



YWCA NIAGARA REGION
Hope for Homeless Women and their Families since 1927

2011 ANNUAL REPORT





YWCA NIAGARA REGION

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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 and creating opportunity for all women to reach their full potential.

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.

BOARD

The 2010/2011 YWCA Niagara Region Board of Directors

Katie Finora, Chair

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & BOARD CHAIR

WE RECEIVED A LETTER from a former client, Rosalie, the other day and the letter started “It’s been many years since I have thought about the YWCA...”. She went on to say that she had stayed at one of our shelters several years ago and that her experience with us changed her life for the better.

We get letters like this often.

So why did her letter stand out? She had stayed with us in the 1950’s as a young woman new to the area.

In reflecting on this letter, we realized how much of an impact our programs have had through the decades. The programs and services offered by the YWCA here in Niagara have made life changing differences for hundreds of women—not just hundreds—thousands, even tens of thousands through the

the years. It’s a bold statement to make, we know.

It’s true and we are proud of it.

Our history has shaped many of the programs and services we offer today. As in the past, women’s well being, safety and personal growth remains the foundation of everything we offer. We continue to honour our traditions of the past through our current housing and life skills programs that we offer.

This past year has provided us with much to celebrate. In spite of economic storms and changing funding priorities we were able to grow. We expanded our Transitional Housing Programs in St. Catharines to include an On-Site Program in the King Street Shelter. We also increased the number of Off-Site Housing units from 35 to 45 units

throughout St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland and we opened a 4-unit Emergency Family Shelter for two parent families and single parent families led by a male.

As we look back on our accomplishments of this year and years past we also look forward to this coming year as we prepare to celebrate 85 years of serving the Niagara community. Along with you, our YW community, we are sure to see to it that women in crisis have the necessary resources to change their lives for the better, just like we helped Rosalie change her life so many years ago.

Katie Finora
BOARD CHAIR

Elisabeth Zimmermann
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



EMERGENCY SHELTERS

BY THE NUMBERS

464

women were served

91

children were served

10,413

beds

36,446

meals served



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CLARA came to the YWCA when she was 42 years old. She had been living on the streets since she was nine, having run away from home to escape physical, emotional and sexual abuse. In addition to being homeless, Clara was addicted to drugs and alcohol, which she used to dull her painful past and escape her present situation.

Hopeless, skeptical and trusting no one, Clara found safety for the first time in the YW Emergency Shelter Program and began to open up to the idea that she had the power to change her future. She spent 23 days in the emergency shelter before moving into YW Transitional Housing.

Since that time Clara earned her high school diploma, found a job and secured permanent housing in a safe

neighbourhood. Today, Clara continues on her path of independence and enjoys giving back to the community that supported her recovery.

On July 4, 2011 the YWCA opened the doors of a four unit **Emergency Family Shelter**, providing shelter to homeless families, single fathers raising their children and mothers with sons over 16. In the first month of operation we served four men, four women and five children.



ON-SITE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

BY THE NUMBERS

31

women were served

71%

moved into permanent housing or next step transitional housing



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KAREN had spent the last several years of her life in an endless cycle of addictions, mental health issues and shelters. She always felt like she was the outsider looking in, just wanting the stability she had never known, and was never taught how to find. Having come in and out of our shelter several times, Karen finally accepted some guidance in how to move forward into that stability.

Karen spent two months within the shelter dealing with her issues. Working with YW Advocates, she decided to set a goal of going through our three-year program within the YWCA, beginning first with our one-year On-Site Program housed within the Emergency Shelter. Being able to access an advocate on duty 24 hours, Karen was taking baby

steps towards her goals. She attended life skills programs, and joined activities at the YMCA. Having completed her first year successfully, Karen recently moved into our Court Street Transitional Housing Program. From there, she will then be ready for our Off-Site Program. While Karen still has miles to go, she now has miles behind her in this journey for a safe, stable life.



SUPPORTED TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

BY THE NUMBERS

38

women

55%

moved into permanent housing or next step transitional housing

611

support hours were given

610

one-to-one sessions were given



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MAGGIE spent 12 months in the YWCA Supported Transitional Housing Program. It was the first time in many years that she had a place to call home.

In her own place, attending programming, volunteering in the YWCA kitchen and connecting with community agencies, Maggie began the process of putting her life back together.

Today, Maggie has been in her own apartment for some time now. She is currently enjoying part-time employment and making a difference everyday in the lives of people in her community.

