

News from National February 2023

President's Message - Patricia Leson

As I sit down to write this, we are celebrating 'Family Day' in Saskatchewan along with our neighbours in Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, and Ontario. While Prince Edward Island calls it 'Islander Day', we all have the same focus of celebrating the importance of families and family life in our communities.

In a virtual gathering earlier today with my grandchildren and hearing their plans for a 'perfect' family day, I was reminded of the thoughts behind this poem by Nicolette Sowder:

'May we raise children who love the unloved things –
The dandelions, the worms, the spiderlings,
Children who sense that the rose needs the thorn,
And run into windswept days the same way they run into the sun.
And when they're grown
And someone has to speak for those who have no voice,
May they draw upon that wilder bond -
Those days of tender things
And be the ones.'

Right across the world, from the small parts of nature and up to defending people who cannot defend themselves, we, as parents and grandparents, have the opportunity, indeed, the obligation, to teach our children to care for those who are most vulnerable. Our members model this behaviour every day; we know it is the best, most important, and perhaps the only way we can continue to improve societal norms for everyone.

That meeting with the grandchildren made it even more distressing to note the report card on child poverty that was released this month by Campaign 2000, *Pandemic Lessons: Ending Child and Family Poverty is Possible*. The report shows that during the global pandemic, rates of child poverty in Canada were reduced by a record 40%. That is the largest year over year drop since the federal government promised to end child poverty in 1989 and is largely a result of temporary pandemic benefits. Its discontinuance has again plunged our most vulnerable into a search for adequate housing, nourishing food, income security, equality, and decent employment. The financial response to the pandemic demonstrated that child poverty is a policy choice, not an economic inevitability. Along with the acceptance of the 50+ recommendations outlined in the report, we believe the best way to provide these essentials and to give them hope, is the permanent establishment of a basic guaranteed income for every Canadian.

In this newsletter, your Board and Convenors have identified gaps, perhaps chasms, in several areas other than child poverty that will pique your interest and inspire you to advocate at the

local, provincial, and national levels. Our advocacy today is very different than it was 130 years ago, but it is every bit just as important.

Bonnie Siemens, your Treasurer, is preparing the 2023-2024 invoices for the councils, federates, and individual memberships. Your prompt attention to them will be much appreciated and make her work much less stressful.

Plans for the AGM are progressing well, and the registration package will be available early next month. We are in the process of finalizing speakers and special events. Please feel free to contact the hotel to book your accommodation anytime between now and before May 15th and let them know you are part of the block booking for the NCWC AGM. Here is the website for the hotel www.parktownhotel.com Please book directly with the hotel and not through other sites as this is why we are receiving a free continental breakfast each day. The rooms we have booked each have two queen beds, and the cost for each room is \$134 per night. Hopefully, the turmoil with air travel will be rectified by then!

At the AGM and Conference in June 2023, we will be selecting a new theme for our Common Program. Based on the concerns identified in the reports in this newsletter, it may be difficult to choose just one. There have already been a couple of suggestions; please send your ideas to me along with a brief rationale so we can make an informed decision as to the focus of our education and advocacy for the next two years. Whatever theme we choose, we must also ensure no one is left behind in the other areas.

We are all looking forward to the warmth of spring; it seems winter has held us in its icy grip for too long! As we yearn for those first buds to appear on the trees, let's continue to pursue our dreams and hopes with optimism and joyful enthusiasm, honouring our 130-year tradition of advocacy for the most vulnerable.



Update to Standing Rules

Your NCWC Board met on Tuesday, February 21st, and one of our business items was the consideration of a suggestion from Carol Schweitzer, the Nominations/Elections Convenor, that we alter the Standing Rules on elections to include an electronic voting system.

Our last election cycle, which has very ably handled by Rosemary Mallory, encountered many issues with Canada Post. Although some envelopes containing the completed ballots were postmarked on or before the due date, the delivery was sometimes delayed by three weeks.

Also, the current method carries a substantial financial cost when one considers the purchase of two sets of envelopes, the printing of the ballots on coloured paper, and the stamps. Plus, it is a very labour-intensive task.

Carol has designed a ballot that safeguards members receiving the appropriate ballot(s), whether the member is an Individual member, or a Board or Convenor member, or a Federate (LCW, PCW, NOS). It also ensures no one can vote one's 'colour' more than once.

Dina Beasse, CPA, has agreed to be the Returning Officer. All ballots will be sent directly to her email address or home address if the member choose a printed paper ballot. Dina is a member of PCW Quebec and is the NCWCDO Treasurer.

Your Board appreciated and understood the rationale for the change and enthusiastically embraced the suggestion. It was also noted that it would, no doubt, encourage increased participation in the election process.

Voting via Canada Post will still remain as an option in the Standing Rules. So, if a member chooses to vote via printed ballot, Carol will accommodate her choice, too.

Carol will be emailing the ballots in accordance with the current Standing Rules, which are available on our website. We feel very confident the addition of electronic voting is another step in bringing our Standing Rules and Bylaws into the digital age and the 21st century.

Electronic voting will be reviewed at its conclusion as to its efficacy, voter turnout, ease of use, and its adherence to the confidential nature necessary in all elections. It may need a few tweaks, but we won't know until we try it.

Thanks, Carol, for suggesting this initiative!!



**In anticipation of the opening of the 67th session of the
UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**

**WELCOME TO THE FIRST CANADIAN CSW SESSION IN CELEBRATION OF
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

Presented by:

**National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC)
Business and Professional Women (BPW) Montreal**

You are all cordially invited and welcome to join us! On March 1st and 2nd, we are celebrating the International Women's Day with the pre-opening of the sixty-seventh session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. This is a parallel event will take place on zoom.

For the first time in sixty-seven years of its existence, the UNCSW is being brought home to you, in an effort to ensure that Canadian local and national grassroots NGO voices are being heard. This year's priority themes are "innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls", and the review

theme is “challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls” which was the agreed upon resolution of CSW 62”.

This event will bring together various levels of national governments, diplomats, and academics along with national and international women’s NGOs. Over the course of two days our high-level panels will discuss challenges, risks, and opportunities for women in STEM in five sessions.

Session 1: Online Violence Against Women (VAG). Women in politics and social media.

Session 2: Women in Cyber Security.

Session 3: Women in Science.

Session 4: The Importance of Education for Women and Girls in STEM.

Session 5: The challenges, risks, and opportunities for women in leadership beyond STEM.

Let’s make history together!

Register here: <https://gmail.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=c4bf6cf35f4b6f6f1b92b260e&id=2c4857496a&e=d53497fdef>



Environment Report

- **Mary Potter, 1st Vice President**

The 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity was held in Montreal from December 7 to 19. The resulting framework includes 4 long term goals to be reached by 2050 and 23 targets to be completed by 2030. Some of the targets as spelled out by the David Suzuki Foundation include:

- “Improve conservation and restoration of degraded lands and coastal marine ecosystems;
- Protect 30 per cent of land and coastal marine species;
- Halt human induced extinction of known threatened species and recover and conserve these species;
- Effectively manage how humans interact and coexist with wildlife and the 70 per cent of land and ocean outside protected areas; and
- Reduce the risk from pesticides, pollution, and plastics by 50% - the first time this treaty identified all three as a big part of what harms biodiversity.”

