

# CONTACT SPRING/SUMMER 2021



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## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

In March, we marked one year since the pandemic was declared. In many ways, this anniversary is a grim one. However, I can't help but feel proud when I reflect on all we have accomplished during this difficult time and that we've managed to stay creative and focused on the future.

Communicating and advocating are important to advancing our vision of women's equality. In March, we partnered with internationally-acclaimed muralist, Ola Volo, on the Wall for Women, a mural that aims to raise awareness on intimate partner violence. You can learn more about this powerful and beautiful project on pages 4 and 5.

Our vision includes a world free from oppression against any person on the basis of their sex or gender identity. We are also in full support of the work to end discrimination against Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. We know that this commitment to fighting racism and systems of oppression requires a close look at our own structures and systems. Our internal work to support diversity, equity and inclusion, and to keep pace with the blossoming of awareness and action in our wider community, has been both challenging and exciting. You can read more about our journey on page 9.

Next year, we will celebrate 125 years of serving our community. We are building up to this milestone by completing the Next 125, a five-year campaign with a goal to raise \$12.5M. We embarked on this campaign to both celebrate how far we have come, and to help secure our work for the century ahead. I can't wait to tell you more about our plans to salute this milestone anniversary in the coming months.

No matter what comes our way, we will continue to do what we know works – offer employment services, food programs, support groups, violence prevention services and youth programs. We will continue to build housing and advocate for affordable child care. And we will continue to build partnerships and listen to our community so that our work is guided by the people we serve.

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**No matter what comes our way, we will continue to do what we know works.**



As always, thank you for stepping up to support the YWCA over the last year. We know you are beside us as we work towards creating a more just and equitable society.

*Deb Bryant*

Deb Bryant, CEO  
YWCA Metro Vancouver

# YWCA HOUSING NEWS

## YWCA Housing Updates

With the housing market reaching seemingly impossible heights, affordable homes for women and children across the region are desperately needed. The out-of-reach housing market coupled with the pandemic has intensified poverty, food insecurity and intimate partner violence, especially for women and single mothers.

To fill the gap in affordable housing and to support women during this combined crisis, YWCA Metro Vancouver continues to build homes for women and their children. We know that housing is critical for safety and financial stability, and that we can only reach gender equality when everyone is safely housed.

### Richmond Housing No. 3 Road: Urgent Funding Needed

The YWCA's newest housing community is under construction in Richmond, in partnership with Keltic Development. This housing at 6340 No. 3 Road includes many firsts for us: the first homes we are building in Richmond and our first housing for women aged 55+. This housing community will also support single women and women with children who have experienced violence.

The 27 units are progressing quickly, and we urgently need to raise the final \$1.7 million of our \$5.9 million goal by November 2021. We are actively seeking funders to support this important project.

### May Brown Place - Welcoming New Residents

We recently opened the doors to YWCA May Brown Place in North Vancouver, completing a project we have long been excited about. In March, 14 families led by single mothers moved in and began to call this beautifully finished building "home."

We are grateful for our partnerships with the Province of BC – BC Housing, the City of North Vancouver Chard Development Ltd and many generous donors in making this vision a reality. When it is safe, we will be thrilled to have an official opening.



*May Brown Place - building's outdoor patio*



*May Brown Place - building's indoor amenity room*



*May Brown Place - kitchen in one of the units*

*If you or someone you know is interested in helping make the YWCA's newest housing community a reality, please contact Brenda Ulmer at [bulmer@ywcavan.org](mailto:bulmer@ywcavan.org) | 604 290 5896 or Bobbi Sarai at [bsarai@ywcavan.org](mailto:bsarai@ywcavan.org) | 604 895 5780.*

# THE WALL FOR WOMEN

In an effort to raise funds and awareness about violence against women, YWCA Metro Vancouver and Rethink Communications partnered with renowned artist and illustrator, Ola Volo, to create a mural that brings to life the reality that violence hides in plain sight.

The mural, titled the Wall for Women, depicts a queen rising with newfound strength. It is meant to be a symbol of hope for women and aims to shine light on the barriers that women experiencing violence face.

The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to a 20-30% rise in domestic violence in some locations across Canada. The need for safe, affordable housing, violence prevention services and universal child care is critical.

