



2021

ANNUAL REPORT



**WOMEN'S
CENTRE
OF CALGARY**

womenscentrecalgary.org

OUR VISION

To be every woman's place for support, connections and community.

OUR MISSION

Women supporting communities, communities supporting women.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | 4 |
| PROGRAMS AND SERVICES | 5 |
| YEAR IN REVIEW | 6 |
| OUTCOMES | 7 |
| 2021 HIGHLIGHTS | 8 |
| WCC VOLUNTEERS | 10 |
| PRACTICUM STUDENTS | 12 |
| BOARD OF DIRECTORS | 12 |
| WCC DONORS | 13 |
| WCC COMMUNITY DONORS & FUNDERS | 19 |
| WCC STAFF | 21 |
| WCC STORIES | 22 |
| APPENDIX | 23 |

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When I reflect on 2021, the year was all about transitions—daily, weekly, and monthly transitions through the pandemic and, of course, the transition to a new Executive Director.

My first day at the Centre was also the first day the Centre re-opened after our short and only closure. Seeing everyone reunite was a joyful moment and one I felt privileged to experience. After that, I was immersed in the Women's Centre's culture of trust, empathy, and reciprocity. An environment where women come first and where the ebbs and flows of life are fully embraced, something you find only in a few places.

It is hard to talk about 2021 without mentioning the pandemic. It is no secret that the pandemic has affected women in unfathomable ways. Keeping our doors open

for most of the year meant women always had a place to connect. We heard from women how important it was that we were open, even if we could not serve coffee or treats or do things the way they were always done. Every day was a new day with new challenges but also opportunities. The staff and volunteers worked tirelessly to re-create, pivot, and try new things to continue the work, impacting women's lives.

One of the things I am most proud of in the past year is that we had 406 volunteers give their time to the Women's Centre despite the pandemic! From basement organizers to facilitators, artists, peer support and toy room volunteers, each woman made this place what it is—a community that cares for each other. Whether staff are present or not, volunteers keep the Centre running and ensure that women always get a warm welcome and a place to belong.

I hope you enjoy reading about some of the beautiful experiences and achievements of 2021 in this report. Above all, we hope to see you back at the Centre to have an in-person tea and chat!

"The Women's Centre is a very welcoming place. I feel connected and supported and that everyone is accepted here."

"It looks like women supporting women no matter what, we're all different but I feel like we need to support each other more often these days."



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

GET ASSISTANCE

The Women's Centre recognizes that meeting **basic needs** is the component of citizens' healthy participation in society. The Women's Centre assists women to meet their own and their family's basic needs by providing **emergency food, personal care items, basic needs referrals, access to technology and bus tickets**. We also run **weekly Legal Advice clinics** and do **safety planning** with women experiencing abuse.

CONNECT WITH OTHERS

The Women's Centre recognizes that providing **social inclusion** needs helps maintain healthy citizens, families and communities in society. The Women's Centre works within a **Community Capacity Building Peer Model** in all of our programs and activities. The Women's Centre provides space and opportunities for women to associate and support each other and develop a sense of belonging and community. This is the foundation of our work.

All of our programs are free. Most have no criteria or intake and are available on a walk in basis without an appointment. We offer non-judgmental peer support, free workshops and groups on a wide range of topics, volunteer opportunities and a safe place for women to gather.

WORK FOR CHANGE

The Women's Centre not only works towards meeting the individual needs of women in Calgary, it also **takes proactive steps to ensure women's voices are present in the dialogue around various social, political and economic issues**. We strive to give all women opportunities to get involved in social justice issues and have a voice in public policy. The Women's Centre also works in networks and coalitions to address both service needs and women's and diversity issues.

YEAR IN REVIEW



**7,327 INDIVIDUAL WOMEN
WERE ASSISTED**



**51,269 CONTACTS WERE
MADE BY WOMEN**



**4,529 GIFTS PROVIDED TO
WOMEN AND CHILDREN**



**132 GIRLS PARTICIPATED IN
GIRLS PROGRAMS**



**406 VOLUNTEERS PROVIDED
SUPPORT OVER 13,927 HOURS**



**2,512 WOMEN PARTICIPATED
IN LEARNING PROGRAMS AND
GROUPS**



"I want to thank you for all opportunities that the Women's Centre is providing. I really appreciate all that the Women's Centre has been doing for me!"

OUTCOMES

97% of women felt that they were treated with respect when they participated (got assistance, volunteered, joined a workshop/event) at the Women's Centre

87% of women were able to get the support they needed, when they needed it, at the Women's Centre

97% of women indicate that their safety needs were met when they participated at the Women's Centre by phone, online, or in-person

88% of women learned something they needed to know through the Women's Centre

90% of women feel a sense of belonging at the Women's Centre

80% of women were able to get more involved in their communities through the Women's Centre

2021 HIGHLIGHTS



SUMMER MURAL

Last summer, our garden came alive with the sounds of women laughing, chatting, and creating together as our summer mural came into development. Summer muralists in residence, **Doro Buch and Flora Johnson**, worked with women in our community to bring our garden murals to life and foster a much-needed sense of connectedness after subsequent lockdowns. The mural project was an opportunity to bring people together safely during the pandemic and create something beautiful simultaneously.



