

YWCA August 2017 Newsletter

Living Wage Leader

A living wage is the hourly wage a worker needs to cover her family's basic expenses in her community. In Waterloo Region, the 2017 living wage rate is \$15.42 an hour. Living Wage Waterloo Region is a program that encourages local employers to pay a living wage, acknowledging and celebrating employers who do: "Living wage employers are responsible employers who care about their employees and the community. They recognize that paying a living wage constitutes a critical investment in the long-term prosperity of the economy by fostering a dedicated, skilled and healthy workforce." As an organization dedicated to fighting poverty and helping women to achieve economic independence, it only makes sense for us to start with our own employees. We are therefore very proud to have been named one of Living Wage Waterloo Region's Living Wage Leaders.

In Her Shoes

An exciting new employment training program for women who experience barriers to employment is coming soon to the YWCA, thanks to a new Trillium Foundation Seed Grant! In Her Shoes will provide technical training and practical work experience in skills relating to retail, e-retail, and self-employment and will deliver a series of small enterprise skills training workshops to women in the community. The training and work experience will take place at our quality used and vintage shoe, bag, and accessory store, In Her Shoes. We will gratefully accept:

- Women's and children's shoes.
- Bags and wallets.
- Accessories like hats, scarves, gloves, belts, shawls.
- Fashion jewelry and watches.
- Eyewear and sunglasses.

Donations may be dropped off at the YW's administration office, 153 Frederick Street, on weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. Contact Jennifer Gordon, if you need to make other arrangements. Fearlessly Girl We are pleased to have received funding from the Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation for our program Fearlessly Girl. Fearlessly Girl is a movement program that focuses on enhancing body image, self-esteem, and confidence in girls aged 11 to 16. The program is designed to help identify and address body issues while encouraging girls to explore

physical activity in a way that feels right to them. The program will also offer training to community professionals to encourage programming that is inclusive and reflective of the needs of girls of this age.

YW Impact

Volunteer Spotlight

It's 4 a.m. on a Monday morning, and Frank Roorda is sitting at Tim Hortons, waiting. He's waiting for the day-olds—whatever remains of yesterday's bagels, croissants, Timbits, etc.—to find their way into boxes or bags and the bed of his hatchback. And then, he'll make his rounds—more food pickups (he might have 20 bags of food, 150 to 200 lbs., by the time he's finished) and delivery to the YW's Emergency Shelter and two House of Friendship programs. He's been collecting and delivering food to help those experiencing homelessness in our Region for 20 years, since his retirement after a career in the food industry.

“Most of our clients can't afford to go to Tim Hortons,” says Maria Wallenius, Emergency Shelter Services Manager. “This is a real treat for them.”

Frank Roorda was born in Britsum, Friesland, The Netherlands, 82 years ago, the youngest of five children. The family, he says, was poor. “There wasn't much food during the war.” His father was disabled. “He couldn't talk, and he couldn't walk. He was injured trying to repair stone shingles on the roof after a storm.”

So 13-year-old Frank left school after Grade 7 and went to work for a dairy, going from farm to farm on his bicycle, morning and evening, weighing milk and taking samples.

At 16, he took a job on a farm, working 12-hour days, Mondays through Saturdays. On Sundays, he worked seven hours. He was also studying at agricultural college.

In 1954, Frank, at 19, decided to emigrate to Canada. His sister had emigrated in 1951. He joined her, thinking that he'd stay in Canada for two years.

But jobs as a produce manager in cities across Ontario followed (he's moved house nine times). He married. And stayed in Canada. He and his wife have been married for 60 years. They have an extended family of 61.

“Helping people who need help makes you feel good,” Frank Roorda says. “We're in

this world to help each other. You never know when you're going to need help yourself."

Our clients are grateful for the love and generosity shown by volunteers like Frank. So are we. Many thanks, Frank! Community Heroes Community Heroes is all about raising up the next generation of girls and gender non-conforming youth. The program focuses on building leadership skills and making change in the community. One of the ways we do this is by connecting participants with mentors. Sarah (mentor) and Grace (mentee) are perfect examples of a mentor/mentee power team. Grace identified a problem in her community and among her peers. When she and her mentor talked about the issue together, they decided that a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) in Grace's neighbourhood was the social change project that was needed.

