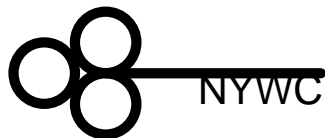


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# KEY NOTES



## North York Women's Centre: Opening Doors for Women

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### Our Annual General Meeting

The NYWC held its Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, September 27, 2005.

This year we were delighted – and honoured – to have Tonika Morgan as our guest speaker. Tonika is a powerful young woman dedicated to making change. A former homeless youth, Tonika was recently selected as the sole guardian of the Women's Global Charter for Humanity in Canada. She also received the 2005 YWCA Young Woman of Distinction Award and was recognized as Flare Magazine's Volunteer of the Year. Tonika engaged us and inspired us – with her story, her courage and her positive outlook for the future.

As for the business part of the meeting, we welcomed Trisha Cipriani and Trish Thomas to the Board of Directors, and said goodbye to Sheryl Brodey, who is at the end of her second three-year term. Co-chair, Elske de Visch Eybergen, reported on some of the successes the NYWC has celebrated and spoke about the renewed energy with which the organization is embarking on a strategic planning process.

And, of course, there was an opportunity to thank our many dedicated volunteers with a hug and a small gift and to honour, especially, our Volunteer of

the Year, Mulu Haddis. Ling He spoke eloquently about her experience as an NYWC volunteer, moving many to comment on how proud they were to be involved with the NYWC community.

### Strategic Planning Update

Many of you know that the NYWC embarked on a strategic planning process in the fall. Under the leadership of Valerie Hyman, the NYWC has been holding stakeholder consultations with current and former board members, volunteers, staff, program participants, funders and partner agencies.

A report on the consultations is in the works and will be presented in time for our January strategic planning workshop. This workshop will identify the NYWC's strategic directions and priorities for the next 3-5 years.

If you want to learn more about the NYWC's strategic planning process, please contact our executive director, Iris Fabbro.

My name is Melanie Schranz and I am a placement student at the North York Women's Centre. I am a third year student at the University of Guelph-Humber and this is my second placement. I have enjoyed my time here greatly and feel that it has prepared me for working in the social work field. My major role here is to answer the phones and help women in crisis register for appropriate programs and connect them to resources. I also perform administrative tasks such as photocopying and developing program intake summaries. I have also had the opportunity to run two programs here. I am very thankful for being given those opportunities to develop my skills in implementing and running programs.

I worked cooperatively with another facilitator named Shabnum, to design and run an anger management group, called 'Anger and You'. We planned many activities together that helped the women understand and manage their anger. I feel that our anger management group went very well and I became very close with all the women. I was so proud of all their progress and am very pleased that I had the chance to work with these women. Not only did the women grow from the experience, I feel I did as well.

After that group ended I had the opportunity to plan and design another group called 'Building Self-Esteem'. I was able to independently design and develop the agenda for the seven-week group. I planned many thought provoking activities that the women found relevant and helpful. I co-facilitated the group with another facilitator named Linda, who supported me during the sessions, and helped answer the women's questions. We are currently in the fifth session of the group and already I see the women's progress and growth. I feel that these opportunities have developed my skills in leadership and working with groups. I have learned a lot from the insights and strengths of the women in both of the groups.

When starting in September as a placement student at the North York Women's Centre, I was hesitant. I assumed that like many other women's organizations in Toronto, the NYWC would be spouting the classic jargon of the Women's Movement, but not acting on it. Since then, however, I have had many exciting experiences and learned a lot at the NYWC. I have been involved in co-facilitating groups for my first time, done facilitator and program planning, as well as worked with the Centre's volunteer and agency policies. What has struck me the most as a placement student has been the Centre's members, board, employees, and clients – the women at the heart of the North York Women's Centre. Never in my life, or my schooling as a Social Work student, have I encounter such powerful and resilient women. These women reflect what exactly was/is the Women's Movement.

Women helping women to me is what the North York Women's Centre is all about. Within the office, our teamwork has been integral in keeping the day-to-day operations of the Centre running. The work and cooperation of the Board and our various Committees have been constantly enriching the programs and services of the North York Women's Centre. The Centre's many group members have brought their unique experiences and knowledge each week, helping each other under the direction of our amazing facilitators. Even the women who call into the office for information have been integral to the North York Women's Centre – their stories and strength have truly touched me.

Although I have learned about the history of the Women's Movement at school, I have never really seen its effects in society of bringing women together. Instead, I have seen women backstabbing each other and stepping over each other to get to the top; overall, working women against women. Due to my experience at the North York Women's Centre, I have been shown that there is still hope. That even in a small, under-funded, under-staffed agency, women are able to come together in sisterhood. Every day, the North York Women's Centre embodies the spirit of the Women's Movement and emphasizes its key principle of women helping women.

