

CENTRED

WOMEN'S CENTRE OF YORK REGION NEWSLETTER

Spring 2009

Volume 1, Issue 1

Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of **CENTRED**. Our goal for this newsletter is to help the community understand how WCYR makes a difference in words, actions, images, reflections, and perspectives. We hope you will share your perspectives and ideas with us – we have included a number of ways to do so in this issue.

We will publish this newsletter four times a year, as the seasons change. Our first issue celebrates spring, which is the season of rebirth, growth and

Programs

by Milena Boden

Over the last few months, **Bridging the Gap** has experienced a 'rebirth' from the previous Poverty Relief Services and is now in full operation to assist women on their path towards financial sustainability. While we closed the doors on the Food Room at our old location, we are now providing women with food support through our Last Week of the Month program. As the name suggests, women sign up at the Centre during the first two weeks of every month, and then come in to pick up a small assortment of fresh food basics during the last week of each month. This ensures greater equity in food distribution and offers more reliable support than before. In addition, Bridging the Gap holds bi-monthly Clothing Exchange days

change. As you know, we are experiencing significant change due to the economy. We are certainly seeing an increase in demand for our services while donations are down and competition for funds is growing. While we know giving is difficult these days, we ask you to consider making a donation to the Centre, sponsoring one of our programs or services, or helping with one of the items on our Wish List (on www.wcyr.ca). If you would like to get more information on making a difference, please call Kirsten at 905-853-9270 x101.

Thank you.

where women bring in their own items to share with each other, or browse through our own selection of new or almost new clothing. We welcome donations of new clothing, but encourage seasonal donations, as we don't have a lot of space to store items longer term.



For more on Bridging the Gap, look under Events at www.wcyr.ca or call Milena at (905) 853-9270 x110.

By the numbers

401
Children who received a Holiday Hamper in December 2008

\$4 billion
The annual cost of women abuse in Canada

150
Women and children accessing our Last-Week-of-the-Month food program monthly

1 in 5
Canadian women living in an abusive relationship

6400
Calls, referrals or appointments to WCYR each year

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Programs



“You've taught me to utilize my inner strengths, get up, go around the block and proceed with caution and continue on with my journey!”

On the last - and very cold - weekend in February, a group of women set out for a wilderness exploration. The goal of the weekend was to pilot a new WCYR program – Making Changes in the Wild – which takes the learnings from our life skills program Making Changes, and helps women apply them in a completely new setting. The weekend was organized by Emmy Hendrickx, owner of Wilderness Wanderings and a graduate of WCYR’s Enterprising Women program. Together with WCYR facilitator Gail Robertson, they created a unique way for women to experience an adventure to help build confidence, encourage risk taking, build trust, and make positive differences in their lives.

Before the weekend, the women set goals including building self-esteem, surviving with other people, increasing confidence in their own abilities, taking risks, making a contribution and seeing the impact of that contribution on others. At the

end of the weekend, all participants emphatically told us they had achieved their goals through the trust in their leaders, the preparation they had taken and their feeling of safety. All this achieved while sleeping outside in a Quinzee (snow hut)!

A generous donation from Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) Aurora/Newmarket enabled several women to participate.

Next steps include finding additional sources of funding for this program to give more women the chance to participate and considering different wilderness wanderings such as one-day hikes, learning to canoe, and excursions in warmer weather.

To learn more about getting involved in future sessions of Making Changes in the Wild, please contact Kirsten at 905-853-9270 x101.

For more information on outdoor trips, you can contact www.wildernesswanderings.ca.