Staff at the Kitchener Public Library, Stanley Park, gave them a welcoming space for their program and asked to partner with them on the initiative. "It all just happened," said Grace with a shy smile in Sarah's direction. Sarah credited Grace with the idea and the drive to make it happen. "I just asked around. I'm a connected person, and I'm used to looking for new resources," she said. Grace will be the leader of this new program, which will start in the fall, and Sarah will be right there, helping Grace along the way. The next thing they are going to tackle is leadership and public speaking, at Grace's request. She wants to be able to keep people talking and bonding in the GSA. Sarah already has a plan to help her achieve that goal. We asked them both what they admired about their mentor/mentee. Sarah said, "I like working with Grace, and I admire her dedication to making the world a more celebratory place for LGBTQ+-identified people." The feelings of admiration are mutual. Grace said, "I like working with Sarah because she is willing to help me achieve what I want, she helps me with anything I need, and she is a great human. She is caring and would do anything for anyone." The GSA will run every second Tuesday from September through December, 7 - 8:30 p.m., at the Stanley Park Library, 175 Indian Road, Kitchener.

YW Issues and Action

Unfounded!

Earlier this year, *The Globe and Mail* released the results of its 20-month investigation into how police in Canada handle sexual assault allegations. The results shocked the country. The investigation revealed that...one in five sexual assault complaints is dismissed by the police as baseless or unfounded. Unfounded doesn't mean that the police closed 20 percent of cases because of a lack of evidence or because the complainants decided against proceeding with charges. It means that the police determined that one in five of the women who reported being sexually assaulted was either mistaken about what had happened to her or was lying. To give some context to those numbers, about 10 percent of complaints of physical assault are dismissed by police in Canada as unfounded. And the unfounded rate for other types of crimes is even lower. International research indicates that that truly unfounded cases of sexual assault—truly mistaken or malicious reports—amount to no more than two to eight percent of reports. So there's clearly something very wrong with the way many police forces respond to sexual assaults. It's no surprise that the majority of sexual assaults aren't reported to police at all. Victims fear that they won't be supported and they won't be believed, and far too often they're right. Like other women-serving organizations, the YWCA wasn't entirely surprised by the results of *The Globe and Mail* study, but we were disappointed to learn that the unfounded rate in Waterloo Region is even higher than the national average. In the five years reviewed, Waterloo Regional Police Services dismissed 27 percent of the sexual assault complaints they received—more than one in four—as unfounded. Following the release of *The Globe and Mail* study, the provincial government asked all Ontario police services to look at their unfounded sex assault cases, to learn why so many allegations are being dismissed, and to find ways of doing a better job of supporting victims and charging offenders. Waterloo Regional Police Services responded quickly by creating a community task force to assist them in this work and asked the YWCA to be a part of that task force. We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to making our community a safer place for sexual assault victims and all women.

YW Upcoming Events

Logo Launch

Last spring, we announced our plans to create a new logo and a refreshed brand that would better differentiate the YWCA from other organizations in the community and emphasize our special focus on women and youth. And we asked for your help in designing and selecting the logo that does that best. Through an in-person focus group and a public survey, we heard from more than 250 of you on eight logo options. Thirty-six percent of you shared the same first choice! It was also among the top three choices for 59 percent of you. That's a great response rate and a very convincing win. We'll be revealing our new logo at a special breakfast launch party at the Tannery on Monday, October 16, from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. To register, e-mail [Stephanie Van De Ven](mailto:Stephanie.VanDeVen@ywca.org).

Newcomer Childminding Program

Conestoga College offers Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs in our community. The YW operates a childminding program on behalf of the college, providing care for children whose parents are attending English classes.

Newcomers face many challenges and stresses. Because of our childminding program, parents are able to focus on learning, without the added stress of having to seek reliable, quality care. Their children are cared for in a safe and healthy environment. Parents, often leaving their children in the care of someone else for the first time, are welcome to see their children at any time. Newcomer children also face many challenges and stresses. But children are with peers who are in the same situation—they're in a new country, a new environment, in which there are communication barriers. Sometimes children connect with peers who speak their native language. But all children find community in the program and feel less isolated.

Childminding staff provide support to children and their families, being sensitive to their diverse backgrounds. They provide enriching programming that focuses on cognitive, social/emotional, and physical activities which enhance children's overall development. Staff are also trained in promoting language development.

Having childminding programs at LINC locations is convenient for parents if children are facing difficulties and need their added support and comfort. In the event of illness or emergency, parents are available. And parents don't have to travel to other childcare locations in a city with which they may not be familiar.

In September, a new childminding program will be opening at a LINC program at 800 King Street. Care will be provided for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. The space will accommodate 32 children. We value our partnership with Conestoga College and are pleased to provide support for newcomer parents and children.

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