Hidden within the stunning artwork are five phone-activated statistics that give anyone who

takes a photo of the mural the chance to learn more and donate.

YWCA program participants were invited to help paint, and many onlookers stopped to admire Ola at work and to watch the mural come to life. The end result is a powerful statement.

“I wanted the woman in this artwork to claim her confidence and her power back by taking up space,” said Ola. “She isn’t small or fading into the background. She’s front and centre, and commands the attention she deserves – even in the busy streets of downtown Vancouver.”

The 42-foot mural is located next to Burrard Skytrain Station, at the corner of Burrard Street and Melville Avenue. We invite you to visit this impactful public artwork. You can take action by learning about violence against women and donating to the YWCA.



Ola Volo is a well-known Canadian mural artist and illustrator from Kazakhstan with a distinctive style drawn from folklore, multiculturalism and identity. Her work is internationally recognized for its inventiveness and for the unique stories she

tells through her creations. Every character is full of spirited personality and inhabits a dynamic environment. Ola creates complex narratives that acknowledge the subtleties of human nature while celebrating the little surprises of everyday life.

In the Wall for Women, Ola has captured the positive and empowering nature of women rising and coming together to end gender-based violence. The use of fire symbolizes power, bravery and drive, while her eyes are on alert as she looks out for herself and her fragile bird. The hearts reflect relationships, acknowledging her past. The stars, seen on her crown and in the universe in her hair, symbolize looking ahead, having faith and moving forward.





YWCA Wall for Women - 855 Burrard St., Vancouver

We are extremely grateful to Rethink and Ola Volo for partnering with the YWCA on this project, and to the many generous supporters who helped fund this interactive and spectacular initiative.

For more information or to support our programming for women impacted by violence, contact Amy Juschka at [ajuschka@ywcavan.org](mailto:ajuschka@ywcavan.org) | 604 895 5810.



## TZU CHI VOLUNTEERS DELIVER LOVE AND CARE

Every year, YWCA Metro Vancouver staff and volunteers look forward to seeing a white van pull up to 533 East Hastings in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Next, a group of crisply uniformed volunteers efficiently unload boxes of backpacks filled with school supplies and brand-new clothing for the women and children we serve at Crabtree Corner.

Who is this delivering joy to families? They are volunteers with the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation of Canada. And they have been coming to Crabtree Corner and supporting the centre's programs and services for the last eight years.

In 1966, Dharma Master Cheng Yen established the Tzu Chi Foundation to bring the essence of Buddhism into practice. Today Tzu Chi provides aid to 69 countries. The shared goal of Tzu Chi volunteers is to cultivate sincerity, integrity, faith and honesty within, while exercising kindness, compassion, joy and selflessness to humanity through concrete actions. Transcending the bounds of race, nationality, language and religion, they serve the world under the notion that "when others are hurting, we feel their pain; when others suffer, we feel their sorrow."

Jennifer Peng is Head of Public Relations with Tzu Chi in Vancouver. She began volunteering in 2008 because she admired Master Cheng Yen's contributions to the world. Tzu Chi gives Jennifer the opportunity to help others and share in its "Four Ingredient Soup," which includes contentment, thanks-giving, understanding and tolerance.

You don't need to be a Buddhist, to speak Mandarin or be a vegetarian to volunteer with Tzu Chi. You just need to give back with love and care.

In addition to supply-filled backpacks, Tzu Chi has also generously funded the Crabtree Corner Saturday Family Activity program, as well as food programs during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are incredibly grateful to Tzu Chi Foundation's volunteers for their kindness, warmth and commitment.

*If you would like to support families at YWCA Crabtree Corner, please contact Vanessa Wellington-Clark at [vwellington@ywcavan.org](mailto:vwellington@ywcavan.org) | 604 895 5826.*



*Tzu Chi volunteers delivering backpacks at YWCA Crabtree Corner*



# THE PENDER Y: PART OF OUR HISTORY AND OUR FUTURE

In 2022, YWCA Metro Vancouver will turn 125. To mark this exciting event, The Next 125 campaign is mobilizing the community and raising \$12.5M for critical YWCA programs to ensure our work continues.