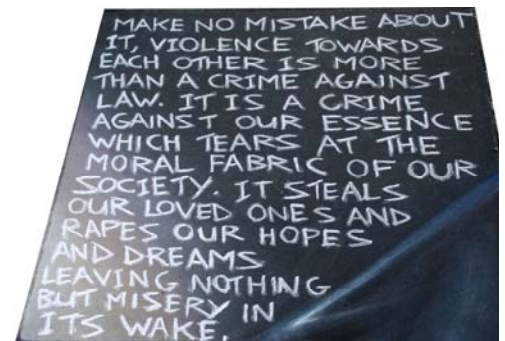
Found

by Danielle Koren

Walking downtown Toronto on a Saturday afternoon, you expect to find tourists, cars, people, especially lots of people, but you don’t expect a statement about Violence being chalked on the sidewalk. But we did, together with many others who were passing by. Some stopped to read the text, to look at the drawings, to give this artist money. “Are those words yours?” I asked him, caught by the power of their meaning. He stopped drawing; there was silence, followed by his compelling opinion

on the violence in the world. Yes, the main part of the text was his, written down to be found. To be found by, hopefully, many many others.

Send us the remarkable reflections and inspirations you find in your community – newsletter@wcyr.ca.



Volunteer

WCYR

offers a number of unique ways for volunteers to get involved. Currently, we have volunteers who are helping us by answering phones, creating a donor database, actively serving on our Board of Directors, developing a donor relations program, and applying their creative skills to developing promotional material.

We want to create a win/win for volunteers so they get as much out of the experience as we do from their time and talent. In this economy, volunteering is a great way to gain experience, learn new skills, and build a portfolio.

Right now, we have many opportunities to make a difference:

Currently we are looking for:
Handy men or women
Fundraising event organizers
Board members
Advisory Committee members
Speaker's Bureau members



- We are setting up a Speaker's Bureau of clients, volunteers, and donors to help us talk about our work in the community.
- We are looking for professionals in communications and marketing to be part of our advisory committee.
- We are looking for people with interests in crafts, women's health, and fitness to help develop workshops for Bridging the Gap.

To find out more about applying your time and talent at WCYR, e-mail volunteer@wcyr.ca.

Community

What is

community? A group of people with common interests or goals? Family? Neighbourhood? If you ask 10 people, you will likely get 10 definitions. As York Region considers what community means, especially for new immigrants, at WCYR, we recently reflected about what community means to us. In a recent discussion with staff, the following came up:

- Community means connecting and socializing when women leave family due to abuse.
- Communities are about reducing isolation and mistrust and building supportive relationships.
- Women often look at communities where they can share food and talents with others.
- WCYR is a community for many women who find safety, friendship, and support within our walls.

What does community mean to you?
Let us know at newsletter@wcyr.ca.

Thank you for making a difference

“WCYR has given me the hope, strength and courage to stand with poise, dignity, and resolve – oh, what a feeling!”

This column highlights small, but meaningful examples we have seen of making a difference. We hope this inspires you to make a difference to others.

- The student and his father who spent four hours assembling a computer cabinet for us.
- The volunteer who spent hours finding missing postal codes for our database.
- The woman who donated funds from a social event, as she wanted to help other women.
- The WCYR client who so valued the counselling she received, would have paid for the session if she were able.
- Filebank Canada and Concept Storage Solutions who donated time, labour, and materials to building a storage unit in our Resource Room.
- Colleagues who say ‘well done’ on a challenging project.

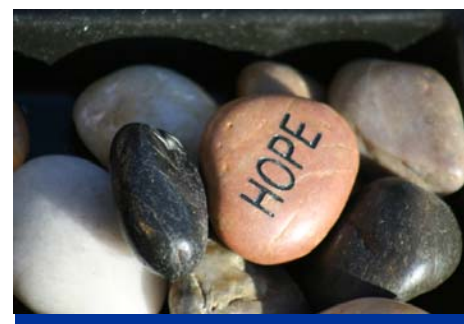
Upcoming events

We are holding two exciting events this spring to connect with community and raise funds to support WCYR programs and services.

- On May 13, WCYR presents the Art of Change event at the Wellington Gallery in Aurora.



- In June, we host our Home & Garden event. More details to follow.



- October marks the new date for our entrepreneurial conference, which will feature well-known local entrepreneurs and showcase businesses in our marketplace.

We invite you to join us in making a difference to women in need. For more information, please contact Kirsten at events@wcyr.ca or 905-853-9270 x101

For enquiries about content, please contact newsletter@wcyr.ca
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