Doro Buch is a Calgary-based contemporary visual artist. She blends her curiosity about individuals and society with her passion for painting. Her work touches upon social, political, environmental, and human issues. Her goal is to cultivate creative exchange and curiosity, whether this takes place through community engagement projects, in her art workshops, or in exhibitions.

Flora Johnson is proud of her First Nation Indigenous Heritage. She strongly supports women and showcases their strength and spirituality in her work. In the mural creation process, Flora aimed to include everything women told her they wanted, from animals to colours. Her goal for the mural at the Centre was to create a powerful, calming, happy, and joyful mural.

GENDER PLUS LENS

The Women's Centre produced a two-part video series illustrating what a gender plus lens is and how to incorporate a gender plus lens into policy making and event planning. A Gender Plus Lens is a tool that allows us to put on the right kind of glasses to see the unique challenges faced by women and gender-diverse people.

These videos were made possible through the generosity of [The Calgary Foundation](#) and video host, [Adora Nwofor](#), with video production by [Five Foot Five Video & Creative](#). As we think about creating greater equity in how we work and what we plan we encourage groups to take a look at these videos:

- [1. See our World through a Gender Plus Lens](#)
- [2. Examples of How to Apply a Gender Plus Lens](#)

FEMINIST RECOVERY

In October 2021, we launched a big project funded by the federal government to build an inclusive feminist recovery agenda to inform Alberta's recovery plans. This project focuses on work to advance a feminist recovery agenda that is rooted in the local context and informed by the sustained and meaningful engagement of diverse women with lived experience and on the mobilization of cross-sectoral support for specific asks. Since the project start date, we hosted several caucus conversations that focused on barriers to leadership. Further, we launched into laying the project's foundation through a research paper that will outline the barriers and opportunities for an inclusive and gender-just recovery in Alberta.

ANTI-RACISM AND RECONCILIATION

In September 2021, we embarked on a journey to better understand and centre the experiences of past and present Black, Indigenous, and racialized staff, at the Women's Centre. We learned that for many, the Women's Centre was a positive experience and that for others, it was harmful. Acknowledging and centring these experiences, and holding ourselves accountable for doing better are core to this work. All staff also embarked on a collective journey of reflection, learning, and action. Working with Dr. Gabrielle Lindstrom through a 10-part Intercultural Relational reflection and learning series was one of these actions. This process provided an opportunity for staff to sit with the truths of colonial history and move towards a vision of Reconciliation. Further recommendations were made to the organization that will inform the action plan for 2022. These include implementing recommendations made in previous reports, appropriate resourcing to build anti-racism and Reconciliation strategies and implementation plans, and focusing on building individual and organizational relationships with Indigenous women and communities.



WOMEN'S CENTRE VOLUNTEERS

Thank you new and returning volunteers for the adaptive ways you provided support, connections, and community.

Abigail King
Adele Sieber
Adriana Avalos
Afra Misbah
Aggy King-Smith
Ainara Serrano
Alanna Nazarko
Alex Handley
Alexandra Swan
Alicia Brozny
Alisha Thompson
Allie Laurent
Allison Gaudon
Allison O'Brien
Ally Herauf
Alma Taylor-Forbes
Aman Badesha
Amanda Jacinto
Amy Alexander
Ana Gamboa
Andrea Joyce
Angelika Bersamina
Anna Cameron
Anna Kozicky
Anne Azucena
Anne Brown
Aralee Pereira
Arbish Ahmad
Arushi Shah
Ashley White
Ashmeet Mann
Asma Mohamed
Asthen Bennett
August Zhang
Averlee Sartori
Avril Fisher
Azam Ajili
Banke Adediran
Barb Fuller
Becky Bertwistle

Berna Ilchi
Beryl Onyango
Betsy Hagestedt
Bev Brooks
Bev Unger
Bhanvi Sachdeva
Bonnie Ting
Brailey Skibinsky
Brandy Carey
Breanna Sayles
Brenda Murphy
Brenna Mattiello
Brina Slager
Brittany Chung
Brittney Scott
Bunda Soy
Caillie Mutterback
Calista Wildeman
Camille Allonneau
Cari McLaughlan
Carla Ramos
Carole
Carole Carpot-Lacassagne
Caroline Andrews
Caroline Kalanquin
Carrie
Carrie Blaug
Cassie Hazelwood
Catherine Bartlett
Catherine Fox
Cathy Le
Cathy Lynn
Celeste Raymond
Chantilly Prairie Chicken
Charla Smith
Charlotte Nei Wong
Chelsea Detheridge
Chelsea Kennett
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Christina Cording