By Maribeth Christensen

My name is Cinzia Scacchi. I am a third year student at the University of Guelph-Humber in the Family and Community Social Services program. I began my field placement at the North York Women's Centre in September. I have greatly enjoyed my field placement at the NYWC. Co-facilitating programs at the NYWC has allowed me to apply many of the concepts and skills that I have learned at the University of Guelph-Humber.

At the NYWC, I had been given the opportunity to run a number of groups. "Breaking Free I" was the first group that I co-facilitated with Mary Benedetto at the North York Women's Centre. Session topics included emotions, distorted thinking, anxiety, phobias and panic. "Breaking Free II" was the second group that I co-facilitated with Roz Giller at the North York Women's Centre. Session topics included anger, anxiety and self-esteem. It was interesting to see the women develop such strong relationships with each other. I learned so much from Mary and Roz about how to successfully run a group for women.

In addition, I co-facilitated the Youth Theatre Project that was held at Flemingdon Park Resource Centre. The Youth Theatre Project meets every Thursday and Friday after school. The participants attended two workshops in order to develop ideas for the script. In the first workshop, a representative from Planned Parenthood discussed safe sex practices. The second workshop was lead by a Toronto police officer that discussed the consequences of abuse. With approximately 10 to 12 youth from the Fairview Mall, Flemingdon Park, Don Mills Centre and Thorncliffe Park areas, we have successfully developed a script with the participants demonstrating what it means to have a healthy dating relationship. Currently, the participants are rehearsing their lines, creating props and costumes. Both workshops and group sessions were videotaped, which will be on a DVD along with the final performance. Each participant will receive a copy of the DVD. Performances should be held in January.

Overall, my experience at the NYWC has been wonderful. I am looking forward to running more groups in the New Year.

## Community News

Former staffer and placement student, Celia Joseph, left the NYWC in September. We would all like to thank Celia for her contribution and wish her the best in whatever the future has in store.

Congratulations to Sheryl Brodey, who recently received an Ontario Volunteer Service Award for ten years of volunteer work at the NYWC. Although she has left the board of directors, after completing her second three-year term, she has agreed to work with the Board in developing its strategic plan and will continue as a volunteer in other roles.

We are saddened that Mulu Haddis is leaving the NYWC after 1½ years as an especially dedicated and reliable volunteer. Mulu has always made herself available to us when we've needed her and we thank her immensely. We will miss her soft-spoken manner, particularly at the legal clinic and outreach events.

We are also sad to see Allie Gilmour leave the NYWC. Allie joined the NYWC as a telephone volunteer in September 2003 and began co-facilitating the *Sharing & Caring* group shortly thereafter. Thank you, Allie, for your commitment and dedication.

Congratulations to long time NYWC supporter and former board chair, Barb Fallon, on the birth of her second child, Ella Helene. Ella weighed in at a healthy 8 lbs, 14 oz after an hour and a half labour.

Congratulations also go to former staffer and volunteer, Michelle Lavergne, who is expecting her second child in May. Keep us posted, Michelle.

# Thank You To Our Supporters

We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their recent donations to the North York Women's Centre.

## **\$500 and over**

The Anglican Church of St. Philip the Apostle

## **\$200 and over**

Sue Griggs  
Stychin Tyme

## **\$100 and over**

Louis Chu  
Wendy Fraser  
Francine Morissette  
Pam Weir  
Marisa Zanini

## **To \$99**

Karen Edson  
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Helen Hansen  
Nina Herman  
Jean Hyndman  
Yunjo Lee  
Carmen Mancini  
Rachel Michaud  
Anne Pilgrim  
Melissa Wong  
Chunrong Zhao

An extra special thanks goes to Direct Energy and specifically Carmen Mancini, Louis Chu and Greg Proud, for furnishing the NYWC with up-to-date computers and office equipment.

We would also like to thank the following businesses or people who donated items for our silent auction held at our Annual General Meeting.

Annick Press  
Buddies in Bad Times Theatre  
Famous Players  
Hudson's Bay Company  
Il Fornello  
Louis Chu  
Mysteriously Yours ... Dinner Theatre  
Nikhil Thakker  
Pam Weir  
Paramount Canada's Wonderland  
Peter Smilevski  
Second City  
Shoppers Drug Mart  
Suzanne Berton  
Tarragon Theatre  
The Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre Centre  
The Keg  
Tim Hortons  
Toronto Maple Leafs  
Warner Bros.  
Wild Water Kingdom  
Winners  
Yuk Yuk's

*Thanks to all those who specifically designated the North York Women's Centre to receive their workplace United Way donation. Please remember that if you are making a donation to the United Way through your employer, you can specify on the back of the form that you would like your donation to go to the North York Women's Resource Centre. Our charitable registration number is 14026 3013 RR0001.*