



# THANK YOU



2021–2022  
Gratitude Report



WOMEN'S CENTRE  
OF YORK REGION

Embracing Change. Empowering Women.





# 2021–2022 Gratitude Report

- 4 2021 Impact Overview
- 6 Letter from the Executive Director
- 7 Programs and Services
- 8 Strategic Plan: Our Way Forward
- 9 Donations at Work
- 10 Giving Together Gallery
- 13 Letter from the Board Chair
- 14 Board of Directors



WOMEN'S CENTRE  
OF YORK REGION

318  
WOMEN  
took part in the  
MAKING  
CHANGES  
PROGRAM



Self Empowerment, Effective Communication,  
Rising Above, Getting Unstuck

WINTER WARMTH

Provided  
**166 women and children**  
with gift cards to purchase food, toys and winter clothing  
for the holidays and colder months

THE  
FINANCIAL  
EMPOWERMENT  
PROGRAM

Served

164  
WOMEN

Provided

\$8,500

in Grocery and Clothing Support

10

FINANCIAL  
SEMINARS

THE  
ENTERPRISING  
CAREERS  
PROGRAM

SERVED  
131  
WOMEN

One-on-One Career  
Coaching for

94

11 NETWORKING  
EVENTS

WCYR  
COUNSELLING

1626  
HOURS

for Emotional  
Counselling and  
Transitional  
Counselling to

216  
WOMEN

Transitional Counselling  
specifically helps women  
exit abusive  
relationships safely



1080

In 2021,  
we helped  
1080 women  
and their  
families!



# LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Celebrating 45 years of service in our community is a large milestone that we are incredibly proud of. Women's Centre of York Region is celebrating the numerous lives that have been changed as a result of the work we do! It is a celebration of the women in our community.

This past year has been one of strength and determination. With the rates of intimate-partner violence rising since the start of the global pandemic and over 50% increase in femicide this last year, WCYR has persevered, ensuring that all women who need support can access it quickly and easily. This year, while continuing to increase programs and services to meet the demand of the community, we transitioned to a hybrid model, ensuring all women could access the programs and services they needed.

With gratitude to our funders, donors, staff, and volunteers who believe in the work we do, I send a big, THANK YOU. It is with your ongoing support that we continue as leaders in our community, providing a multi-resource centre that addresses a full spectrum of needs for all women in our community. To the brave women who come to WCYR, we are honoured to be a part of your journey.

With Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Liora Sobel". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Executive Director  
Women's Centre of York Region

## PROGRAMS & SERVICES

### **Making Changes Life Skills**

A group program that enables women to develop basic skills necessary to become clearer and stronger decision makers. Focus is on developing confidence and accepting responsibility for choices they make in their lives.

### **Enterprising Careers**

An exploration program helping participants take the first steps to become "job ready" by showing them how to access their current skills, make informed decisions.

### **Exploring Self Employment**

Participants weigh risks and benefits to understand if this option is right for them.

### **Financial Empowerment**

Participants are empowered to take greater control of their personal finances to progress toward their life goals. Lessons include household budgeting, buying a car, managing debt, saving for education and more.

### **One-on-One Counselling**

Individual counselling for women who experienced violence, domestic or otherwise, helping them regain confidence and work towards a sustainable livelihood, free from abuse.

### **Transitional Housing and Support Counselling**

Provides emotional and practical support to ensure women and their children can leave an abusive relationship safely.

## Vision

Women thriving socially, emotionally, and economically.

## Mission

Using a strengths-based, trauma-informed feminist approach, we provide opportunities, support and resources to all persons who identify as women on their journey of self discovery and empowerment.

## Values

At the Women's Centre of York Region, we are guided by the following values in all the work we do:

**Inclusivity:** We breakdown barriers and equalize the power imbalances to create a culture of respect and support that focuses on the individual needs of staff, volunteers, and people participating in our activities

**Collaboration:** We achieve great things by working together, embracing change, and seeking possibilities

**Innovation:** We encourage learning, exploration, and creativity in the those we support and ourselves

**Empowerment:** We support, trust, and empower staff, volunteers and people participating in our activities to develop the confidence in their individual talents and capabilities.

# 2022–2024 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## OUR WAY FORWARD



### Build for Our Future

We will collaborate with partners and the community to further strengthen the impact and value of our services.



### Invest in Our People

We will empower staff and volunteers by focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion in all we do.



### Support Our Sustainability

We will solidify our organizational structure and secure resources to support our activities now and into the future.