The Canadian government is allocating \$800 million for Indigenous-led conservation funding and around \$600 million for developing nations to invest in conservation.

However, as the David Suzuki Foundation states “...with rampant gas fracking, oil exploitation, logging and mining and the infrastructure that comes with them, ...Canada [doesn’t] appear remotely ready to realize the convention’s vision of ‘living in harmony with nature’ any time

soon. Short-sighted, outdated economics too often put continued fossil fuel and other industrial dollars ahead of the natural systems we rely on for health, well-being, and survival.”

I received an email from the President of LCW Winnipeg alerting me of two silica sand mine proposals near Winnipeg. There is concern about the destruction of boreal forest, the creation of silica dust which can cause silicosis, and the acidification of ground water. Since we don't have adequate policy to address this, I have written a resolution called “Environmental Effects of Mining” to be dealt with at the next AGM.

Urban sprawl is taking place in many areas of Canada with the resultant loss of biodiversity and agricultural lands. A serious case is in Ontario where the government is opening several areas of the Greenbelt to build housing and planning to build two new highways through prime agricultural land and part of the Greenbelt.

We will have to ensure that Canada lives up to the goal of the Convention on Biological Diversity “to bring about a transformation in society's relationship with biodiversity and to ensure that, by 2050, the shared vision of living in harmony with nature is fulfilled.”



Affordable Housing?

- Karen Monnon Dempsey, VP Economics and Employment

A word that is continually used with regard to housing is ‘affordable.’ What is affordable for you may not be for me, or my neighbour, etc. It has a totally subjective context based on your income and/or net worth. The long-time prevailing wisdom is that you should only spend 1/3rd of your pre-tax income on housing, therefore, that is what is deemed to be ‘affordable’ for you. However, many people are finding it necessary to spend more than that.

For the past few years across the country, **housing** has become **the** issue. Housing prices have entered a rarified stratosphere that just leave most of us with nosebleeds. If you can't afford a house, you need to rent. In Halifax which is the second-largest growing city in Canada, there is a 1% vacancy rate in rentals. We have had a huge influx of people over the last six years, and there is a huge building boom here as apartments/condos are being built at a dizzying rate. However, supply is not keeping up with demand.

In addition to supply issues, we also have a dearth of **affordable housing**. We urgently need in Halifax and all across the country accessible, adequate, and affordable housing for **everyone**, including the homeless and those precariously housed. When I say adequate, I mean clean, accessible, safe, and properly maintained. There is a huge student population in Halifax which has seven institutes of higher learning; Dalhousie University **alone** has over 20,000 students. This huge student population need apartments as do young working people, single parents, and many seniors – none of whom can afford the current mega-rents. If you can pay \$2,000/month (or \$24,000/year), then according to the pundits, you should have an income of \$60,000.

The current housing crisis is something we have seen before. In 1982 NCWC called attention to a growing number of households in Canada whose incomes were insufficient to acquire suitable

and adequate housing in the private sector and production had declined dramatically. In 1988 NCWC urged the Government to declare a “National State of Emergency” as it related to housing those persons most in need. Vacancy rates were unacceptably low with many Canadians spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing and a high percentage were on waiting lists for “rent geared to income” RGI housing. Those most in need were low-income seniors, female-led single parent families, single persons, unemployed youth, women who had experienced violence, and those who were disabled.

Does any of this sound familiar? In 1999 homelessness was approaching disaster proportions. The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights committed each signatory country to work toward an “adequate standard of living” for all its citizens. Women and children tended to suffer disproportionately from homelessness and its poverty-related concerns that affected not only their health but their ability to seek, find, and hold jobs.

In 2002 NCWC again urged the Government of Canada to declare a “National State of Emergency” as it related to housing those persons most in need. We urged that sufficient, safe, affordable social housing be provided to meet the needs of Canadians. In 2003 the UN CEDAW (Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination) Report urged Canada to provide safe housing for vulnerable women. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples referred to the rights of Indigenous peoples with respect to autonomy and self-government and to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including housing, for which states are required to take effective measures to ensure improvement in these conditions.

In 2010 NCWC urged the Government of Canada to work with First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples to develop and implement plans for funding housing and infrastructure construction without delay, and to provide sufficient funding and support.

NCWC’s long history of housing policies certainly illustrates our steadfastness and sense of purpose with regard to this issue. Looking at our carefully crafted policies on housing only reinforces the fact that not much has changed over the past several decades; affordable housing still remains out of reach for many Canadians and many more are homeless. We unequivocally state that this situation is not acceptable; it is past time that all levels of government working together address this issue with purpose and resolve.



Health Report

- **Beryl Matthews, VP Social Development**

February is Heart and Stroke month. Cardiovascular disease is the primary cause of death in Canadian women over 55. Only one in 450 emergency departments has a protocol that recognizes the presenting symptoms of; indigestion, nausea, cold sweats, shortness of breath, dizziness and pressure or pain in the back, chest, abdomen, neck, jaw, or shoulders. Stress,

loneliness, and high blood pressure increase the risk of disease yet fifty percent of women go undiagnosed.

The Canadian system of Universal Medicare is a source of pride to its citizens, but it has been decades since it was rated world class. Of the 11 major countries; Norway, Holland, Australia, France, Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, Britain, Canada, and the USA., Canada ranks 10th overall and seventh in administration efficiency. We spend 13% of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on health care, The United States spends 18% but neither country sees much of a benefit.

The Canadian Federal Government pays 22% of the Provincial health costs but more is needed. A recent recommendation was that the Canada Health Transfer payments be eliminated because there is not enough accountability, but in the past week they were again increased. Bill Morneau, the former Federal Finance Minister, suggested that any increase in transfers should be conditional on Provincial reform. Health Care is the responsibility of the Provincial Governments, they need to reform their systems of delivery. This may involve a compromise between public and private suppliers as suggested by Ontario and BC. Perhaps we need to study the systems provided in top ranked countries such as Norway and Australia. There have been many provincial – federal meetings to date, but no concrete solutions. The Health Standards Organization recently released updated directives for long term care which is also under control of the Provinces. The Covid-19 pandemic took a tragic toll on the quality of life of Canadian seniors. Citizens are asking for enforced Federal regulations where residents receive at least four hours of quality daily care in accredited facilities. To regain support of Canadians, each Province needs to set up rigid accountable regulations of care with mandatory facility licensing.



Senior and Social Issues

- Sheila Pepper, Vice President

Most of the Seniors' and Social issues across Canada concern Housing and Health, but other vital problems and crises concern: Families' and Seniors' transportation, safety in all aspects of their lives, financial issues, and social connections and activities.