This milestone is an opportunity to focus on the future, and to reflect on our history. Our work covers a vast terrain, but it has always been rooted in community. And our approach has always been to partner with the people we serve to address unmet needs.

In 1938, the YWCA established a community centre in Chinatown to support members of the local Chinese community, many of whom faced racism and barriers to equal opportunity.

During the war years, the community centre offered leadership training groups, service clubs and youth programs. In 1952, it officially became The Pender Y, and moved to a new site to accommodate expanding programs and membership. In the 1950s and 60s, The Pender Y was a popular gathering place for youth and adults alike. It remained open until 1977, at which time there were more than 50 organizations actively working in the neighbourhood.

The Pender Y succeeded because of volunteers and families who generously gave their time and support. We are grateful to each of them and look forward to sharing some of their stories in 2022.

More than 50 years later, the YWCA still operates near The Pender Y's location. Our safe, affordable housing at YWCA Cause We Care House is located above the Strathcona library; and YWCA Crabtree Corner Community Resource Centre on Hastings Street offers transitional housing, early learning and child care, food programs and a range of supportive programs for seniors and families.

*You can be part of the YWCA's future and support priority projects like new housing in Richmond. Consider joining The Next 125 as an Urgent Response Partner with a gift of \$25,000 or more, pledged over up to five years. To learn more, contact Brenda Ulmer at [bulmer@ywcavan.org](mailto:bulmer@ywcavan.org) | 604 895 5764.*

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**I have supported the YWCA with charitable donations at various times during the last 50 years. The YWCA is a bedrock of the community, providing so many necessary programs and support services, and that is why I am increasing our commitment.**

*-Glenna Urbshadt & Katie Trydal, mother and daughter*

**I found the YWCA in the UK at age 16 when I needed a safe and affordable place to live. It's been in my life in various ways over half a century. I appreciate the values of health and wellbeing, personal and career development, accessibility, safety, care and support. I am proud and honoured to be a part of the YWCA's legacy.**

*- Anne Dobbie*



*The Pender Y in the 1950s*



## IN MOTION & MOMENTUM+

YWCA Metro Vancouver recently launched an exciting new employment program, developed and funded by the Canadian Career Development Foundation. In Motion and Momentum+ is a research program running in locations across the country with 25 community partner agencies and up to 500 participants taking part.

In Motion & Momentum+ helps participants tap into their innate potential and create the life they want through goal setting, action planning and building and extending their skills, strengths and supports.

The program was created for individuals who are feeling stuck or like they have been moving in a direction that is not right for them. The format helps participants recognize their inherent strengths, resilience and potential, and to take steps to live the life they want.

“In Motion and Momentum+ feels like being at a pep rally, but it’s your life you’re cheering on,” said Kent, a program participant. “It let me push myself into creating again, something I never felt I had time to do while raising my young family. Now I have a team to share my victories with, and strategies to keep the momentum going. I have a practical timeline for where I want to be, and the skills to troubleshoot what is going wrong when I stumble. I know how to check in with myself and evaluate how I’m doing. And

it's working! I'm making more art than I have in years."

The 13-week session began in February and is being delivered online to 10 participants in three modules that focus on recognizing skills and strengths, building a vision for the future and contributing to the community in a meaningful way. To complete the final module, participants created fairy houses with fortunes and quotes for people to find, and installed them in different neighbourhoods around Metro Vancouver. They geocached the project and created a hashtag to help spread the word.

The intensive program runs for six hours a day, and asks participant to dig deep into their wishes and dreams. The results so far have been inspiring.

"It's been so exciting to see the participants work together by sharing their experiences and grow in confidence," said Helen Kim, facilitator of In Motion & Momentum+. "This is a great opportunity for anyone who knows that they want more out of life but are not quite sure what steps to take."

*The next program starts in September, we encourage those interested to register for an online intake session. Contact Helen Kim at [hkim@ywcavan.org](mailto:hkim@ywcavan.org) | 604 209 0275 for more information.*



*As part of their community project, participants installed fairy houses with fortunes and quotes for people to find in different neighbourhoods around Metro Vancouver.*



# DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION AT THE YWCA

We learn again and again that we are stronger when we work together and strive for a common goal. At the YWCA, that goal is to achieve women's equality.