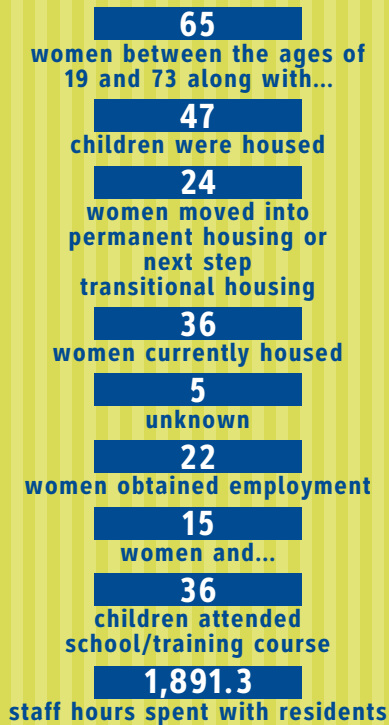
Maggie spends time with her daughter and is a proud and doting grandmother. Life is simple and much more satisfying for her now.

Instead of worry, she faces each coming day with anticipation, knowing she has the supports to deal with future challenges.



OFF-SITE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

BY THE NUMBERS



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JEAN, a 62 year old, had been living and working in Niagara-on-the-Lake for most of her life when she suddenly found herself without a job. After a lengthy search, she finally found a promising position in Kingston, Ontario. Using the last of her savings, she packed up and moved, only to find that the position was not what she had been promised. Jean had no choice but to come back to the region, but was now without a home. Jean found herself couch surfing until she had exhausted the charity of her friends and families.

Jean was welcomed into the YW King Street Emergency Shelter where she stayed for one month while preparing to move into our Off-Site Transitional Housing Program. Jean enthusiastically participated in many

YW Life Skills programs and soon decided to enroll in a six-month school program to become a Personal Support Worker (PSW). After graduating from her PSW course, Jean continued her search for employment and quickly found work. Jean has now moved back into independent living and often contacts us to give an update on how her life is going.

WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARD RECIPIENTS



Sarah Cannon
HEALTH & WELLBEING
SPONSOR: MODERN LANDFILL INC.



Sue Forcier
PUBLIC AFFAIRS & COMMUNICATION
SPONSOR: ENBRIDGE GAS



Valerie Jaeger
PUBLIC & COMMUNITY SERVICE-
OCCUPATIONAL INVOLVEMENT
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SPONSOR: RANKIN CONSTRUCTION INC.



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Cindy Paskey
EDUCATION, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT
SPONSOR: KEN & MAUREEN FOWLER



Lilita Stripnieks
ARTS & CULTURE

VICKY HULL YOUNG WOMEN OF DISTINCTION



Emma Hudson
ARTS & CULTURE



Cara Jeffery
COMMUNITY SERVICE



Katie Kalchman
SPORTS & RECREATION

THE YWCA Niagara Region's Women of Distinction Awards and Fundraising Celebration recognizes the influence that women have made to our community. This year's celebration recognized a distinguished group of remarkable women who made outstanding contributions to the Niagara community.

Over 480 people attended the 2011 YWCA Niagara Region's Women of Distinction Awards and Fundraising Celebration, which featured a keynote address from Margaret Trudeau and raised over \$30,000. All funds raised went directly to YWCA programs and services.

WOMEN OF DISTINCTION SPONSORS

Award Sponsors
Enbridge
JBM Office Systems Ltd.
Ken & Maureen Fowler
Modern Landfill
Rankin Construction
Walker Industries

Media Sponsors
Astral Media
Cogeco

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DJB
Henderson's Pharmacy
Hoogasian Insurance
Brokers Ltd.

Print Donor
Peninsula Press

Wine Donor
Vineland Estate Winery

Speakers Accommodation
White Oaks Inn

POWER OF BEING A GIRL



The 5th Annual Power of Being a Girl Conference brought together 125 young women from across Niagara for a day of empowerment and inspiration. This year's theme was "Take the Wheel!" and focused on participants identifying personal strengths and using them to achieve goals and reach their potential. Keynote speaker, Wendy Matthews provided a message of encouragement as the girls were treated to a day of education, encouragement and fun.

HOPE FOR HOMELESS WOMEN

Hope for Homeless Women was an event to help raise awareness about homeless women and their children. Community members collected donations and pledged to sleep over in the Brock University gymnasium. An untimely blizzard prevented the sleepover from taking place however the initiative raised \$5300 in support of the YWCA.

THIRD PARTY EVENTS



Each year generous organizations and community members take it upon themselves to host fundraisers to benefit the YWCA. In 2011 nearly \$20,000 was raised by:

Deloitte Impact Day
Go-Girl-Golf
Fore Ladies Only Golf Tournament
ETFO Niagara
Niagara Dental Hygienists' Component Society

Starbucks
Kindred Spirits Quilting Company
City of St. Catharines
Bev Hodgson (Hosted 'Comedy Fest')
'Madmen Party' Fundraiser



YOUTH TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

BY THE NUMBERS

16

youth served

1,356

program hours

1,652

support hours



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JENNIFER, a 17-year-old, fleeing verbal and physical abuse from her father and working through an addiction to cocaine and oxycontin with methadone treatment, found herself referred to and accepted into the YWCA's Youth Transitional Housing Program. She worked closely with the Youth Advocates to achieve weekly and monthly goals that she began to set for herself and soon started to see positive changes happening in her life. She obtained a part time job, and applied and was accepted into a college training program.