Our Housing challenges across Canada are being met by most provinces' and territories' programmes and promises of additional funding for homeless people-- primarily families and singles: adults, youth, and seniors. However, seniors are "disproportionately affected by rising costs, as most are on fixed incomes."

Most provinces and territories have adopted an Affordable Housing model, with several innovations reported from Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, and British Columbia. Some of these include:

- an Age-Friendly Housing, Naturally Occurring/ Mixed Generational Communities' models, Non- Profit Housing, Co-living, Container Homes for single homeless people, etc. Other provinces are supporting homeless people in various ways with innovative housing and struggling to provide more funding each year for families chronically or temporarily in poverty.

We are encouraging more immigration from countries in much worse situations than Canada, and this will exacerbate our housing challenges country-wide. An example is the Newcomer Community Integration Support programme. This group, with Indigenous, Racialized, and women in general, are the most affected by housing challenges. (As we know, for centuries and millennia, people have lived in several generation housing types, but it seems we need to encourage this type again!)

Many Housing Advocacy organizations and working groups have been supporting government efforts to increase housing construction and affordability, but more partnerships must step up to assist these efforts. Several traditional and long time, Canada-Wide Service organizations have been helping in recent years. Prominent Housing Advocacy organizations include: the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness and their proposal for a Homeless Prevention and Housing Benefit, Calgary's Right to Refuge, Indigenous Women and Homelessness, the National Right to Housing Network, and the National Housing Council Review Panel. Several Provincial and Territorial counterparts are active throughout the country, also focussing on rural and northern areas of Canada.

There's pressure and presentations from these groups for more funding to properly maintain the existing affordable housing, renovate, restore, and prevent evictions from social housing. The one-time Federal \$500. Rental Benefit is still open for applications, but this is a 'drop in the bucket' and needs to be monthly or even quarterly to be of significant benefit.

As we see in our major urban centres, many homeless people live in tents on city streets and in parks and other possible places-- these encampments are tolerated temporarily but are then demolished before these residents are given alternate housing. We need land trusts, changes in urban and suburban zoning regulations and ways to help developers and landlords to make more social housing continue to be available! The many For-Profit developers pressure governments at all levels to approve their applications before the Not-for-Profit alternatives for low-income renters.

I've attended several webinars such as the Seniors for Social Action Town Hall, regarding barriers to Aging in Place models of Community Care. There were suggestions of redirecting such institutional funding to Community-based and In-Home Care. Perhaps the need is also for more varied cultural- and language-based seniors housing, as several religious institutions have done for years.

Transportation-- So many challenges exist for families and seniors in particular, to get to all the appointments, jobs and to acquire all the necessary household supplies on a weekly basis. Mobility issues often prevent seniors or other family members from getting together often. Isolation continues to be a major problem for many seniors whose families live in other areas of the country, exacerbated by the recent Covid closures and restrictions. Various forms of social connections are provided by some community organizations. An example is the proposed Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation by Age-Friendly Manitoba. Some cities provide free transportation to annual events, such as Winter Carnivals, annual sports, and musical events, or on one day a week for seniors and homeless people.

Safety and Security-- Seniors and various aged singles are most vulnerable to crime, abuse, and exploitation, as we know. More home safety resources, emergency and law enforcement contacts, counselling and peer supports are needed to help make everyone safer. More funding for gender-based violence and in-home awareness of abuse and exploitation by family and/or caregivers is also needed. Winter safety falls prevention and keeping warm are all concerns for

those living alone. Seniors need safe, accessible environments to continue to thrive, as well as access to nutritional food.

So many innovations of scams and frauds are problems for us all-- seniors in particular need help with taxes, insurance, and investments, to keep them living independently and able to help family members when necessary. Many seniors' lack technical skills that have prevented them from getting help and protecting themselves.

Many groups help seniors to stay active, and to help with lack of motivation by providing walking groups, seniors' community activities, and educational opportunities.

There are specific national helping agencies, such as the National Council on Aging, National Institute on Aging, the Eldercare Locator, various area Agencies on Aging, and the Family Caregiver Alliance.



NCWC is Bringing UN CSW67 Home!

- Daniela Chivu, Vice President Justice and United Nations Liaison

On this sixty seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), organized by UN Women at the United Nations Head Quarters in New York, governments and civil society with ECOSOC status will come together to address, strategize, and decide on the best way forward for women and girls on two major themes.

The priority theme is “innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls” and the review theme is “challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls”, which was the agreed upon resolution of the sixty second session of the Commission.

This year’s CSW will be held in a hybrid format, 80% online and 20% in person. This positive outcome is now possible, due to NCWC’s active pursuit for open formal and informal virtual space for civil society along other sisters’ organization. Women and girls from around the can fully participate, engage, and interact with member states, UN entities and among each other through various available space and platforms. Women NGOs from around the globe, will not have to face obstacles, such as unattainable high costs for travel and accommodation, visa entries and proof of vaccination, as we are all too aware of access to vaccines for many was and remains another major inequality, impacting women and girls of all ages from the parts of the globe.

NCWC has fifteen delegates, some of them will attend the session in person in NY at the United Head Quarters and some will be attending online. A briefing session with our delegates was held on the 4th of February, related to various aspects of the session and more information and updates will be sent to all our members. All NCWC members will be able attend the CSW online, subject to available virtual platforms. Our UN Liaison, Daniela Chivu will be coordinating with our delegation via zoom, therefore meetings will be held to share and exchange updates.

All NCWC members, are welcome to join these meetings. More information will be sent out, to ensure that none of our members are left behind.

As for the past three years, we happy to inform you that NCWC was invited to join the government's UNCSW Rapid Response Team to provide input for negotiations of the official agreed conclusion, we will be represented by Daniela Chivu, our UN Liaison.

NCWC together with BPW, Montreal are Bringing CSW Home to Canada, this is our parallel event in the context of CSW on 1st and 2nd March. It is vitally important that Canadian women and girls become familiar with the UN Commission on the Status of Women its functions, and its impact on our policies at home and in the international arena.

This can best be achieved through a meaningful and substantial engagement between Civil Society and the Government of Canada, recognizing and ensuring that Canadian Civil Society is an integral part of all United Nations processes. In the same spirit, this event is also celebrating the International Women's, and what better way to celebrating us than with the pre-opening to the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on Status for Women. We therefore invite you to save the date in your calendars and joins on this historic first, for women and girls in Canada. All the necessary information and the registration appears right after President Patricia's message.



Children and Families

- **Beryl Matthewson, VP Social Development**

Five percent of the children in British Columbia live in Poverty, not much different than the rest of Canada. 'First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society', provides a yearly report card on the changes seen with recommendations that is due out February 14th. Many of these should be considered across the country.