This includes the full realization of equality for women, girls, Two-Spirit and gender-diverse people. As an equity-seeking organization, we also stand in solidarity with Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

We recognize that solidarity requires an examination of the structures and systems within which we work, that privilege some while oppressing others. This is often uncomfortable work, but it is the only way to make meaningful progress.

To move this work forward for our organization and across program and service delivery, the YWCA has three staff committees: truth and reconciliation, gender inclusion and racial equity. We have also retained Bakau Consulting, led by Cicely Blain, to support our diversity, equity and inclusion journey.

The truth and reconciliation committee examines how the YWCA can raise our voice as an ally alongside Indigenous leaders and Indigenous women and girls in their pursuit of the full realization of substantive equality. This group supports truth and reconciliation training for employees, created with Reciprocal Consulting, who deliver the program to all YWCA staff.

This training provides an opportunity to learn more about Canada's colonial history and about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) work in Canada. We have integrated calls to action from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, as well as calls to action from the TRC across the organization and annually measure our progress.

The gender inclusion committee aims to better support trans, Two-Spirit, non-binary, gender diverse and LGBTQ2S+ people. The committee has audited organizational structures and practices and is making recommendations to support gender inclusion. They are providing

staff training to foster dialogue and promote understanding of gender diversity.

The racial equity committee works across the YWCA to create a safe, inclusive, informed and welcoming organization for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. They are also making recommendations, helping guide our work and increase training inside the YWCA. This group recently organized Unconscious Bias training for staff and shared important resources for Black History Month.

*For more information on our diversity, equity and inclusion work, please contact Michelle Sing at [msing@ywcavan.org](mailto:msing@ywcavan.org) | 604 895 5753.*



*Colourful Hands mural by Annabelle Wombacher, Jared Mar, Sierra Ratcliff and Benjamin Cahoon*

# OPENING DOORS



*Open doorway posters placed across Metro Vancouver*

In a time where COVID-19 has closed doors to businesses, workplaces, social gatherings and our everyday lives, we partnered with Vancouver creative agency Rethink Communications on a campaign to remind people that the doors to our services are still very much open for those who need them.

Opening Doors involved a series of optical illusion posters put up across Metro Vancouver. These called for passersby to donate to the YWCA and help open doors to violence prevention and legal supports, housing and child care.

The posters created the illusion of an open doorway to YWCA services, as well as a QR code that made it easy for the public to donate directly to the organization.

While the need for services is critical, the YWCA has experienced major financial losses due to the pandemic.

“Crises can deepen inequality and YWCA services like housing, child care and violence

prevention programs provide crucial support and community-building opportunities for women,” said Amy Juschka, YWCA Director of Communications and Advocacy. “Our Hotel and Health + Fitness Centre, which help fund YWCA community programs, have been hit hard by the pandemic. We hope this campaign raises awareness and generates donations to help us continue our work.”

The campaign was made possible by long-time YWCA Metro Vancouver supporter Coast Capital Savings.

Maureen Young, Coast Capital Savings Director of Community Leadership, said: “We continue to be inspired by the work that the YWCA does to support women and youth across Metro Vancouver and were pleased to be able to support with this initiative that raises awareness of their vital programming.”

*To learn more about YWCA programs or to make a donation, contact Vanessa Wellington-Clarke at [vwellington@ywcavan.org](mailto:vwellington@ywcavan.org) | 604 895 5826.*



# DANCE! DANCE! DANCE!

YWCA Project Y, a collective of next-generation change makers, in partnership with the YWCA Health + Fitness Centre, hosted the first virtual Y Dance-A-Thon presented by Pacific Blue Cross on February 3, 2021.

The past year has seen many of us miss out group fitness and fun, so we decided to put on an event to get people connected and moving together. What better way to relieve stress and have fun than dancing?

Some of Canada's top DJs, special guests and YWCA Health + Fitness instructors led participants through five hours of dancing. More than 250 people tuned in from home with their children, colleagues and pets. They wore costumes, decorated their kitchens and hosted Zoom parties with friends to shake off the winter blues.

