



Change!

2010 Annual Report

2010

A	Vision and Mission	Page 1
N	Message from the Executive Director	Page 2-3
N	Message from the President	Page 4-5
U	Community Partners	Page 5
	Our Team	Page 6-7
A	These Walls Were Not A Home	Page 8-9
L	Off-Site Transitional Housing	Page 10
	On-Site Transitional Housing	Page 11
	Youth Transitional Housing	Page 11
R	A New Day Program	Page 12
E	Emergency Shelter Statistics	Page 13
P	Lifeskills	Page 14
O	Volunteers	Page 14
	Annual Events	Page 15
R	2010 Women of Distinction Recipients	Page 16
T	Third Party Events	Page 17

A decorative illustration in the top right corner of the page. It features a network of thin, golden-brown vines that branch out and curve downwards. Interspersed among these vines are various flowers and leaves. The flowers are simple, five-petaled shapes in shades of pink, purple, and white. The leaves are small, oval-shaped, and colored in shades of green and yellow. The overall style is delicate and artistic, resembling a watercolor or ink wash illustration.

VISION

The YWCA is a leader in the Niagara Region providing awareness through education and advocacy to raise the equality of women and the visibility of issues in our community.

MISSION

The YWCA Niagara Region is part of a national and worldwide movement that is passionate about empowering women and their families by providing safe supportive housing and programs creating opportunity for all women to reach their full potential.

Message from the

E Writing for the Annual Report is always for me, a time
X to reflect and review. As I look back and see what has
E transpired in this past year it comes to mind how the organization
C continues to evolve. Each year seems to bring new challenges
U and opportunities and this year was no exception. In terms of
T challenges, we faced the closing of our long-standing women's
I only employment program, as the provincial governments funding
V priorities shifted. In re-evaluating how to maintain clients and
E crucial programming the program offered, we have continued
 the life skills component; which absorbed some of the impact of
 losing the employment program. We are now incorporating life
 skills programming workshops in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and
 Welland.

This year we expanded the Off-Site Supported Transitional Housing
 program into Welland; bringing the total number of apartments the
 YWCA supports to thirty-five. We also recently developed an On-
 Site Transitional Housing program at Culp Street site to provide
 six women with an opportunity to have a more intensive level of
 support and stability. The addition of the On-Site program bridges
 the gap between the emergency shelter and the transitional
 housing programs. The On-Site program creates a needed link of
 housing support for critical clients we serve.

E Within the past three years there has been tremendous growth
C within the transitional housing programs as well as with the
T accompanying life skills programs. As we build on the continuum
O of services we offer, different levels of support bridge the gaps
R between different stages of crisis we serve. The success rates
 that we are seeing within these programs are a testament to the
 importance and value of supporting women. By creating stability
 in their lives, they can deal with the issues that they are facing
 and move from a place of dependence to self-sufficiency and
 reintegration into community.

Through strong partnership we have been working with the Crown Attorneys office, the Niagara Regional Police, Niagara Health System Addiction Services and the John Howard Society to create a court diversion program for street level sex trade workers; a program established to support marginalized and vulnerable women in our community. Through this partnership we have been able to support women to move out of the sex trade and create opportunities to better their lives.

This year we were also privileged to host YWCA Canada's Annual Members Meeting. Delegates from our sister YWCAs from across Canada joined us in Niagara Falls for a three-day conference. It was a great opportunity to showcase Niagara, the work of our own YWCA and receive updates of the great work our sister agencies do so diligently. It was a tremendous success due to the wonderful work of our staff.

Another year of hard work from the YWCA team! I am always humbled by their dedication, passion and endless drive. Our services would not be possible without our great team of women leaders, who ensure the programs and services we offer truly benefit the women and children we serve. I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to each one of them.

All of this work would not be possible without the strong support system of volunteers who work alongside the staff. Volunteers are the icing on the cake, adding so much to our day with their hard work and smiles. It is with pleasure that I thank them for all that they do.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of the board of directors who are passionate about the organization and the women and children we serve. Thank you to each one of them for the leadership, experience and devotion they bring.

Finally, I want to thank the women who cross our doorstep every day. Listening to their stories of courage and triumph through difficult circumstances is an encouragement. It reminds me daily of the importance of supporting and providing each of them with the best quality service we possibly can. They are the reason we are here!