- 1) Employees should be paid a living wage, calculated for each community, and allows one to meet their basic needs.
- 2) Increases must be applied to welfare levels and the income of those citizens with disabilities or caring for those with disabilities that reflect the cost of raising a child. The Canada Child Benefit should be indexed to inflation and reaches all families.
- 3) Governments must collaborate with First Nations, Metis, Inuit, and Indigenous organizations to prevent poverty and increase education opportunities in urban and rural communities.
- 4) Universal access to high quality childcare and early childhood learning where educators are paid appropriately is needed across the country.
- 5) Kinship care providers such as grandparents need to be able to access the same resources as in the foster care system.
- 6) Children transitioning out of foster care, immigrants and refugees often need more help finding education, housing, and employment opportunities.

There has been an appetite to support Child Care and Early Learning systems across Canada. Three approaches have been looked at in all provinces. A set fee reduction is probably the easiest to attain through a government rebate but is not equitable. The 50% reduction in fees was more helpful in smaller centers but in many others still too high for some families and the aim to reach a \$10 per Day maximum for all families is favored with most advocates. Many Countries around the world such as Sweden champion a system where 3% of household incomes, an average of \$195 per month, goes to childcare and does not increase with younger children. Why is it needed in Canada? Affordable Child Care is good for the economy as more people enter the workforce. Social and Gender Equity reduces barriers, supports women, and makes children the priority.



Health Report

- **Arlene Jones, Convenor**

I have been working on a special project - that you may be interested in - "Aboriginal TB Photo Project" with 2 professors from the University of Winnipeg.

The latter part of my nursing career was in tuberculosis education. I travelled with the TB Team to most of the First Nations communities in the province setting up testing, educational and treatment programs.

My colleague, the Provincial Public Health Nurse in charge of TB and Respiratory Disease in Manitoba, and I took hundreds (more like thousands!) of pictures/slides etc.

The project is to bring these pictures back to the communities and share their stories. Sadly, my colleague died of COVID last year and I am still going through the rest of the pictures.

A website has been developed and it is an ongoing project. You can access the TB Photo Project here: <https://indigenoustbhistory.ca>



Information for Seniors

- **Dolly Dastoor, Convenor for Seniors and Social Issues**

Here is an abstract from the January 2023 Newsletter of Minister for Seniors Rt Hon. Kamal Khera

Minister Khera writes "I am committed to improving the lives of older Canadians, making life more affordable as inflation continues to raise prices across the globe. Last year, we took concrete action to support and empower seniors, families, students, workers and renters

through targeted measures. This year we will build on this work as we continue to foster an economy that works for all Canadians.

There will be a one-time top-up to the [Canada Housing Benefit](#), which aims to help low-income renters with the cost of renting. The application period is [open](#) until Friday, March 31, 2023.

The Government of Canada has a number of benefits and credits aimed at making life more affordable for seniors.

The Old Age Security (OAS) pension provides seniors aged 65 and over with a minimum income, which helps reduce the incidence of low income.

In July 2022 an increase to the Old Age Security was made by 10 percent for seniors 75 and older, representing \$800 for full pensioners. This change strengthened the financial security of 3.3 million seniors, **56% of whom are women**.

It is important to note that OAS and CPP benefits are indexed to inflation to ensure that they can keep up with the cost of living.

The **Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)**, is for seniors living on a low income. The amount GIS recipients receive may change each year depending on income, but this provides more stability and support for older Canadians.

The **GST credit** has been doubled for six months which gives an average of \$225 more in the pockets of seniors and has helped 11 million Canadians. The last payment was issued on January 5, 2023.

Seniors may also be eligible for a number of other tax credits, including the:

- [Canada Caregiver Credit](#): You may be able to claim the CCC if you support your spouse or common-law partner with a physical or mental impairment.
- [Disability Tax Credit](#): The DTC helps reduce the income tax that people with physical or mental impairments, or their supporting family members, may have to pay. It aims to offset some of the costs related to the impairment.
- [Home Accessibility Expenses Credit](#): HATC is for qualifying expenses incurred for work performed or goods acquired in respect of a qualifying renovation of an eligible dwelling of a qualifying individual.
- [Medical Expenses Credit](#): An individual is entitled to MEC for medical expenses paid for himself/herself, his/her spouse or a dependent during a 12-month period ended in the year 1 and which was not used in the prior year.
- [Age amount credit](#): You must be 65 years of age or older on December 31, 2022, with a net income of less than \$90,313. The unused portion of this credit may be transferred between spouses or common-law partners.
- [Pension Income amount Credit](#): Allows you to claim up to \$2,000 if you reported eligible pension, superannuation, or annuity payments on your tax return. Income from Old Age

Security benefits, Canada Pension Plan benefits and Quebec Pension Plan benefits are not eligible for this credit.

January was **Alzheimer's Awareness Month** and with the rise of diagnoses of dementia in Canada, we need to raise awareness about dementia and how you can better support the person and the family know who has been recently diagnosed.

In the next newsletter we will talk about Alzheimer Disease and other types of Dementia, and how we can support the person and the family dealing with this situation.



Immigration, Citizenship, and Global Affairs

- **Kerry Gibson, Convenor**

Canada, much like the rest of the world, is experiencing the effects of increasing inflation, supply chain concerns, housing shortages, health care insufficiencies, and labour shortages. A thoughtful immigration plan could mitigate some of these shortfalls (such as BC Health Care Minister Dix's recent proposal to streamline the acceptance of foreign health care credentials, and programs such as BCIT's military service credentialing conversion program), however by the same token the ready infrastructure necessary to receive these immigrants is not present.

For instance, the housing shortage continues to be exacerbated and although permitting has increased, due to construction costs (i.e., softwood lumber prices spiking) and skilled trades shortages, actual building has decreased significantly and some residential developers are abandoning current projects (Coromandel Properties is currently seeking substantial credit relief leaving multiple unfinished development projects). Canada essentially needs to boost home building by 50% (Globe and Mail) to accommodate immigration. Proponents of tiny house projects see such developments as expedient, cost effective, and a transitory opportunity for the unhoused populations requiring support, thereby being one potential "quick fix" for both domestic and incoming international populations alike. Housing shortages and prices also affect the thriving international student market as those students are already paying a premium for their tuition, however additional costs may price them out of a Canadian education (such as the recent 8% bump in housing charges at UBC dorms). This would complicate the existing flow of skilled workers who come to Canada on student visas with expectations to stay and work here after graduation.

New technologies also have the potential of easing strain on overburdened systems, (such as health care) in order to further build the infrastructure necessary to welcome new Canadians. However, government processes by which to adopt such technologies is more cumbersome than most other developed countries, and there is a danger of creating an inequitable system (lack of access, equity concerns, pay to play etc.). If provincial governments put a greater focus on public procurement of such technologies to integrate them into existing systems rather than spending scarce resources delineating public vs private roles and responsibilities, Canadians

could still enjoy such established rights as public health care while the technology assists in creating equity (such as built-in AI translation, machine learning etc.)while retaining the principles of social systems. Working with Ministries such as the Ministry for Citizens Services which is working on completing the “Last Mile Project”, cutting edge technologies that unburden traditional systems would be available to all Canadians, including remote and Indigenous communities throughout the north. This would also provide further support for immigrants who might be encouraged to settle in more rural areas, as they would have the resources required.

