



# WOMEN GROWING

WCWRC Annual Report 2015



## *A Message from the Executive Director & Board Chair*

2015 was a year of growth and change for the West Central Women's Resource Centre and one that emphasized team work, community collaboration and organizational success.

This year two of our biggest projects include the completion of the three year Roots/Routes To Women's Leadership and Empowerment project and our kitchen renewal capital campaign. These projects wouldn't be possible without the continued support of our multiple funders, including the Province of Manitoba, Status of Women Canada, Citizenship and Immigration, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, the United Way, Winnipeg Foundation, Assiniboine Credit Union and many other loyal donors.

We look forward to an exciting year ahead. We have an outstanding team of staff, board, volunteers and partners and together we will continue to make the West Central Women's Resource Center a safe and welcoming home for women and families in our community.

### **Lauren Konrad, Board Chair**

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2015 was a year of growth for the Centre. We took on a new program - our More Than Four Walls Housing First program - which brought us new staff and new participants. We completed a capital campaign to expand our kitchen and with it, our food security programming. Our community garden had its most successful year and many women were able to learn how to grow their vegetables. We expanded our mandate to be a Centre of Learning, taking in practicum students from a variety of disciplines, as well as re-examining and expanding how we do mentorship inside the centre. And as staff, we reflected on ourselves and our role in community, challenging each other to continue to grow our own knowledge.

We are grateful for the support of our funders and donors - without you our work isn't possible. Our success was also made possible through the ongoing support of our dedicated board members, who guide us and keep us on track. To our remarkable team of staff, mentors and volunteers, who give tirelessly of themselves - you are WONDER WOMEN! And to the amazing community women who invest in our centre every day, bringing your stories, your strength, your laughter and tears - you are the beating heart of our community and the reason that we are committed to continue to grow!

### **Lorie English, Executive Director**

# WCWRC Staff & Board

## Staff

Warda Ahmed  
Bridget Ayotte  
Jessica Audy  
Rachel Bergen

Laura Canfield  
Laurel Cassels  
Nel Derksen  
Lorie English

Erika Frey  
Merrill Grant  
Urmila Kapoor  
Helena Kelly

Chelsea King  
Wendy Kissack  
Damien Leggett  
Tanya McFadyen

Melissa McGregor  
Lynn McLeod  
Christine Merasty  
Rena Shorting  
Lisa Spring



## Mentors

Latifa Aalem  
Richelle Baker  
Donalee Basarowich  
Sonia Cashman  
Chantal Cloutier  
Lavonne Crate

Amie Fosseneuve  
Jennifer Henry  
Veronica Johnston  
Daisy McLellan  
Sharon Olson  
Rhonda Starr  
Jolene Wilson

## Board of Directors

Erin Anderson  
Shannon Buck  
Liubov Gavrilova-Crozier

Nan Colledge  
Lauren Konrad  
Meredith Mitchell

# WCWRC Programs and Services



## Indigenous Programming

Cultural Programs; Drumming, Beading  
Events & Ceremonies  
Red Road to Healing

## Newcomer Programs

Settlement Services  
Conversation Circles  
Sewing Program

## Drop-In

Shower / Laundry / Hygiene Supplies  
Lunch Program  
Workshops

## Housing

HOMES –Housing and  
income security support  
More Than Four Walls

## Employment & Education

Job Readiness Support  
Training Opportunities  
Childminding Services

## Mentorship Program

Leadership Training  
Job Experience  
Volunteer Placements

## Community Building

Celebrations & Events  
Community Gardening



# Program Highlights

## *More Than Four Walls*

The H.O.M.E.S. Program has a sister! In 2015, we launched our second housing program, More Than Four Walls (MT4W), which uses the Housing First model to reduce homelessness for women, trans-people and families who are experiencing chronic or episodic homelessness.