Christine Malarchuk
Christine van Hal
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Cindy Dolland
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Corinne Knodel
Courtney Lanouette
Crystal Mackenzie
Cynthia Haider
Damon Bailey
Danelle Watson
Dani U.
Danielle Bridger
Daria (Dasha) Limonova
Debbie Hennessey
Delia Aguirre
Denise Brunson
Denomie Fisher
Diana Cummings
Dima Shafiq
Donna Evans
Dree Kosh
Eden Baxter
Eleanor Cowan
Elise Lavigne
Elizabeth MacGillivraye
Ellen Hamilton
Ellie Merin
Elmita Lobo
Elnaz Enayatpour
Emily Koch
Emily McBride
Emily Whyte
Emma Saunders
Erica Welsh
Erin Kuzyk
Erin Porter
Eunmi Choi
Farah Shah
Felicity Meng

Fiona Munezero Buchanan
Flora
Flora Bing
Flora Malig
Florida Tuisheva
Franklin Fernandez
Gail Davis
Georgina Reynolds
Glenna John
Gloria Hartl
Grace (Chen) Liu
Grace Bogowicz
Grace Gao
Grace Millar
Gurleen Bhatti
Harbir Minhas
Hayley Richards
Hillary Wilkerson
Hina Awan
Hind Redha
Hope Sawtell
Imogen Jenkins
Ina
Ingrid Sinclair
Inna Kuzina
Ishnoor Dhillon
Janet Davie
Janet Ezebuwala
Janice Wilson
Jenn Clarke
Jenn Jurka
Jenna Macken
Jessalyn Almond
Jesse Attrell
Jesseca DeMone
Jessica
Jessica Clark
Jessica Fitzgerald
Jessica Howe
Jessica Ottenbreit
Jessy Rajan
Jo-Ann Visser
Joanne Godsman
Jodi Stapley
Jody Daloise
Joe Foley
Julia Barrett
Julianna Pitosto
Kaitlin Dagenais
Karena Davies
Kat Handley
Katarzyna Gajewska
Katherine Bradish
Katherine Kowalchuk
Kathleen Armstrong
Kathy Le
Katie Chuey
Katie Shea
Kavin Sheikheldin
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Kayla Templeton
Kaylee Kindlein
Kaylei Whitman
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Kelly Eurard
Kendra Chichak
Khiana Kirby-Viberg
Khinna Kirby-Viberg
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Krista Hill
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Monica Neitz
Monique Neitz
Moremi Omotoso
Moyo Adeniran
Nabila Mirza
Nancy Janovicek
Nancy Nguyen
Nancy Zaharchuk
Nathalie Whyte
Nicole Bastien
Nicole Colley-Lewis
Nicole Cone
Nicole Haywood
Nicole Lee Pak
Nicole Madge
Nilima Sonpal-Valias
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Paige Gratton
Patti Nolan
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Susan Huvenaars
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Tuvila
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Vinna Tram
Winnie Lee
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Katie Shea

Linda Garratt
Martha Peden
Moremi Omotoso
Nicole Bastien

Nilima Sonpal-Valais
Tapisa Kilabuk

"You all do such great work in the community and I feel proud of my involvement as a volunteer, which truly makes me feel like I am making a difference"

"All the women at the Centre are here to help assist each other and anyone who comes through the door. It is a great place to be, as they always find new and innovative ways to assist women in need."



WOMEN'S CENTRE DONORS

*You stepped up in big ways this year to support women and girls in the community.
We could not do it without you!*

Abby Guthrie
Adam Schwartz
Adewale Taiwo
Adrianna Schaaf
Adriana Mackarenko
Adrienne Stuart
Adrienne DeLuca
Adrienne Kutney
Aggy King-Smith
Aimar Bracho
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Bianca Roxas
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David Mark Townshend
Dean Kaiser
Deanna Hutchins
Deb Hauser
Debbie Hoffort
Debora Simkesh
Debora Caza
Deborah Bartlett
Deborah McCaig
Deborah Archibald
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Elusha Baird
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Emma Postma
Emmaluz Quilop
Emmanuel Lamvu
Era Rana
Eric Pottie
Erick Salas
Erin Wolsey
Erin Manywounds
Ernest J. Wyder
Ester H. Little
Family Nicoll family
Fatma Oz
Fatma Ozgur
Felicia Steenbruggen
Felicity Meng
Felina Abdallah
Fern Cyr
Fiona Hayes
Frances Wright
Frances Pender
Frank Woolstrencroft