There are also specialized concerns for new immigrants and refugees, such as women who have been sexually violated in wartime crises, who require medical care, mental health/trauma support, and possibly abortion/adoption/childcare supports accessible to them swiftly and accessibly. The Access Clinic at BC Women’s Hospital offers such a program, however it is direly underfunded and localized to primarily the urban centre of Vancouver. Replicating and funding these programs across Canada would not only be beneficial for new immigrants requiring such services but to local populations as well as the program is designed to serve all women, including women with disabilities.



Children and Youth Report

- **Penny Rankin, Convenor**

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It has been two decades since the National Council of Women of Canada first began advocating for a dedicated Children's Commissioner. Our policy urges the Federal Government to appoint an independent and non-partisan Commissioner for Canada's Children, accountable to Canadians through Parliament. Essentially a Commissioner would then be tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and more broadly ensure that children's best interests are prioritized.

The Commissioner and their office would then:

- 1. promote an effective and coherent approach to children in federal government policies and legislation; and*
- 2. ensure that the federal government lives up to the commitments made to children at the national and international level; and*
- 3. ensure that children's voices are heard in decisions affecting them made at the federal level*

Pushing for a Commissioner must not stop!
This Children and Youth Report makes it clear as to why!

Parallel to the establishment of a Commissioner and critical to our strategy moving forward is our tradition of including solid data from respected sources such as Statistics Canada and UNICEF when engaging with government. What follows is a brief summary of the most recent “report card” issued by UNICEF CANADA. It shows that Canada **ranks 23rd** in terms of the conditions for good childhoods but **30th** in children's outcomes when compared to the 41 richest countries in the world. We are in fact, one of only a handful of countries that have better economic, environmental, and social conditions but worse child well-being. It is interesting to

note that many of those countries who scored better in this report card have either a dedicated commissioner-or similar body.

Specific categories of concern contributing to Canada’s poor rating include the following indicators:

- Budget allocation to children and families ranks Canada at 28th- *spending is only 1.68% GDP. We spend less than most wealthy countries and almost half of Norway for example.*
- Canada has one of the highest rates of adolescent suicide: at 9.0 per 100,000. Ranking 33rd.
- Canada’s rate of infant mortality is 0.98 child deaths per 1,000 births. Canada Ranks 28th

Budget	Spending on children and families	28
Mental well-being	Life satisfaction	28
Physical health	Child mortality	28
Physical health	Overweight/obesity	29
Health	Immunization	33
Society	Violence (homicide)	33
Mental well-being	Teen suicide	35

- 87% of children are immunized against measles, below the 95% threshold for protection
- Canada ranks 33rd in the homicide rate, a marker of a violent society for children.

Overall poverty in Canada continues to be of great concern: Almost 1 in 5 children lives in poverty, though the rate for Black children can reach as high as 1 in 3 in some urban centers, and the rate for Status First Nations children can reach above 1 in 2.

While there has been good news related to the recent agreements on transfers to provincial and territorial governments supporting [early learning and childcare](#) (Canada ranks 19th in the number of children in preschool one year before primary education begins) there are too many areas where children and youth are falling through the cracks. We and other countries are a long way from meeting the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

In mid-February I attended a conference hosted by the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children (CCRC) on housing. Participants from the National Right to Housing Network along with the Women’s National Housing and Homelessness Network shared their data along with a report **relating to housing precarity and homelessness among children** that was presented to the CRC Committee in Geneva. Their approach, as is true of ours, is to highlight **rights-enshrined in conventions Canada has ratified, along with providing solid data and recommendations**. I encourage you to read through their [document](#).

Whether talking about access to mental health care or clean water, or housing- or indeed the full range of concerns that impact the wellbeing of all Canadians- most if not all issues “intersect”. When attending the CCRC conference a particularly poignant bit of research data was shared that struck me. On April 18th, 2018, a pan-Canada snapshot study of shelters for women was conducted. 669 women were unable to find a bed that night -82% because the shelters were full...269 accompanying children also did not have a bed that night. A director of a shelter in Hamilton Ontario went on to say- that is when the cars begin to circulate around the block...looking for the vulnerable-waiting to see who is left behind...who hasn’t a bed.

This is a good segue into news related to exploitation and human trafficking:



Traffic Jam 2023

February 22nd marked Canada's third National Human Trafficking Awareness Day and the National Council of Women of Canada was honoured to be approached to participate in this important conference

being held in Ottawa. As Convenor on Children and Youth (NCWC) I submitted a [recording](#) touching on our strategy and advocacy related to human trafficking, and launching the 2nd day of **Traffic Jam 2023: Navigating the Intersections of Human Trafficking**.

“Our” International Council of Women (ICW) resolution that became policy at the ICW AGM in France last summer addresses some of the same issues that are soon to come before the House. I would like to encourage everyone to contact your local MP ([Search by Postal Code](#)) to urge the passing of the following Bills as they make their way through the legislative process:

Bill S-210 - [Protecting Young Persons from Exposure to Pornography Act](#) Sponsored by Senator Julie Miville-Dechéne focuses on requiring “adult entertainment” companies (pornography companies) to prevent minors from accessing pornography. Currently at its third reading in the Senate- we are hopeful it will move on to the House and soon become law.

Bill S-211 - [Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act](#) sponsored by Senator Miville-Dechéne and MP John McKay focuses on working towards ensuring there is no forced or child labour in our supply chains. The Bill calls for supply chain reporting measures on Canadian companies. Having been adopted by Senate and at report stage, it has been suggested that the Bill will be before the House of Commons on March 6th.

Bill S-224 - [An Act to amend the Criminal Code \(Palermo Protocol definition\)](#) is sponsored by Senator Salma Atallahjan and MP Colin Carrie . The Bill will update the Criminal Code offence of human trafficking to fully align with the Palermo Protocol. Currently adopted the Senate and recently tabled by MP Colin Carrie, it is at second reading in the House of Commons.

Finally, as ever, I welcome input from our members: comments, concerns, questions and participation!!!!



NCWC ENVIRONMENT REPORT - Gracia Janes Convenor

The last few months have been very busy indeed, and once more I have distributed environmental news from of a variety of articles and alerts to our Environment Committee members in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Here are a few examples of these reports:

- “*First Nation in BC making strides toward energy sovereignty*”, CBC News, December 04, 2022.
- “*Proposed Federal rules would allow coal mines to release more toxins into the Environment*”, CBC Canadian Press, February 13, 2022.
- “*Ontario’s risky play on nuke power – Mark Winfield, York University Professor of Environmental and Urban Change*” Hamilton Spectator News, November 4th, 2022

On the action side of these important issues, I attended several meetings marking the 50th Anniversary of the Canada/US International Joint Commission “Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement” and helped form a new environmental group, “the Great Lakes Ecoregion Network (GLEN). PCWO is now a member of GLEN, and I am on a “nuclear issues” sub-committee. Also, as PCWO environment Advisor, I sent a PCWO brief to Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCE) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) re Annex 3 & Priorities for Action Concerns Regarding Impacts of Radionuclides on the Great Lakes and PCWO “*Support of the Need to Designate Radionuclides as Chemicals of Concern*”.