One of Jennifer's goals was to finish her methadone treatment program and live her life free of addictions. She managed to do this in one short month, and has remained addiction free. We are proud to say that in

December 2011 she will be moving on to independent living—clean, abuse free and ready for her post secondary education.



LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMMING

BY THE NUMBERS

843

clients served

612

participated in YWCA individual life skills

128

participants in school programming

48

participants in after school programming

24

women attended the Addiction Support Group

10

women participated in the Lucy Project

10

women participated in the Women Inspiring Women

4

women participated in the Self Harm Group

7

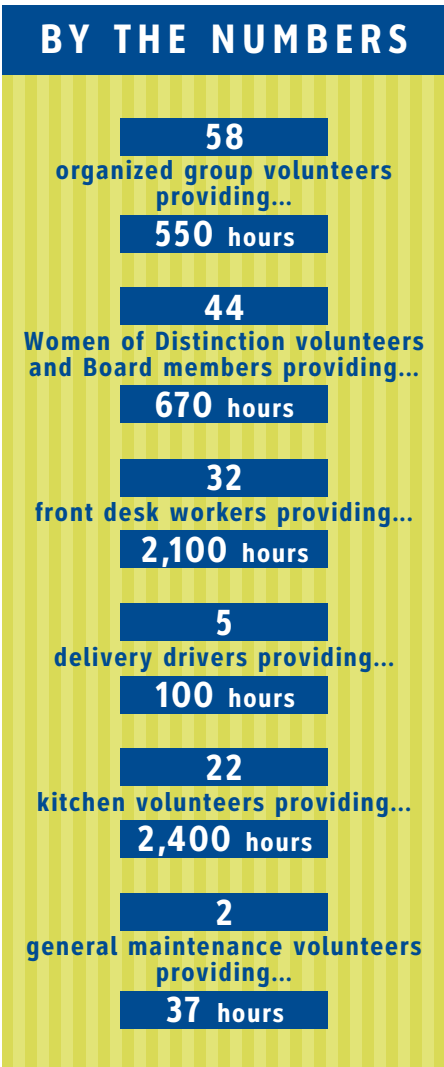
women participated in Anger Solutions

YWCA LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMMING is an integral part of the services we offer. While providing shelter for women in crisis is our most critical service, providing programs that teach women to cope with and overcome addiction, enhance personal awareness, build self esteem, and learn basic skills such as financial management are what help our clients successfully gain employment and find homes of their own. A woman that accesses any of our shelters must attend our Life Skills programming. Life Skills programs are offered to girls and women age eight and up and take place within YWCA shelters and at six participating high schools in the Niagara Region.

We are proud to report that every participant in Life Skills Programming with the YWCA in 2011 expressed “overall personal growth” on their feedback form.



VOLUNTEERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE



IT IS INSPIRING to see just how many members of our community truly care to make a difference. YWCA volunteers worked in our kitchens, at our front desks, made deliveries, painted walls, sat on committees and so much more.

Volunteers gave us nearly 6,000 hours of their time in this last year!

And it's not just about the quantity of time they gave. It's about the quality. It's about stories such as Mr. and Mrs. Fair, who upon learning about our food shortage took it upon themselves to collect over 700 pounds of food from friends and neighbours on their newspaper route!

It's about our kitchen volunteers who contributed over 300 hours of service when our kitchen supervisor fell ill this past July.

It's about the 15 employees from Starbucks spending two days painting, gardening and building a deck to make YWCA shelters in Niagara more beautiful.

These are just three examples of the many wonderful things our YW volunteers have done to help our organization. Our volunteers are an invaluable resource and we are so grateful to have them as part of our community.