The Housing First model looks at housing as a basic human right. The goal is to move individuals experiencing homelessness into housing as quickly as possible FIRST, BEFORE accessing additional services or treatments and supports. Evidence shows that people cannot focus on getting well until the risk of homelessness or unstable housing has been removed. Participants are offered a choice in their housing and are then supported to both maintain that housing and learn about good tenancy. The ultimate goal is an increase self-sufficiency and sustainable change in the lives of participants.

MT4W is one of 8 Housing First programs across Winnipeg, funded largely through the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy, one of our long term funders.



*MT4W participant (left) in her new home with WCWRC outreach worker*

# Centre of Learning

At the end of 2014, we embarked on a strategic planning process with the help of Health in Common, that would guide our work for 5 years to come. Finalized in 2015, one of the key objectives was to focus on being a Centre of Learning. For us, this means that we are committed as an organization to continue to challenge ourselves and our ways of working to ensure that we are evolving and adapting to the needs of community. This includes consistent and effective evaluation, hearing and responding to the voices of community members and partner organizations and ongoing training for our staff, board, mentors and volunteers. It also means that we create opportunities for women to learn and grow inside the centre. This has taken various forms including our ongoing mentorship program, welcoming a variety of practicum students to work with us and providing programming like our Politics in the Drop In series to build the capacity of all women who access our centre.

All of this fits well into the centre's Empowerment Framework – a capacity building framework with 4 stages of empowerment - breaking social isolation, networking, awareness, and action. It was also something that we already had some experience with. Peer mentorship has always been a part of our way of working and it's a model that we have been able to grow over the years. In fact, almost two thirds of our staff at the Centre have been mentored into different roles over their time with us.

In the coming year we look forward to new ways of learning and of offering learning at the Centre. We will focus on redeveloping our mentorship and childminding programs, with an emphasis on sustainable empowerment for women. We will welcome new practicum students and modify how they are incorporating into our work. And we will embark on a new project with Health in Common, to create a standardized evaluation framework for the Centre and all its programs. We see all women as both learners and teachers and we are excited to put reciprocal learning forward as one of our goals for the coming years.



# WCWRC Women of Distinction



**Erika Wiebe**  
Funding Support,  
Advocate



**Joan Hay**  
Original Board Member  
(2005-2013)



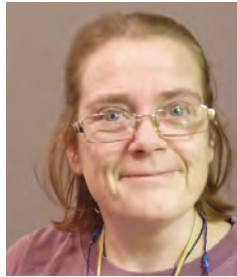
**Jackie Hogue**  
First Executive Director  
(2006-2012)



**Genny Funk-Unrau**  
Original Board Member  
(2005-2011)



**Nanagale Fagnan**  
Drop In Coordinator  
(2007-2013)



**Rachel Carrier**  
Volunteer  
(2008-2016)

WCWRC was built and is sustained by remarkable women. As a way to honour that we are introducing our Women of Distinction awards, which will recognize the many women who have helped shape the Centre since its inception. When we look at our theme for the year, Growing Women, it was easy to decide where to begin in selecting women to acknowledge - OUR ROOTS.

What began as a community empowerment project in 1999, is now a booming Centre, with 16 staff, an ever-growing team of volunteers and mentors and over 18,000 visits every year. Once housed in the basement of the John Howard Society, the Centre purchased and renovated its current home in 2010 and have continued to expand our work. None of this would have been possible without the support of some dedicated and passionate women. The hours of time, the ideas and creativity, the tenacity and determination that these women offered set the stage for the Centre's continued success.

Thank you doesn't quite seem to do them justice but...  
**THANK YOU!**

# Food Security: Garden /Kitchen

In 2015, the Centre began a campaign to renovate and expand our kitchen which would in turn, grow our ability to provide healthy meals to the community and to offer food programming that promotes healthy eating through workshops, hands-on cooking demonstrations and by increasing knowledge about available resources. Mentors, volunteers and childminders as well as the broader community will build their capacity and help them to cook healthy meals for the Centre, themselves and their families.