As well, on an issue of great importance, I drafted a letter for NCWC President Patricia Leson to the Prime Minister and Ministers of Environment and Climate Change, and Natural Resources (NRCan) commending the creation of 4 new protected National Parks, with partnership and leadership of the Indigenous people, but expressing grave concerns regarding the huge investments and simultaneous speeding up of mineral resource permits in the James Bay Lowlands.

Additionally, NCWC and PCWO joined over 80 cross-Canada groups to sign a letter to the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Natural Resources Canada as well as members of the Federal Cabinet and Federal Critics, objecting to the Nuclear Waste Management Corporation (NWMO) being a lead in the development of Canada’s nuclear waste strategy, rather than the Government. The letter asks *that “the Prime Minister take steps to ensure that the establishment of radioactive waste strategies are made subsequent to having a sound policy on radioactive waste and decommissioning (of nuclear reactors) in place and with the full engagement of the Canadian public and Indigenous peoples with the Government of Canada.”*



PCW British Columbia
 - **Rani Gupta President**

We recently had our Semi-Annual General Meeting on November 25, 2022, at the University Women's Club venue in Vancouver. Our guest speakers were two moms who had lost their children to drug addiction. Their talk was very heart wrenching as it made us aware of the lack of professionals to deal with this problem as well as the lack of facilities to obtain proper medicines.

We also discussed a Resolution prepared and presented by the New Westminster Council of Women "to separate drug addiction and mental health into two departments and not one as it is now." After discussion it was passed by the PCWBC board and a letter was drafted by Beryl Matthewson (our resolution chair) and me which has been sent to the relevant Ministry in our Province for consideration. We are hoping to hear from them in the near future.

I have been attending many workshops and seminars dealing with issues such as elderly long-term care, support for FGM victims, the difficulties of Afghan women in the present Taliban regime, the plight of Burmese women and children, childcare, ending poverty, and dying with dignity. All were very informative and thought provoking.



LCW Montreal

- **Linda Serpone, President**

The Montreal Council of Women (MCW) wishes a healthy and successful 2023 to the NCWC Board and members, and to members of the local and provincial councils. It has undeniably been a challenging year for many members and federates; sickness, isolation, work stresses have put an outsized burden on members and boards all around. Let's look to a brighter year ahead! After all it is our 130th Anniversary this year. We are looking forward to celebrating this historical moment with several events including a luncheon on October 1st in the historic Canal area of old Montreal, a beehive of industry in 1893 as waves of new immigrants manned the mills and factories. This was a typical landscape that inspired Lady Aberdeen to advocacy, fighting for health care, education, and a better quality of life for all regardless of social stature.

On January 29, 2023 we started the year off with an amazing hour with Kathryn McMorrow who taught us how to understand and deal with stress. I can attest that we were all relaxed and feeling hopeful at the end of the hour!

We have just suffered through record breaking cold, inflation hitting a high, increased rental rates and more, all converging on creating a perfect storm for the increasing number of homeless and low-income families fighting to provide three meals a day. We will be addressing these issues in February with two events.



On Feb 16 at 6pm EST at the Zoom presentation "The Changing Face of Homelessness and Hunger in Montreal" we will meet three people who are leading the charge to alleviate the human distress caused by this growing and urgent situation in the downtown core of our city and in the suburbs.

TO [REGISTER CLICK HERE](#)

On February 25, from 4-6pm “The Coldest Night of the Year” the MCW Marvelous Mavens (of Terry Fox infamy last fall) will walk again to raise funds for the homeless. We would love your support. To donate click [HERE](#)



On March 9, 2023, at noon on zoom we will discuss “Painting the Colour Back into the World” with Adrienne Piggott, a MCW member, President of the Board of the Teesri Duniya Theatre and McGill University, Associate Director. Adrienne will cover the ways that colourism and racial exclusion have been present in many ways that people don’t even think about and how this has shaped our view of the world. She will explore how this has affected women and we can begin to “erase the erasure collectively”. [REGISTER CLICK HERE](#)



Thursday April 20, @12 Noon: “The Impact of Climate Change on Women” – Nathalie Daoust, MPA, LL.M – Director of Government Relations, Strategy and Performance, Commission for Environmental Cooperation (*more information to come*)

Sunday April 23, 2-4:30 pm SPECIAL JOINT NATIONAL EVENT “Creating Change: Advocacy and Lobbying” – A joint national zoom tutorial given by Maria Peluso and hosted by BPW Montreal, MCW, NCWC and BPW Canada (*more information to come*)

April 28-29-30 a weekend retreat at Villa St. Martin in Montreal for MCW members led by Kathryn McMorrow.

We invite you to join our free webinars and I have included the links where possible. You will also find information and registration info on our website under EVENTS. www.montrealcouncilofwomen.ca



LCW Prince Albert
- Rose Rothenburger, Secretary/Treasurer

Meet Our 2023 Inductee in the Hall of Fame!!

The 2023 inductee into the Prince Albert Women’s Hall of Fame is **NICOLE RAN COURT**. The Induction Ceremony coincides each year with International Women’s Day on March 8.

Nicole has given so much of herself to our community. She began her volunteerism in her teens as a Junior Volunteer at Holy Family Hospital. As a young mom, Nicole served as chairperson of the Woodland Daycare board. In 2008, the Elizabeth Fry Society presented Nicole with their

Rebel with A Cause award for her work with incarcerated women.

Nicole has served as chair of:

Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan Prince Albert branch, Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers Prince Albert branch, Citizen Advisory Committee for Saskatchewan Penitentiary and Prince Albert Parole.

Currently she is a member of: Community Networking Coalition, Heart of the Youth Community Pow Wow Committee' Prince Albert Council of Women, Prince Albert Historical Society Parkland Restorative Justice, Mental Health support for the Crisis Intervention Stress Management (CISM) team at Saskatchewan Penitentiary

Nicole served as MLA for Prince Albert Northcote from 2016 to 2020 and continues to be active politically. She is a strong advocate of having more women represented in leadership roles.

Prince Albert Council of Women President, Chrissy Halliday, said “Nicole has been a strong voice for women, families, and children. She has been a role model throughout her career, both as a social worker and in public life. She has provided many with support, guidance, and genuine caring.” Halliday said, “One factor taken into consideration by the Selection Committee is the themes of both the United Nations and the Government of Canada. Nicole’s contributions truly encompass both the Government of Canada’s and the UN’s 2023 themes”.