Fitness instructor Jennica Fulton put us through our paces with Zumba, followed by Buti Yoga with Sydney Mayer and dynamic dance with Marissa Lee. Natasha Gorrie made Hip Hop look easy and Rohan D'Silva led us through some classic Bollywood moves. Johanna Ward seamlessly hosted the event and then got

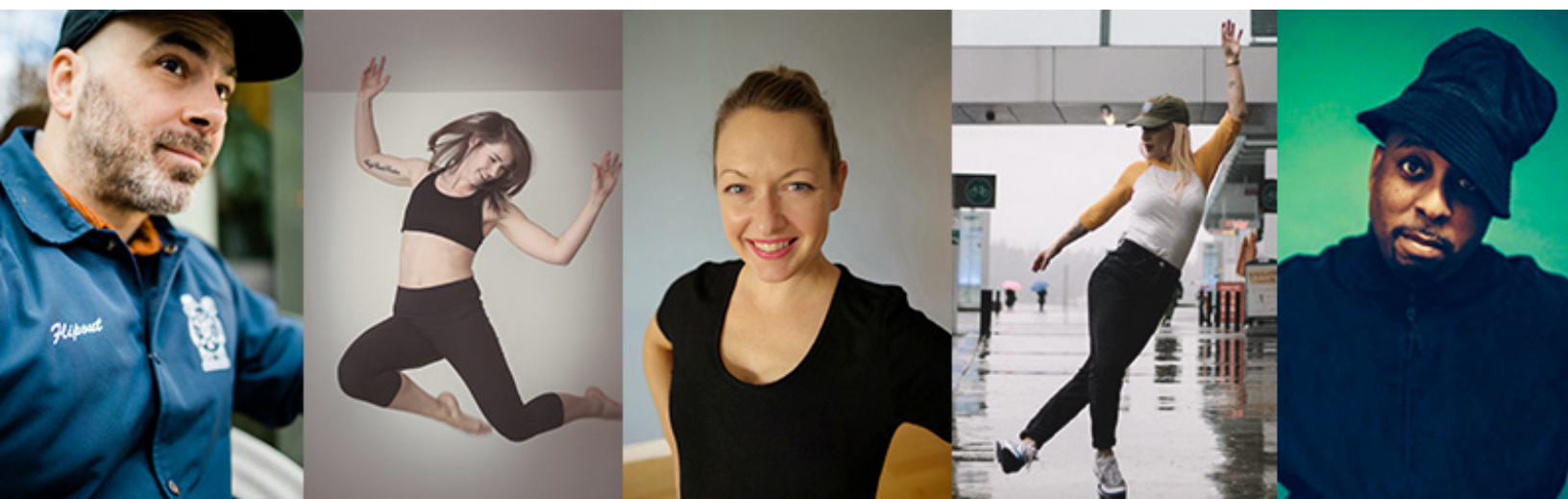
our hearts pumping with DanceFit!, before Jill Metheral led us through a cool down. The sessions were interspersed with freestyle tunes from DJ Baron S, DJ Flipout and DJ Agile.

Thanks to generous sponsors, fundraisers and donors, we raised \$57,033! More than 70 participants set up fundraising pages to help spread the word and raise funds. There was also a little healthy competition with Pacific Blue Cross providing prizes for our top fundraisers. This was Project Y's first peer-to-peer fundraiser, and to say the event was a success is an understatement.

We are grateful for the community's overwhelming support, especially during a year that has brought unique challenges for us all.

Funds raised ensure that families across Metro Vancouver can connect with the resources they need to be safe, healthy and move towards their goals and dreams.

*If you would like to fundraise for the YWCA through an event, contact Vanessa Wellington-Clarke at [vwellington@ywcavan.org](mailto:vwellington@ywcavan.org) | 604 895 5826.*



*Y Dance volunteer DJs and instructors: DJ Flipout, Jennica Fulton, Johanna Ward, Natasha Gorrie and DJ Agile*

# STRETCH YOUR WAY TO HEALTH



YWCA Health + Fitness manager and instructor, Jill Methetal, demonstrates the “Figure 4” stretching pose

Want to feel good instantly? Stretch!