COMMUNITY FUNDERS & PARTNERS



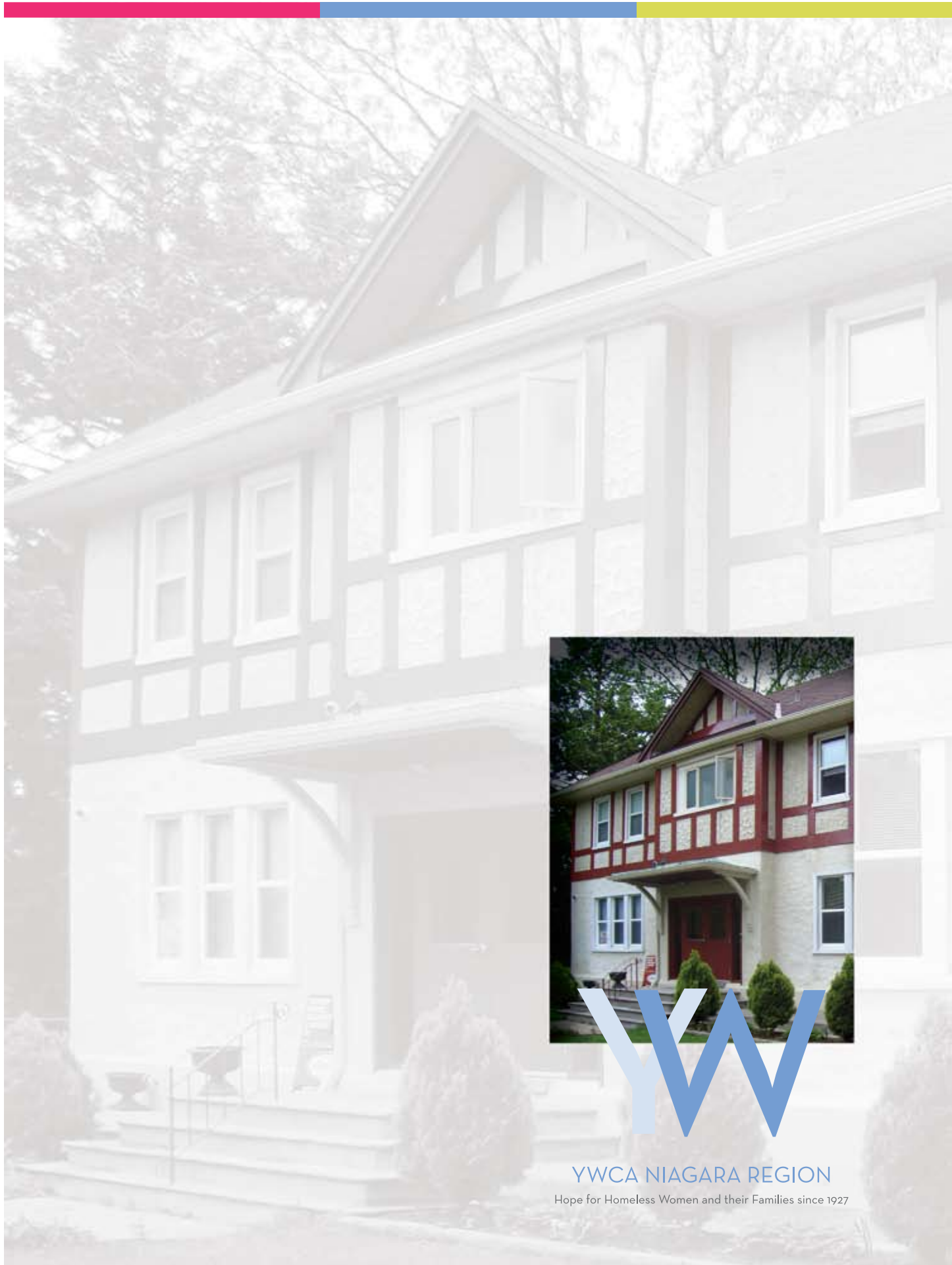
IT TAKES A VILLAGE. The work we do is complex and multi-faceted. We rely heavily on the financial, in-kind donation and the referrals of our Community Funders and Partners as we help the women and their families who utilize our services. It is through this support we are able to continue to provide shelter and meals to homeless women and their families, advocacy for their welfare, a better life for teen girls, solutions to end poverty and support to women, families, youth and children as they transition into stable housing. We are truly grateful for this support.

FUNDERS

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
City of Niagara Falls
City of St. Catharines
Family and Children's Services
Homelessness Partnership Strategy
Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities
Niagara Regional Housing
Ontario Trillium
Regional Municipality of Niagara Social Services
Service Canada
United Way of Niagara Falls
United Way of St. Catharines & District

PARTNERS

AIDS Niagara
Bethlehem Place
Boys and Girls Club of Niagara Falls
Brock University
CARSA
Canadian Auto Workers Local 199
Community Care of St. Catharines & Thorold
Costco
Design for a New Tomorrow
Distress Centre
Gateway/Canadian Mental Health Association
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Hope Centre
Housing Help Centre, St. Catharines
Mark's No Frills
Niagara College
Out of the Cold Program
Project Share/Housing Help Centre
RAFT (St. Catharines)
Regional Sexual Assault Centre
Salvation Army
Starbucks, Niagara
Start Me Up
W.A.R.M.
Withdrawal Management Program (Detox)
Women's Place of South Niagara
Women's Place, St. Catharines & North Niagara



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