The UN theme 2023 International Women’s Day is “**DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality**”

The Government of Canada’s 2023 theme is “**Every Woman Counts**”.

The induction ceremony will take place on March 11 at the Coronet Hotel. Tickets are \$25 and are available by contacting rose.r@sasktel.net.



News from NCWCDO

- **Carol Schweitzer, Past Chair**

Since the mid 'eighties, NCWCDO has supported a wide range of specific projects, in designated communities, for the advancement of literacy and basic education and for skills training for women and girls. These educational and social welfare programs supported by NCWCDO are located in developing countries as well as Canada.

Has your Council considered making a donation to the NCWCDO? Have you yourself considered making a donation or suggesting a project that would benefit from NCWCDO’s support? What follows are descriptions of some of the projects supported in the past, within Canada and from around the world.

Currently NCWCDO has a balance of just under \$1,000, However all donations that are deposited by March 31, 2023 will increase the funds that can be distributed to projects that

can be considered for support this Spring. Donations can be made through CanadaHelps. For the address to which cheques can be sent, please email ncwcdo@gmail.com

2022

The **Ukrainian Women's Congress Regional Network** is a community of thirty-seven women leaders in almost all the regions of Ukraine, who are working with the NGO UWC as volunteers and inform the organization about the real situation with gender equality in regional and local communities. The activities are planned to help women cope and improve their life situation. Having the project come from the UWC ensures the training supports good ventures.

2021

Shelter Movers is a volunteer-powered charitable organization that provides moving and storage services at no cost to women and children experiencing domestic violence and abuse. It helps remove the logistical, security and financial barriers which can prevent women from fleeing violence.

2020

Fraser Hickson Institute's minibiblioPLUS in Montreal is a hallmark outreach program *which aims to raise literacy levels by empowering partners to instill in children a life-long love of reading and learning from birth and to enable free access to books and animation services.* There are 165 programs at 100 sites, such as Boys & Girls Clubs, children's hospitals, community centres, daycares & nurseries, pre-schools.

2018

The **Namuwongo Literacy Project (NLP)**. Started by two Montreal educators in 2006, NLP's goal is to bring literacy and numeracy to 20 children per year in Namuwongo. It is an illegal settlement on the outskirts of Kampala. As such, the government doesn't "owe" the people any services including schooling. The teacher finds new pupils by visiting the well, the only clean water supply, during school hours. She follows the children home that are fetching water, doing the laundry, etc. to convince the parents to send them to school. NLP meets rent-free in one classroom in Kisugu Junior School. The annual budget pays for the teacher and items such as: daily nutritious lunch and snack, all teaching material, student textbooks, workbooks, writing and art material, school uniform & gym uniform (so that children are not distinguished from other pupils who are privileged and wear the school and gym uniform), medical insurance, all special school events and activities, and incidentals.

2015

KAMBUI SCHOOL FOR DEAF: Funding was donated to "Our Kenya Kids" an organization in Brockville, Ontario that has taken responsibility to establish educational programs for children in Kenya. Nairobi is the only school for the deaf children in the country. The target population is orphaned and vulnerable children and youth in Kenya in need of primary education and vocational training.

ECHELON DES PAYS D'EN-HAUT, QUEBEC: Funding from NCWCDO was donated to Community based Art Program for Adults with Mental Issues in a rural area of Quebec. The activities aim in part to offer support and maintain hope daily. They requested funding, within the framework of art therapy to create a film which will project the reality of living with a mental health problem.

2006

Nashi – Our Children (Through Education: A Solution to the Sex Trade) – Ukraine

Associated with “Child Care International (a Canadian sponsorship program based in Nova Scotia, the mission of Nashi is to divert children from the sex trade by providing trades training skills which will facilitate economic independence. The focus is on education and training of older children in orphanages to provide skills (sewing, weaving, computers) before they are forced to leave at age 16 to find their way in an often-hostile world.

Breaking Bread for Women in Afghanistan. The funds provided to CW4WAfghan are directed to projects in Afghanistan. These projects are managed in partnership with Afghan women's grassroots organizations focusing on women's health, employment, and education (including literacy, women's leadership, peace building and human rights education).

2005

The **Gogo Grannies' Sewing Project, Alexandra Township, South Africa**, supports grandmothers who are faced with the tragedy of burying their own children who had died from AIDS and having to care for their grandchildren – often with meagre resources. The aims of the project are to: purchase basic tools and supplies to furnish a small sewing workshop; train participants in the basic techniques of sewing and tailoring; provide opportunities for participants to generate income.

The first **Osu Children's Library** was founded in 1990 under a tree in Accra, the capital of Ghana, by a Canadian woman who started story times for neighbourhood children. Word spread and before long, children were lining up each week to explore the magical world of books. Before returning to Canada, she opened a small permanent library, which proved to be the beginning of a network of libraries throughout Ghana.

2004

FCJ Hamilton House Refugee Project, Toronto, Ontario, **Le goût de lire / born to read**, Montreal, Quebec, **Construction of Girls' Dormitory and Ablution Block**, Mansa, Zambia, **Trenchtown Reading Centre**, West Kingston, Jamaica

2000

TOSTAN - Senegal, West Africa. In 1991, a nongovernmental organization, TOSTAN (which means 'breakthrough' in the native Wolof language) was formed to create a program that would help women make their own decisions regarding female genital mutilation (FGM).

FANIA - Neuva Suyapa, Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Nuevo Suyapa is an extremely poor area, in the outskirts of the capital city of Tegucigalpa, originally populated by people displaced from their homes due to Hurricane Fifi in 1974. The FANIA Project offers pre-school and primary education for underprivileged children as well as a nutrition program and sewing school for their mothers.

PICTOU COUNTY WOMEN'S CENTRE, New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, has 2 mandates; direct service and social change. A community-based organization that provides services and programs to women/adolescent girls on a wide range of issues, it is woman-positive, woman-supportive, and chronically under-funded. It is guided in its work by women's experience and knowledge.

1999

Shanzu Traditional Workshop (Kenya), **Centre Humanitaire Bethanie-Viacam** (Cameroon), **Anita Goulden Trust** (Peru), **Tyndale-St. George's** (Montreal), **Anishinabe Fellowship House** (Winnipeg)

You have helped make a difference in the lives of the women and girls in these organizations; your continued financial contributions will ensure this tradition continues. Thanks!



Heart Disease and You and Your Sister and ...

- Carla Kozak, Past President of the NCWC

Did you know that 2/3 of research on heart disease and stroke focuses ONLY on men?

Did you also know that the #1 leading cause of premature death in women is heart disease and stroke?