Stretching is an important component of exercise – it brings blood flow to muscles, joints and ligaments and helps with range of motion and flexibility.

Many of us are spending hours sitting every day, which has negative effects on the body, especially on the hip structure. Lots of people are also reporting increased feelings of anxiety and depression. Self-care is important for good physical and mental health, and a daily stretching routine can help promote optimal wellness.

Stretching activates the parasympathetic nervous system and promotes relaxation and calmness. Research finds stretching will also help you sleep better.

**Dynamic stretching** helps promote gains in flexibility and prepares you for sport or activity. Dynamic stretching is energizing and perfect to do throughout the day after you’ve been sitting for extended periods of time.

Try these:

**Yes, No, Maybe** – nod your head, turn it side to side and raise and lower your shoulders

**Leg Swings** – stand beside a chair with one hand

on it for balance, gently swing your outside leg forward and back 4 times, change directions and swing the other leg. Then face the chair with both hands on it, swing one leg side to side 4 times, repeat with the other leg

**Static stretching** is the most common and a great way to unwind. Here you take a muscle to a maximal point and hold for 30 seconds (4-5 breaths). Allow the muscle to relax and lengthen while breathing slowly. Static stretching is especially great before bedtime.

Try this:

**Figure 4** – lay on your back, cross your right ankle over your left knee. Slowly bring your left knee towards your chest. Hold your thigh and gently pull your leg closer until you feel the stretch in your right glute and hip. Hold, release and repeat with the other leg.

When taking time to stretch, focus on your breath to connect to and listen to your body. Keep in mind that the body moves in three planes of motion. Flex and extend, move limbs to the side and rotate too!

*To join the Health + Fitness Centre for stretching and other low-intensity fitness classes, contact [memberservices@ywcavan.org](mailto:memberservices@ywcavan.org) | 604 895 5777.*



# A LIFELONG CONNECTION

Kimberley's connection to the YWCA began when she was a shy 13-year-old who was forced to sign up as a camp counsellor-in-training for a summer day program in Saskatchewan. Grateful for the experience that slowly pushed her out of her shell, she spent several summers engaged in youth programs at her local YWCA.

It wasn't until she moved to Bowen Island in 2006 that Kimberley crossed paths with the YWCA again, a stone's throw from her downtown office on Dunsmuir Street. This time, with a little less trepidation, she joined as a volunteer spin class instructor at the YWCA Health + Fitness Centre.

"It was quickly apparent to me how progressive YWCA Metro Vancouver is, with a hand in everything from the state-of-the-art Health + Fitness Centre, to the Hotel, to the many housing communities in the Metro Vancouver area.

It was a no-brainer for me to commit to the Inner Circle giving program, and it felt good knowing I was a part of the constant progress the YWCA

makes in achieving its goals for bettering the lives of women and children."

Though she relocated to Nelson, BC in late 2008 after the birth of her son, Kimberley was not ready to sever her relationship with the YWCA.

"As a high school teacher and single parent of a teenage son, my commitment to the values of the YWCA is as strong as ever. That's why this year, in re-writing my will, I have decided to include a legacy gift. I know my contribution will support the continued success of the YWCA's many programs and will also serve to instill these shared values in my son."

We are grateful to Kimberley's commitment to our work, and to all of the donors who will keep the YWCA thriving into the future.

*If you would like to leave a legacy gift in your will or learn more about the Legacy Circle, contact JoAnne Fahr at [jfahr@ywcavan.org](mailto:jfahr@ywcavan.org) | 604 895 5829 | or Arden Sutherland at [ardensutherland@ywcavan.org](mailto:ardensutherland@ywcavan.org) | 604 895 5859.*



*Kimberley and her son*

# WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARDS

Join us for the 2021 Women of Distinction Awards virtual event and celebrate the women and businesses that transform our communities.

June 7, 2021 | 6:30pm

Purchase your tickets today at [ywcavan.org/wod](http://ywcavan.org/wod)

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## YWCA VISION

To achieve women's\* equality.

\*This includes the full realization of equality for women, girls, Two-Spirit and gender diverse people.



## YWCA MISSION

To touch lives and help build brighter futures for women and their families through advocacy and integrated services that foster economic independence, wellness and equal opportunities.

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