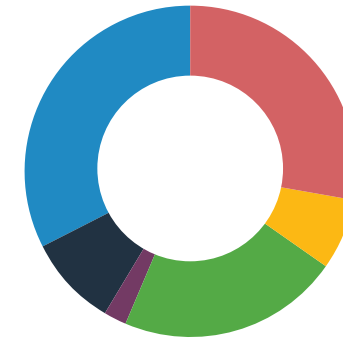
To achieve our Strategic Priorities, we will focus on:

Partnerships

Communication

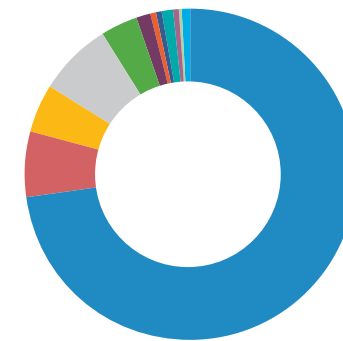
High Quality Innovative Programming

# DONATIONS AT WORK



## 2022 Revenues

The Regional Municipality of York	\$ 252,202
United Way of Greater Toronto	62,597
Third party grants	193,931
Newmarket Charitable Gaming Association	20,622
Donations and fundraising	81,814
Ministry of Community and Social Services	290,836
	<hr/>
	\$ 902,002



## 2022 Expenses

Salaries and benefits	\$ 667,515
Occupancy	57,810
Office and general	44,626
Professional fees and insurance	64,613
Client support	32,630
Fundraising and promotion	12,623
Education	6,071
Telephone	4,834
Subcontractors	11,220
Travel	4,181
Bank charges	1,966
Depreciation	6,740

---

\$ 914,829

---

“

## THE JOURNEY OF A WOMAN

She's lived a modest life, raised two children, and soon to be empty nester. On the surface, her life looked good. She always smiled and had kind words to say to everyone. The day came where she could not keep quiet any longer. She had quietly kept a secret that was hurting her for too long. She thought she was protecting her children but now that they were grown, she was desperate for the abuse to end. She came to our office today. Terrified about her future and how she would cope. She had been a stay-at-home mom and didn't know how she could afford to leave. With many tears, she met with one of our counsellors. On her way out, I saw her smile under her mask. I saw it in her eyes. Our Administrator gave her information about our career readiness and financial literacy programs, which she bravely asked to register. She left our office with hope. She left our office with the confidence that she would be ok and that she would never let anyone hurt her again. She has a long journey ahead of her and we will walk with her through that journey.



Giving Together



We would like to extend a special thank you to the community partners who have helped us, help others.

*"It takes someone with a very big heart to gift their time."*





## LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR



As we celebrate our 45th Anniversary, I feel incredibly thankful for the resiliency of the WCYR, and its unrelenting commitment to empower women to see their strengths and achieve their goals, despite facing significantly challenging barriers. Over the years, thousands of courageous women in our communities have reached out for support in their pursuit to create better lives for themselves and their families. There is so much to be proud of and yet so much still to be done. The demand for our services is ever increasing, with the mental, emotional and financial ramifications of the pandemic unfolding, and alongside it, a rise in gender-based violence.

This past year, the WCYR has embarked on a strategic plan that will allow us to expand our critical work in response to the changing and evolving needs of the women in our community. Through the incredible passion and dedication of WCYR Staff, Board Members, Community Partners and Funders, I'm confident we will continue to create a legacy of community service for many years to come. I am so grateful for all the people on this journey with us, helping women and families in need, in such a meaningful and impactful way.

*Jennifer Gibbs*

Chair of the Board of Directors

## THANK YOU

A special thank you to our past Board of Directors members for bringing your passion, intellect, insight, experience and resources to the table.



**Fiona Cao, CFA**  
Past Member



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Jennifer Gibbs**  
Chair

Jennifer is an accomplished Data and Technology executive with over 20 years of experience leading globally distributed organizations. Jennifer is also an entrepreneur and the founder of Jennifer Gibbs Coaching, Inc., a career coaching company empowering women to create incredible careers full of adventure and possibility. Jennifer is a passionate advocate for diversity and inclusion. She feels very fortunate to have the opportunity to leverage her network and skills to serve her community and those in need. Jennifer has an Honours Bachelor of Computer Science Degree from the University of Windsor, an Executive MBA from Ivey Business School, Western University and a Life Coach Certification from The Life Coach School. She moved to York Region 20 years ago and is currently living in East Gwillimbury with her husband, 2 kids and 2 spoiled cats.



**Judith Puttock,**  
CHRP, CHRL  
Past Chair

Senior Human Resources Professional with over 15 years of progressive leadership and consulting experience including Magna International, Maclean Hunter (Quebecor), the Jim Pattison Group and World Vision Canada. Judith is a highly skilled communicator with proficiency in building positive relationships between management and employees with competencies in dealing with issues related to human resources, including employee relations, change and/or downsizing. She has the ability to coach and develop both leaders and employees, resulting in improved teamwork and increased company productivity. Industries include automotive, printing/publishing, insurance, not for profit and consulting.