The Province of Manitoba, the City of Winnipeg, The Thomas Sill Foundation, Spark and the United Way, as well as individual donors enthusiastically got behind our vision with funding and with the generously donated work of architect, Liane Veness, the project quickly took shape. By the end of 2015, we had met our fundraising goal and were ready to begin construction.





At the same time, our Community Garden received a much needed makeover. Staff and Volunteers worked together to re-paint the garden boxes, plant vegetables and purchase new supplies including a picnic table. Community members proved to be dedicated gardeners. Much learning, teaching and sharing of work was done throughout the season and by the end of summer, women had fresh produce to bring home to their families. In September, WCWRC hosted a Community Garden Party where we celebrated the year's successes and shared in the harvest. With over 200 community members present, it was a huge success!

Through both our Community Garden and our new kitchen, WCWRC looks forward to supporting food security in the community in the coming year!



# Politics in the Drop In

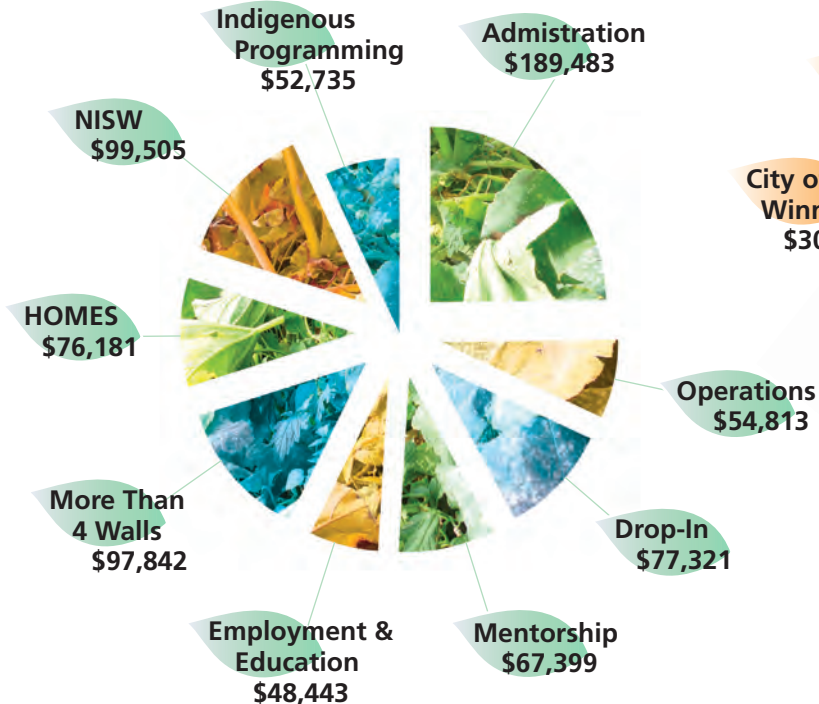
From August to October 2015, women who use the drop-in at WCWRC participated in a 10 week, informal workshop leading up to the Federal Election. For 1-2 hours each week, we gathered to discuss such topics as Requirements to Register, Where to Vote, Canadian Government Structure, Provincial versus Federal Jurisdiction, Party Lines and Promises and specific issues that were raised by the community members participating.

What started with 5 or 6, previously politically savvy participants grew to a crowd of 40 or so during our final weeks, when we enticed all four Winnipeg Centre candidates to attend moderated question and answer sessions in our drop-in. What's difficult to describe is the excitement of these newly engaged voters as they asked their potential representatives tough questions on their home turf. The discourse was informative, respectful and very lively.