Elisabeth Zimmermann
Executive Director

Message from the

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When I reflect back through the past year I am amazed at how much has been accomplished with so little. I attribute this to the passion and dedication employees and the board have to the women and children that desperately need our help. Like many other businesses and not-for-profits in this economy, we have experienced funding cuts as well as increased need. Despite these challenges, the team has been determined and found creative ways to re-invent and grow.

To ensure long term success, financial stability and community awareness have been the two areas that the board has focused on over the past year. We have implemented a balanced scorecard and new reporting that will help us understand the impact of our efforts toward our goals. This scorecard creates alignment between the board and front line employees to ensure that we are all aware of how we contribute to the success of the YWCA Niagara Region.

I am particularly proud of how Elisabeth lead the team to re-invent itself by opening On- Site Transitional Housing in our King Street location when our funding for the YWCA's Job Route for Women program was cut. This service provides salvation for women who struggle to find permanent housing and need our life skills support as well as contributes to the financial security of the YWCA Niagara Region.

As we look to the future, our organization will continue to support the needs of community by expanding in ways that provide long term success for individuals that seek our support. Empowering women, girls and children so they can reach their full potential.

This is my final year as board president and I must say that it has been a journey where I have received so much. It has been inspiring to be a part of something that really, truly, impacts our most vulnerable citizens in such a positive way. I pass the baton to Katie Finora with great confidence and support but will also always carry my own baton for the YWCA Niagara Region.

Caren Burt
President

Community

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Service Canada; Province of Ontario; Employment Ontario; Ontario Trillium Foundation; Regional Municipality of Niagara; United Way of St. Catharines and District; United Way of Niagara Falls and Greater Fort Erie; City of Niagara Falls; City of St. Catharines; Niagara Community Foundation; Homelessness Partnership Strategy; Business Education Council; Ministry of Training; Colleges and Universities; Ministry of Community and Social Services; YWCA Canada; FACS Niagara; Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; Niagara Regional Housing.

A special thank you to all of our community funders and partners. You have committed to a long standing organization that continues to provide shelter and meals to homeless women and children; advocacy for their welfare; a better life for teen girls; solutions to end poverty and support to women, youth and children as they transition into stable housing.

With your efforts, we continue to make a difference as a member agency of YWCA Canada, addressing local, national and global issues that affect women and children.



Board of Directors

President Caren Burt

1st Vice President Katie Finora

2nd Vice President Hilary Caters

Treasurer Lisa Frattini-Burgess

Secretary Shannon Valenti

Our Team

Management

Emergency Shelters

Women's Resource Centre

Transitional Supportive Housing

Community & Donor Relations

Administration

Executive Director

Executive Assistant

Accounting Coordinator

Accounting Clerk

Advocates

Darlene, Jessica,

Jennifer, Candice, Erin,

Jennifer, Keshia

Transitional Support Worker

Board Members

Bonnie Nistico-Dunk

Cindy Crossley

Carolyn Fish

Jessica Potts

Lynne Charnock

Pamela Carrera

Rebecca Raby

Sue Chenard*

Laurie Skyvington*

Jackie Cirocco*

Nancy McIntosh+

Elisabeth Zimmermann

Donna Shelton

Gladys Wood+

Diane Vail

Relief Advocates

Sami-Jo, Lisa, Tasha,

Jessica, Meghan, Cindy,

Amy, Charlene, Adelaide,

Christy

Maj-Britt Kannegieter*

*Changed positions within the organization, +New Hire



Youth Advocates

Youth Relief Advocates

Transitional Support Workers

Lifeskills Worker

Community Relations

Community Relations Assistant
Communications & Events Assistant

Food Services

Supervisor (St. Catharines)
Kitchen Assistant (St. Catharines)
Supervisor (Niagara Falls)
Kitchen Assistant (Niagara Falls)

Maintenance

Program Closure

Job Route For Women

Our Thanks to Former Employees



Alysia Blondin, Sarah
Biggar

Sarah McCart, Leanne
James, Lucy Bradshaw

Tara Liphorpe
Linda Hajling

Chantelle Berry*

Carli Taylor*
Kristen Merkley

Maria Donato
Lida Moore
Cheryl Statst+
Maureen Johnston

Gary Snedden

Nancy Saczkowski, Tricia
Graves, Simon DeLima,
Sabrina Essner, Jennifer
Rose, Amy Davis

Andrea Mills, Courtney
Counsell, Rebecca
Read, Kit Rowan, Marina
Gauvreau, Maria Teresa
Caro, Stacie Royds

These Walls Were Not A Home

As she sits in her room she glances at her bed, a dirty blanket on the floor. Wallpaper barely covering the walls. She hears another empty bottle broken against the wall. These walls were not a home. Her arms wrapped around her knees, she rocks back and forth to keep warm. These walls were not a home. Humming to herself to cover the loud screams of her mother down the hall, she wonders what it would have been like if her father didn't leave. You see, Laura's father was tired of dealing with his wife's mental illness; a mental illness that led Pauline to drink herself awake and asleep. These walls were not a home.