Sadly, of all women who have a heart attack, their symptoms are not recognized in fully half of them. Why unrecognized? Because women's symptoms may include chest and arm pain, like men's, but often are shortness of breath, pressure on the chest or back, pain in the lower chest and/or upper abdomen, dizziness, fainting and/or extreme fatigue. These symptoms often are misdiagnosed as anxiety, indigestion, stress, and overwork. In a study of 10,000 patients, 48% of them women, published in the peer-reviewed New England Journal of Medicine, women under 55 were 7 times more likely to be misdiagnosed than male patients under 55. WHY? Because the diagnosis (and treatment and any follow-up program) is influenced by the doctor's perception of the patient's gender, age, ethnicity and menopause status as well as his training.

Heart disease kills more women than men every year. How can you help change this grim fact? First, take care of yourself with improved nutrition and physical activity, Second, educate yourself in learning to recognize the symptoms of heart attack and stroke and learning cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Automated external defibrillators (AED) are available in more public spaces now and can be used by anyone. Third, if you or someone you know survives a heart attack, insist that they be included in a cardiac rehab program: these programs lower death rates by 50% but often are not made available to women.

Local and provincial councils can help save women's lives by making Heart Month (February) a springboard for action in educating women about the extent of the danger and how to reduce their risk, and by fund-raising for more research that includes or focuses on women. Let's close the deadly gap in diagnosis and treatment for women. We can do it!

(For more information on heart disease and stroke, go to heartandstroke.ca)



Advantage Facebook

– Karen Monnon Dempsey, Facebook Administrator/Editor

If your Council has made a resolution this year to increase your membership and raise your profile in your city or province, FACEBOOK can help you get your message out.

Marketing an organization is very much like marketing a product in that people:

- *Need to recognize your name/your 'brand'*
- *Need to know what you do/what you stand for*
- *Need to know why they should join you/why they should 'buy' into you*

Another advantage that can be garnered from Facebook usage is becoming aware of and familiar with so many organizations which we might not otherwise have known about, and conversely, they with us. When I share a post from one of these organizations they often thank me for doing so, and they in turn share and or like our posts. This therefore raises our profile significantly throughout the non-profit/NGO network.

Suggestions:

- "Like" all of your affiliate members who also have are on Facebook.
- "Like" similar minded organizations.
- "Like" the NCWC page and those of other LCWs and PCWs.
- "Like" reputable news outlets especially those in your city and province.
- Check 'feeds' everyday at least once and 'share' posts. This gets your Council's name out in front of your members and others on a regular basis.
- Provide information on how to join your Council on your page.
- Share posts from your affiliates (who are also looking to broaden their reach). By helping to promote them and helping them get their message out, you are creating more of a synergistic relationship.
- Post information about your upcoming meetings/events and invite all to attend.

Following NCWC's Facebook page on a daily basis is arguably ***the best way for board members and convenors to keep up with the latest and most relevant news from over 700 curated sources on issues related to their portfolios as well as others.*** It is also a great way to find issues on which NCWC should implement or update policy so that appropriate resolutions can be drafted to bring before the membership.

On February 1, 2023, our page had 1430 'likes' and 1598 'following' so over 3,000 in total. Women aged 35-44 are our highest demographic, with the 45-54s and over 65s coming in only slightly less, but significantly, we have seen an increase in every age group. As usual 80 per cent of our readers were women; 70 per cent were from Canada, specifically: Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Prince Albert, Vancouver, Halifax, Saskatoon, Calgary, and London.

If any of you have questions or need assistance with your Facebook page, please email me at: kdempsey624@gmail.com.



Closing Reflections

- **Patricia Leson, President**

Thank you to all the contributors to this edition of 'News from National'! It is truly amazing and inspiring to consider the depth and breadth of the dedication of members to ensuring that the work of our organization continues to make a difference.

It is such a pleasure to work with others who understand the needs, enunciate best practices, and have shared values and ideals to assist women, girls, families, communities, and society to be their best. In the NCWC, we do this with transparency in who we are and what we do – from our budgets to our grass roots decision-making all the way through to connecting everything we do back to our mission and vision. We do this with pride, perseverance, mutual trust, and respect. May it be ever so!

Best wishes to each of you as we embrace 2023 with all of its opportunities and challenges, no matter what comes our way, we will handle it all by continuing to work together!!

Altior!!



Vancouver Council of Women



*Working to improve the lives of women,
children and communities since 1894*

Land Acknowledgement

As we begin our work today, let us acknowledge and respect the Indigenous peoples of all the lands on which we have a presence. Let us reaffirm our commitment and responsibility to the protection of the land which we each call home. Let us acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and let us consider how we can each, in our own way, move forward in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

President: Chitra Khare

VCW President's Spring Report for NCWC,
February 2023,

The days are getting longer and we are all eagerly waiting for the Spring weather. This past winter weather has been unusual with the snow - but it seems that places all over the world faced extreme weather due to climate change.

We resumed our meetings in September 2022 after a two months (July and August) break. As of September, the VCW started the general luncheon and guest speaker meetings in-person and continued the executive meeting on ZOOM.

In September, we heard from guest speaker Dr. David Kuhl, co-founder of NGO Blueprint. Dr. Kuhl, renowned researcher, author, and speaker on the subject of men's health and well-being provided an overview of Blueprint, and outlined ways to inspire men and society towards positive change.

During the October general meeting, as is the usual practice (every 4th year), the VCW conducted a Civic Forum of Female Candidates. Elizabeth Gautschi, Civic Affairs Convenor, contacted the political parties and asked each party to send 2 candidates to participate. An election panel made up of some of the women candidates running for Mayor, City Council, School Board and Parks Board. There were 16 speakers. The Municipal Elections in BC took place on October 15 th , 2022. VCW members got to hear from the candidates which helped inform members' voting. Elizabeth did excellent work organising this event.

In our November general meeting, our speaker JoAnne Fahr from YWCA Metro, spoke to us about the initiatives of the YWCA which is - in its 125 th year. She provided an extensive update on the Y's current housing initiatives: YWCA housing communities provide safe and affordable homes for single women and their dependent children.

In December, we heard from guest speaker Zina Chernowas of Illuminate, Salvation Army. She spoke on ending human trafficking. As the CEO of Illuminate and Manager of Operations, Zina explained that human trafficking is controlling a person for the purpose of exploiting them,

resulting in illegal financial gain. Illuminate works with survivors of human trafficking by providing community outreach support, certified Service provider training,

In December we had a Christmas Feast, which was provided by the Board members. Everyone enjoyed the delicious food.

Every year VCW members prepare Christmas Hampers for donation. This year VCW members donated to Zina's organization Illuminate for women and families affected by trafficking. Stella Shulhan of the Ukrainian Women knitted beautiful toques to donate as well.

VCW started 2023 with an executive meeting in January.. There was no General meeting in January.

In our February 2023 general meeting, our guest speaker was Elder Lois Rullin. She is a Haida Elder and also a navy veteran; she is 81 years old and members enjoyed learning from her.

Our nominating Committee is preparing for the elections which will occur at the AGM on April 3rd, 2023. It was decided at our February general meeting that we will start discussing the Resolutions earlier this year so we can be ready to vote at the AGM.

Take care all!

With Warm Regards,
Chitra