**Diane White,**  
CHRP, CHRL  
Vice-Chair

Diane has worked as a Human Resources Professional in the retail sector, and as a Professor at Seneca College in the School of Leadership and Human Resources for over 35 years. Diane has consulted with small and medium sized organizations and has experience in strategic planning, employee recruitment and retention, curriculum design and higher education teaching strategies. She is a Certified Human Resources Professional and Leader and is currently pursuing a Professional Coaching Certification. A resident of Aurora for over 30 years, Diane is committed to her community and to serving women to help them learn, grow and thrive. She brings human resources and higher education expertise to the organization.



**Caroline Lee,**  
CPA, CA  
Treasurer

Caroline is an accounting professional and obtained her Chartered Accountant designation in 2003. She has more than 18 years of experience in the financial services industry providing a broad range of expertise including accounting advisory, risk management, and asset and liability management support. With two young daughters, Caroline is passionate about empowering women, promoting equality, inclusivity and diversity and has acted as a mentor and coach to young women. A long time resident of York Region, currently Caroline is co-founding a project to launch a language and literacy program geared towards assisting children with intellectual disabilities within the community.



**Taiwo Olubamise**  
Secretary

Taiwo's professional journey started 10 years ago, and she has worked in multiple industries leading project deliveries and managing cross-functional relationships. She currently works at TD leading the delivery of several strategic initiatives. She is passionate about connecting with women and girls to help them thrive and achieve all they can on their journey. She has served in several volunteer capacities, including fundraising for charity and providing mentorship to high school STEM students & undergraduate students. Taiwo holds a bachelor's degree in Mathematics and an MBA from Schulich School of Business, York University.



**Lena Azzou**  
Member

An experienced strategic advisor, Lena Azzou is the Chief of Staff at Metrolinx and is part of a multidisciplinary team leading the largest transportation investment in Canada's history. She is able to help keep the complicated worlds of \$80 billion in construction projects, the operations of GO Transit, UP Express and PRESTO, and corporate management in balance. Lena was named Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women Award Winner in 2021 with the Women's Executive Network, and is the Executive Sponsor of the Metrolinx Women's Network. Prior to joining Metrolinx, Lena worked in both the structural engineering and telecommunications industries where she took on responsibilities for both technical and customer experience specific programs.



**Elle Meija**  
Member

Elle started her real estate career in the industrial sector at Cushman & Wakefield in 2010, before attaining her real estate license. In 2015, Elle moved into retail leasing for a private company, completing high level retail leasing transactions across Canada, the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, Singapore, South Africa, and New Zealand. Her "deals done" portfolio is inclusive of high street, AAA shopping centre, airport retail, and open air centre locations. In 2014, Elle founded PrettyGirlsWork, an online community for women founders & entrepreneurs, where she currently serves as lead for both the Retailers & Real Estate Houses. She is a competent, professional coach, teaching both time-tested & modernized strategies. Elle finds balance through yoga and reiki.



**Toyin Omotoso**  
Member

Toyin is a lawyer with a focus on human rights, ADR, workplace investigation, and training. Her areas of expertise include women's rights, Indigenous Peoples rights, and anti-Black racism. She has served at various levels of government, including the City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario. She has several years of experience in policy development and advisory roles, using both formal and informal resolution mechanisms to achieve legislative compliance. Toyin has a Master of Laws degree from the University of Saskatchewan. She is a member of the Law Society of Ontario, the Nigerian Bar, and ADR Institute of Ontario (ADRIO). She lives in the York Region where she volunteers as Council Member of a School. In her spare time, Toyin enjoys reading classics and gardening.



**Aleksandra Pressey**  
Member

Aleksandra is a lawyer at a human resources law firm, where she practices in all areas of labour, employment, and human rights law. She advises and represents employers on a broad range of issues. She also regularly conducts workplace investigations and workplace culture reviews as a third-party investigator for organizations across industries. Aleksandra writes and presents on educational topics for employers and human resources professionals. She is committed to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion, and is passionate about empowering and supporting women to allow them to thrive.



**Sara Thomson**  
Member

Sara is Senior Vice President, Human Resources – Corporate Functions at the Toronto-Dominion Bank. She is an accomplished leader with over two decades of experience in the financial services industry. Sara is known for her vision, strategic thinking and inclusive leadership. She has a strong track record of leading teams to strong business results and delivering on complex initiatives. As TD Business Banking's Executive Sponsor of Women in Leadership, Sara helped drive change to build the future pipeline of women leaders at TD. Sara holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Wilfrid Laurier University and a Masters of Business Administration (Finance) from the University of Calgary.





WOMEN'S CENTRE  
OF YORK REGION

Embracing Change. Empowering Women.

16775 Yonge Street, Unit 207, Newmarket, ON L3Y 8J4  
905-853-9270 info@wcyr.ca

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

THANK YOU TO OUR  
FUNDERS, FOUNDATIONS, DONORS,  
COMMUNITY PARTNERS  
AND VOLUNTEERS

---

*Your generosity has been  
life changing for a woman  
in our community.*