Laura grew up into her rebellious teens, skipping school, failing grades, late hours on the streets that turned into years. The street had become her home. The more Laura rebelled, the further she fell into depression and wrong choices. Laura's unstable home disabled her from knowing how to support herself off of the streets. She had been arrested for prostitution and upon her release had been given the recommendation to contact the YWCA. Laura felt she had better options.

Until one day, Laura was walking down King Street on a cold winter's afternoon; she glanced up and saw a bright blue and white sign. As she squinted to read the sign, it read YWCA. Laura was reluctant in her decision, but turned down the walkway that led her up to the emergency shelter.

As she walked into the doors, Laura dropped to her knees in tears. The advocate on duty rushed to her side and helped her to her feet. Laura was taken upstairs to the advocate's office where she felt comfortable and safe.

When Laura was done telling her story, the advocate told her she could take a shower, which she hadn't been able to do in weeks she said. Her clothes were washed and she was given new clothes that had been donated to the shelter.

As the weeks went on, Laura was supported by an advocate on duty 24/7 and fed three meals a day. She attended lifeskills programming where they focused on anger management, self-esteem, budgeting, depression and self-harm prevention.

As the weeks progressed Laura slowly gained the confidence needed to build her self up again. She gained part-time employment at a coffee shop and enrolled in night courses to complete her High school diploma. Shortly after moving into an apartment through our Transitional Off-Site program Laura's mother passed away from her mental illness. As she grieved the loss of her mother she received the support she needed through the YWCA's Transitional Support worker.

A year had passed and the staff at the YWCA saw Laura excelling in every aspect. Laura gained full-time employment, and reached the point in the Off-Site programming where she could take over the apartment on her own, and resides there today. Laura continues to stay connected with the support worker's at the YWCA. Even though Laura had come a long way from the girl who landed at the emergency shelter some time ago; she was not out of the clear just yet. As life will bring her many challenges, she wanted to ensure that she had the support of the YWCA staff.

We are excited to share that Laura is in her first-year at Western University where she is studying Health Sciences. Laura's future goal is to be employed by the Canadian Mental Health Association, where she would like to focus on supporting families dealing with a parent suffering from a mental illness.

The success story shared would not be possible without three valuable contributors, the YWCA's dedicated staff, passionate community partners and loyal donors. The power of three changes the lives of women and children. Together, we continue to reduce poverty in the Niagara Region.

Off-Site

This past year has seen the successful growth of the Off-Site Transitional Housing program into the Welland area. The partnership with Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) has expanded to reflect this growth. The program has a total of 35 apartments that are subsidized through the Rent Supplement Allowance Program.