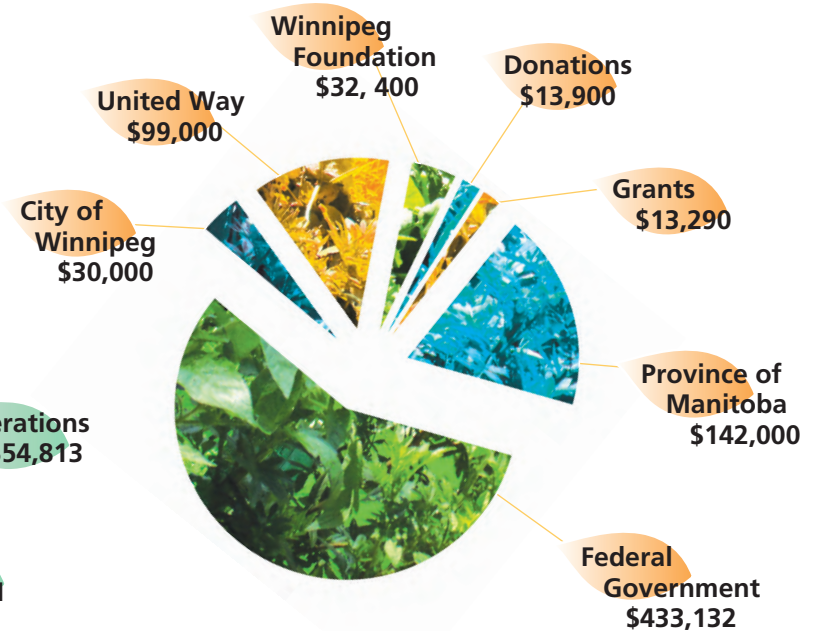
Women who needed support to navigate polling day were escorted by members of our staff. Advance polling support, rides and advocacy were supplied and many women who had never participated in the electoral process turned out to vote. Stay tuned for Politics in the Drop-In: The Provincial Edition!



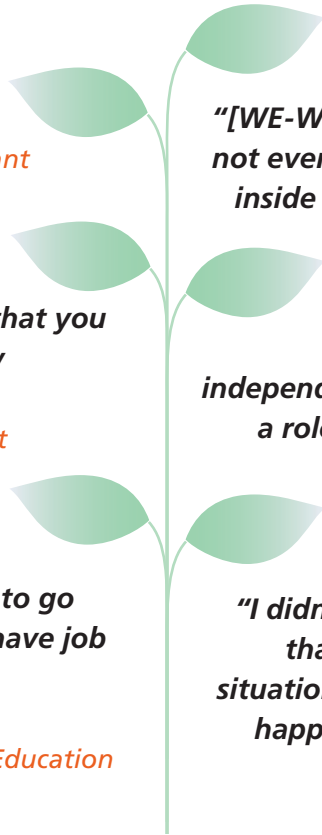
## EXPENSES



## REVENUE



# Women Growing



***"I feel safer now"***

*- HOMES Participant*

***"We are very grateful that you helped us because now I can go to school"***

*- NISW Participant*

***"I really want to thank you for supporting me to go in my career... Today I have job and what I want to do in my life."***

*- Employment & Education Participant*

***"[WE-WIL] opened so many doors, not even just out in the world, but inside of me, inside of my head."***

***"I've learnt to be a more independent woman and hopefully a role model for someone else"***

***"I didn't think that I had any skill that was going to change my situation at all... and then WE-WIL happened, and well, you know, now I'm unstoppable."***

*- WE-WIL Participants*

## Our Funders

Assiniboine Credit Union  
 Canadian Women's Foundation  
 City of Winnipeg  
 Communities 4 Families  
 Daniel MacIntyre/ St. Matthew's Revitalization Inc.  
 Canadian Heritage  
 Citizenship and Immigration Canada  
 Homelessness Partnering Strategy  
 Status of Women Canada  
 Investors Group  
 Province of Manitoba  
 Neighbourhoods Alive  
 Manitoba Jobs and the Economy  
 Manitoba Heritage  
 Manitoba Housing  
 The Richardson Foundation  
 Spence Neighbourhood Association  
 Thomas Sill Foundation  
 United Way  
 Winnipeg Community Infrastructure Program  
 Winnipeg Foundation  
 Winnipeg Regional Health Authority