelter in The Beach.

Many of us often think of resilience as an individual trait; something that marks our ability to face challenges and make our way through the world on our own. Some of the most powerful examples of resilience, however, are found at a community-wide level. Winter Station's *THE HIVE*, a striking 11'6" tall beehive-like dome constructed of translucent yellow and orange geometric panels, embodies this idea of collective strength.

Inspired by the resilience of bees and their ability to work together to ensure their colony survives the winter, Kathleen Dogantzis and Will Cuthbert designed *THE HIVE* to reflect the power of community-level action in the face of adversity.

"The bee is a warrior and continually adapts to the changing climate in order to not only survive, but also thrive," says Dakota Wares-Tani, one of the lead organizers of Winter Stations. "Residents of YWCA Toronto's shelters and housing programs

demonstrate that same strength and powerful transformative qualities. *THE HIVE* structure, as well, is innately simple, yet strong and beautiful, which speaks to the community built through the organization."

These themes resonated with both our staff and program participants. Ensuring people have stable, affordable housing, like that offered at YWCA Toronto, has always been a critical step toward building resilience at both an individual and community-wide level. When people have stable housing, they have the foundation to, like the bees, not only survive but also thrive.

YWCA Toronto is committed to providing women, girls and gender diverse people with emergency shelter and affordable housing, along with an array of vital wraparound services. As our city falls into an even deeper and dangerous housing crisis, we remain dedicated to working as a community to provide affordable housing and advocate for change at a systems level.

We are so grateful to everyone who has supported YWCA Toronto. Your contribution, no matter what size, is a valued part of our collective effort to build resilient communities.

THE HIVE will be on display at Woodbine Beach from February 21 to March 31, 2022.

THANK YOU FOR GIVING CHANGE

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who contributed to our year-end campaign this past November and December. As many of you know, the pandemic has disproportionately affected women and girls, but with the support of new and already committed donors alike, we were able to raise almost \$70,000 to support women fleeing violence.

Domestic violence, while ever-present, has risen exponentially since the start of the pandemic. Because of this, we felt it critical to highlight the grim reality many women faced even before the pandemic exacerbated the frequency and severity of violence against women. In Canada, on average, every 2.5 days a woman or girl is killed by a man she knows.

While we felt it important to draw attention to this shocking statistic, we also wanted to capture the extraordinary resilience of domestic violence survivors. This is why we chose to highlight Hope's story.

After her abusive ex-husband kidnapped her son and fled the country in 2020, Hope who had stayed in one of our emergency shelters before, contacted YWCA Toronto for help. She was determined to get her son back. Even as her ex-husband fled with her son from country to country for a year and a half, Hope never gave up her search. Finally, after much struggle and with emotional and financial support from YWCA Toronto, Hope and her son were reunited this past fall.

While she is still fighting for full legal custody of her son, Hope's story is full of



PHOTOS: Principles firm

resilience and the power of what survivors can accomplish when they have access to community supports like YWCA Toronto. Your donations, like those made to our year-end campaign, are essential to creating these positive outcomes. To read Hope's full story, [visit ywca-toronto.org/blog](https://www.ywca-toronto.org/blog)

Thank you to all who contributed. Your generous contributions make transformative change possible. Your important support helps women like Hope find safety and support to build stable, vibrant lives.



Looking for a way to champion women in these times of global crisis?

As a 2022 YWCA Toronto member you will have a voice and a vote at our Annual Members Meeting on May 17 — help shape our advocacy, improve our programs, and change lives.

You will be part of a vibrant feminist community championing women everywhere. Join today!

Sign up at:

www.ywca-toronto.org/membership

The Impact of Unpaid Care Work on Women

4 in 10 Canadians stated their household's amount of **domestic and care work** had increased because of the pandemic with **the bulk of the work falling to women.**

(House of Commons Canada, 2020)



Indigenous and Black women reported even greater challenges compared to white women. Indigenous women were **3x more likely** to indicate that they **had to give up looking for paid work.**

(House of Commons Canada, 2021)

Over **70% of women** reported feeling more anxious, depressed, isolated, overworked or ill because of having to shoulder the **additional unpaid care work.**

(House of Commons Canada, 2020)



Even before the pandemic . . .



33% of single mothers **struggled to find paid work** in Canada, and 34% of single mothers and their children **lived in poverty.**

(Statistics Canada, 2018)

DONOR LOVE

When Dianne McQuaig, an already dedicated supporter of vulnerable women in the community, initially toured our 1st Stop Woodlawn Women's Shelter and Residence in 2018, she saw an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of 134 women who call 1st Stop home. Constructed in 1956, the building was in desperate need of upgrades, particularly the kitchen and dining area. Dianne saw this need and leapt into action.



"It's great to have an idea, a dream, but you need a team to do it," she says speaking of the *Home Team*, a dedicated group of volunteers who have spearheaded the fundraising efforts for the renovation of the kitchen and dining area, "and the team has been awesome."

The *Home Team* began when Dianne reached out to her network for support, which included Jacquie Martinez at HOK, an international design and architecture firm. Inspired by the potential impact of the renovations, Jacquie jumped on board and quickly got it approved as an official *HOK Impact* project, meaning the firm would generously donate significant time and resources.

While the pandemic has created significant challenges for the *Home Team*, they have remained committed, and to date, have raised over \$730,000 in collaboration with YWCA Toronto's Philanthropy team.

The impact of these renovations goes beyond simply providing a functional kitchen and dining area.

"The opportunity is, I think, to not just eat in there," explains Jacquie while discussing the project's potential impact, "but to use it as a real gathering space. The kitchen really is the heart of a home."

Thanks to the generosity and determination of Dianne McQuaig, Jacquie Martinez, the rest of the *Home Team*, HOK—including Deborah Sperry, Lori Urwin and Rowena AuYeung—and partners like Govan Brown Construction, 1st Stop Woodlawn Shelter can continue to be a safe and supportive place for women and gender diverse people seeking emergency shelter and affordable permanent housing for many more years to come.

The renovations at 1st Stop Woodlawn are close to completion, and we still need to raise over \$300,000 to cover the costs. If you would like to contribute to this project you can donate online at <https://ywcatoronto.crowdfunder.ca/1546> or contact

Faith Feingold at ffeedingold@ywcatoronto.org or 416.961.8101, ext. 361.



MARGARET NEWALL
President's Award



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PROUDLY ANNOUNCING YWCA TORONTO
2022 WOMEN OF DISTINCTION



Join us at the 41st YWCA Toronto Women of Distinction Awards Gala to celebrate the achievements of these remarkable women and raise vital funds to help over 13,000 women, girls and gender diverse people in our city.



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