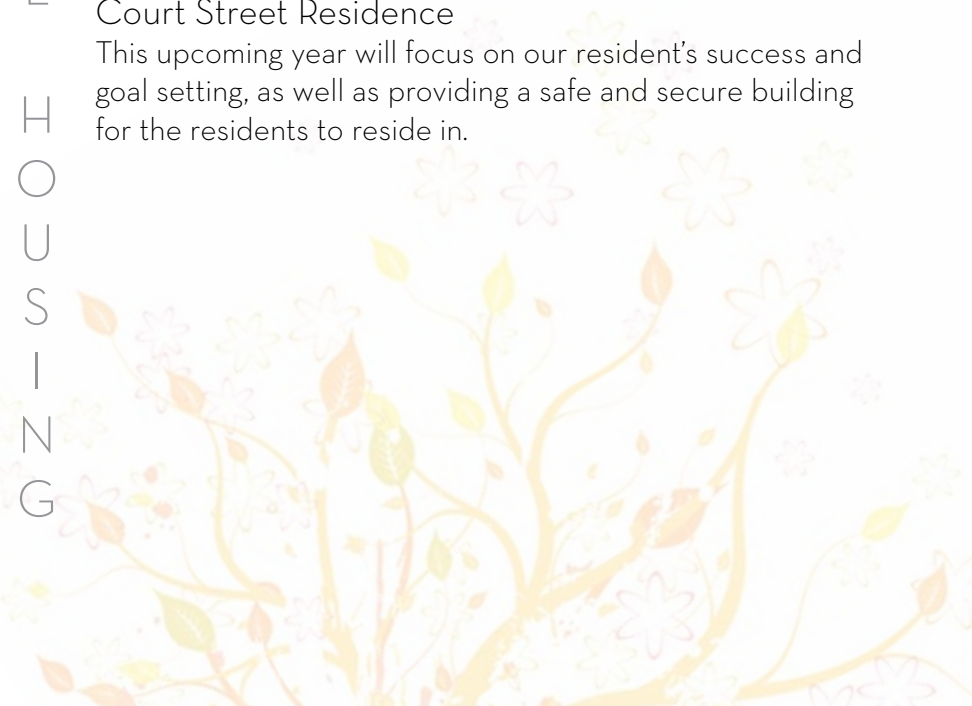
Residents continue to attend lifeskills programming in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland. Community agencies are now speaking at our monthly house meetings. This provides the opportunity for residents to receive information and to make new community connections.

And Staff will continue supporting women residing in the program through apartment visits to ensure the participants success in completing both their short term and long term goals. Staff also provide referrals, lifeskills programming and appointment accompaniment.

L Court Street Residence

This upcoming year will focus on our resident's success and goal setting, as well as providing a safe and secure building for the residents to reside in.

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On-Site

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On-Site Transitional Housing programs started in Niagara Falls and will be expanding into St. Catharines and Welland next fiscal year. This program currently houses 6 women. Typically located within the same building as our shelters, this program offers a more intensive level of support for women working towards independence. Women are provided with individual support, referrals, lifeskills programs, and appointment accompaniment. Each transitional housing program is offered for the period of one year. A woman who requires longer term support is able to remain housed and supported through the YWCA for a period of three years, better enabling them to live independently and successfully.

Youth

W
 e are excited about the success of our new youth program within our transitional housing sector. We continue to see growth in the youth after they leave the program and most of the youth follow up with the advocates long after they have moved on.

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82 youth and 18 children took part in our lunch program and after school programming.

Transitional Housing Program Statistics

172 women and 43 children were housed in the Transitional Housing programs over the past year.

Total number of hours spent with residents: 3,932

A New Day

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For the past year we have been working with community partners to establish a court diversion program which will provide an exit strategy for women who are involved with street level sex trade.

The YWCA Niagara Region is working directly with the Niagara Regional Police, Crown Attorney for Niagara North and Niagara South, Addiction Services through the Niagara Health System, The John Howard Society of Niagara to ensure the programs success.

Women in the diversion program enter the YWCA Niagara Region at the shelter level which provides immediate support and then move into one of the On-site Transitional Housing programs. The women work directly with staff to establish goals with support through one on one sessions. They will be provided with various program choices such as; Lifeskills, Women's Addictions Support Group, Self Harm, Sex Trade Empowerment, and Budgeting.



Emergency Shelter

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11,172 Nights of Shelter

33,516 meals served

539 Women

94 Youth

135 children



Lifeskills

This year we offered a variety of lifeskills workshops and programming for all of our women, children and youth who accessed our shelter and other programs. The lifeskills program also offers programming to the community at large, and topics range from anger solutions, budgeting, cooking on a budget, stress management, self-esteem etc. We are excited this year to introduce our newest lifeskills program, Truth, Respect, Action, Decide, Empower (TRADE), a Sex Trade Empowerment program, along with an eight week Women's Addiction Support Group. All of our lifeskills programs are offered in Welland, St. Catharines and Niagara Falls. Our lifeskills worker also delivers a High school lunch hour program within two High schools in the region focusing on girl-centered issues. We also assist in the after school program, partnered with the United Way, at the Manchester and Thorold site for young girls.

Volunteers

As an organization that relies on the assistance of volunteers it is a pleasure to highlight some of the amazing contributions and accomplishments we are lucky to witness on a daily basis here at the YWCA.

You support our reception areas, brighten our hallways with fresh paint, and assist staff. You pick up and deliver donations, tend our gardens, help in our kitchens and donate hairdressing services to guests. You host BBQ's for our guests, and ensure special holiday meals for women in need. You assist with fundraisers, special events, host third party events and organize donations.