Frank Vanden Elsen
G. Lissette Serrano
Gabriel Danie
Gabriela Ostendorfer
Gabrielle Motuz
Gail Staratti
Gail D. Armitage
Georgina Wilks
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Glen Yee
Glenda Smith
Gloria Dingwell
Gloria Seaver
Gordana Young
Gordon Brett
Gordon Churchill
Gordon Stang
Grace Millar
Graham Heath
Grant Boyd
Grant Mutch
Greg Petti
Gregory Marks
Gurbinder Manhas
Gurinder Dhadda
Gurvinder Viridi
Haley Thomson
Hans Fung
Harinder Kamah
Harjot Kaler
Harleen Gill
Harvey Sandhu
Heather Lai
Heather Sinton
Heather Procyshyn
Heather Weinmayr
Heather Hudson
Helene Croteau
Henry Tam
Hijal De Sarkar
Hillary Wilkerson
Holly Holowath
Holly Heffernan
Hyla LaPointe
Ian McFarlane
Ileapigie Lamai
Ioana Pintea
Isabel Miller
Jacob Donville
Jacqueline Minshull
Jacqueline Fields
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Kari-Lynn Reed
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Kate Kelly
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Kathleen Shannon
Kathleen Mullrooney
Kathryn Blair
Kathryn Pisco
Kathy Medina
Katie Hope
Katsina Whitechurch
Katy Murdoch
Kayla Down
Kaylee Ramage
Keli Pollock
Kelly Schmitt
Kelly & Ricardo Osuna

Kelsy Brawn
Kelvin Fagbenro
Kerry Lynn Okita
Keshia Hollowman-Dawson
Kim Hudson-Witzke
Kim Emons
Kim Speaker
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Kim Setter
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Kiwa Kurihana
Kourtney Branagan
Krishan Kaushal
Krista Beatty
Krista Poley
Kristen Tuff
Kristi Hyson
Kristin Ator
Kristine Edwards
Krysta Serratore
Kyle Kuchma
Kylie Harder
Laarni Aldea
Landyn Blisner
Lara Schmitz
Lariab Imtiaz
Larissa D'Silva
Laura Darton
Laura Coward
Laura & Barry Moore
Lauraine Newton
Laurie Anderson
Lawna Hurl
Lawrence Stilwell
Lawrence Mah
Leah Lasarte
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"I have donated to the Women's Centre for a long time and I look for events to participate in. I really appreciate the online learning and workshops. I love everything about what the Women's Centre is doing and the approach being taken. Thank you for your great work!"



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"Thank you for creating a safe and empowering place."

WOMEN'S CENTRE STORIES

“I came to Canada in 2013 and knew about nothing in the city. I had multiple issues, and difficulties settling here and needed help. Once I met an Indigenous woman who came to the Women's Centre frequently, and she told me about the place, saying it was nice and friendly and that I could get help here. I decided to give it a try. In the beginning, I was receiving assistance with food and personal care items monthly; this already was a huge help as I couldn't afford much at the time. Later on, I started learning from the Centre about different resources, learning about places, programs and getting professional answers to many questions I had. But the most valuable thing here in the Centre is the people. Always ready to listen, always caring, always ready to help, regardless of how tough or complicated

the issue is. Great people, responsiveness and professionalism—these are the things I like the most about this place. The Centre changed my life in many times and ways. I got many answers to my questions, which made my life easier. And also, it made my life more interesting. Without the Centre, I would feel lonely and have less meaning in my life. Since I came to the Centre, I found community, friendships, meaning, and goals. Without exaggeration, it allowed me to see my life here differently and decide to stay in Canada. I feel like I belong here. I feel I am needed to make some of these great programs happen. I am part of something bigger thanks for the opportunity to participate in community events, workshops, and volunteer.

“I have been volunteering with the Women's Centre of Calgary for over 3 years. Since moving to Canada, I have become actively involved in volunteering. When I moved to Calgary, I started looking for ways to be more active in society and connect and support others. I found the Women's Centre through a google search for organizations that operate from a feminist standpoint. The Women's Centre was at the top of the search results, and after reading through the website and what it does, I signed up on the same day. What I like most about the Centre is that it is a space designated for supporting women. I feel like this gives me the opportunity to just be around other women and have those conversations that focus on us and our issues. Volunteering at the Women's Centre has impacted me in so many

ways. It opens a space for me to interact with women I would not have encountered in my daily life and space. I get to learn a lot about the myriad of issues that affect women, and how my story or lived experience can contribute to the work the Centre is doing. Another way it impacts me is that it provides a way for me, even though very small, to learn from others and let others learn from me. As a workshop facilitator, I get to participate in these super cool activities and witness how women use the things they learn as a coping mechanism. I also get to share who I am and my culture and have these discussions about our similarities and how our differences help make us this beautiful mosaic of women warriors and storytellers.

"I hope for the community to continue to grow and help out as many women as possible, and let them know they are not alone. We're all in this together."

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