You have contributed over *three thousand eight hundred and sixty hours* of your time. You are our ambassadors. You are inspiring.

Each of you has done something extraordinary. Each of you has made a difference. THANK YOU.

Annual Events

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 During YWCA Canada's Week Without Violence campaign, the YWCA Niagara Region in partnership with local community agencies hosted its 4th Annual Power of Being a Girl Conference. The Power of Being a Girl Conference is a YWCA signature event that enables the organization to speak to young girls in the Niagara Region on various educational topics. Last October the YWCA was educating young girls in grades 10 and 11 through the key theme, "Empowered by Choice." Under this theme; the keynote speaker, Sergeant Robyn MacEachern from the Ontario Provincial Police, spoke to over 250 girls on Cyber Safety at the C.A.W Hall. Topics included, identifying trends in terms of risks, strategies to consider to reducing risk and identifying the tools of exploitation.

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 It is our mission that every woman and child receives something special on Christmas day, and each year without fail, the community responds. Turkeys were donated with stuffing, gravy and all the fixings. Womens hearts were filled with warmth and children were filled of joy and laughter. Thank you to all of our gracious donors.

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 Another successful Women of Distinction was held at Club Italia on May 6, 2010. With a sold out venue of just under 400 people, the YWCA Niagara Region honoured the unique contributions of women across the region who distinguished themselves by their personal achievements, community involvement and their contribution to the advancement of women. These recipients inspired vision, initiative and leadership. This signature event raised \$40,000 to support women and their children. Helping the YWCA continue our mission of empowering women and their families by providing safe supportive housing and programs and creating opportunity for all women to reach their full potential.

YWCA Niagara Region Women of Distinction Awards

Congratulations to the award recipients of 2010!



Top Row L-R: STEPHANIE JONES, Performance Acura Arts & Culture; PAT HUNDERTMARK, Modern Landfill Inc. Health & Wellbeing; ANN SPERLING, Rankin Construction Science & Technology.

Bottom Row L-R: GAY DOUGLAS BROERSE, Ken & Maureen Fowler Education, Training & Development; BETTY BOYD, Walker Industries Public & Community Service; WENDY SOUTHALL, JBM Office Systems Ltd. Trades, Professions & Entrepreneurship.

The Vicky Hull Young Women of Distinction



L-R: BRIANNE LIDSTONE, The Standard Arts & Culture; JENNIFER COOPER, Meridian Credit Union Community Service; AMANDA SCAVO, Ferguson, Neudorf Glass Sports, Recreation & Leisure.

Third Party

E **T**he staff, board members and clients of the YWCA
V **N**iagara Region would like to thank everyone who
E hosted a third party event. You have made a valuable
N contribution in helping the over 800 women and children
T we serve.

Recent third party events...

S Inn on the Twenty Ltd. hosted a fashion show benefiting the YWCA and raised \$1,330. Shoppers Drug Mart donated \$480 during their Annual Tree of Life campaign. The Small Business Women in Niagara arranged their Pajama Program and we received enough pj's and books for all of our guests in our emergency shelters, off-site and on-site programs. Employees of General Motors donated \$700 worth of gift certificates for stocking stuffers. We were yet again the lucky recipients of a large donation of toys for Christmas from Mark's No Frills at the corner of Lake and Lakeshore. The City of St. Catharines and HSBC donated from their dress down days in December and January. Our board of directors put on a Family Skate at Ridley College in early February, raising funds during a delightful afternoon skate. Meridian Credit Union had dress down days in the months of February and March and graciously donated \$2,497. Atrium Spa and its staff gave a personal donation because they felt so fortunate and blessed in their lives. The board of directors hosted a public screening of the Sexy Inc. documentary in the month of April. Fulton's Fitness reached out to our plea for food, by running a food drive at their Fitness Centre during the month of May. Ferguson, Neudorf Glass Ltd. hosted their Annual Tennis and Bocce Fundraiser in July, raising a successful 10,000 for the YWCA programs and services. PenFinancial saved our kitchen troubles by donating \$2000 to replace our broken commercial fridge with a new one. THANK YOU.



YWCA NIAGARA REGION
183 King St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 3J5
Tel: 905-988-3528 Fax: 905-988-3739
Email: reception@ywcaniagararegion.ca
www.ywcaniagararegion.ca

