



West Central Women's Resource Centre

2010 Annual Report



Our New Location

We're all moved in to 640 Ellice!! We're so excited. As an agency we had been considering relocating from our original site since 2007 but we never dreamed the result would be owning (not renting) our own beautiful building. We're collectively overwhelmed with how successful our Relocation Project has been. It feels great to be in a space that honors and respects women in our community.

Support from funders and our community has been incredible and our new home is amazing. As of December 2010 we raised over \$855,000 toward our \$1 million project goal. This is a massive success in such a short time. We want to thank Assiniboine Credit Union for helping us to finance our mortgage in order to make the project complete.

The space is double the size of our former location and has huge windows - a drastic change from our old basement location. Given the street front location and large windows, it is a brighter and more naturally lit space. We have more space to do programming and more space to meet with women confidentially. Our Drop In has more seats and more community phones and within the first month of the new Centre opening, new shower facilities and laundry facilities were open to the public, free of charge.

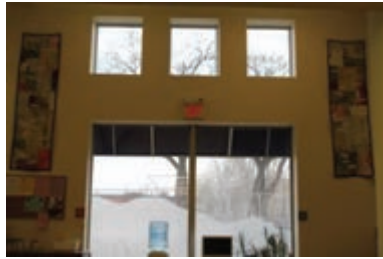
And the neighbourhood is responding to our change in location very well. In a survey of 83 community women we learned that women love the new space. The results were overwhelmingly positive; there was not one negative remark in all 83 surveys. Respondents felt the new location was wonderful, beautiful, and bright, with great energy and more space. Many also shared that the new drop in area was welcoming and a positive, safe place for women to come, relax and find resources. The new space has also allowed us to expand our programming and increase our ability to collaborate with other community and health agencies.

The increased visibility of our new location has been proven through the fact that almost 20% of those that responded had not known about the Centre prior to visiting us at 640 Ellice and all but one respondent believed that we would have more daily visitors than we did at our old location. That has been proven by the increase in daily visitors we tracked in October. We had a 50% increase (over 400 more visits) in visitors during the first month that we were open to the public at 640 Ellice.

We held our Grand Opening Celebration on Oct 29. It was a huge success with over 250 visitors passing through to help celebrate our move. We want to thank all the community members, agency partners, funders and government representatives that helped us celebrate our beautiful new space.

The opening of the WCWRC at 640 Ellice Street represents continued progress towards neighbourhood revitalization by having a beautifully refurbished building in a once vacant space.

The WCWRC located at this site will further the revitalization of the community by complementing other recent developments including the newly renovated West End Cultural Centre, the Ellice Café and Theatre and the University of Winnipeg developments.



*Meet the WCWRC Staff:
Jen Porter, Fiona Muldrew,
Jess Klassen, Nana-gale Fagnan,
Marianne Cerilli, Alana Farrell,
Nel Derksen, Talia Potash,
Jackie Hogue*



*Visitor Mary (left) drops in to meet
with Executive Director Jackie Hogue*

Message from the Executive Director

The West Central Women's Resource Centre exists to empower women to help themselves, their families and their community to safer, healthier lifestyles. Now that we are in our new home at 640 Ellice, we are even better equipped to make a difference in the lives of the women of our neighbourhood. As the reports on the following pages will confirm, our women are gaining knowledge, skills and strength as they work together to better their lives. We are all proud to be part of this neighbourhood, and the change that we are seeing in it.

Jackie Hogue
Executive Director

Message from the Chair

It has been my pleasure to be Chair of the Board of Directors for the West Central Women's Resource Center (WCWRC) again this year. It has been a momentous year for the centre as we moved into our new, and very beautiful, home. Staff and volunteers have worked incredibly hard over the past couple of years to make this move possible and the results are fantastic. We now have an accessible, bright, large space that staff and community women love. It allows us the opportunity to not only provide our current programs and services, but also develop new program to meet community needs. For more details about the many programs offered at the WCWRC, please read their attached reports.

We are all proud of the WCWRC, where we have come from, what we have become, and what we can become in the future. We hope that all of you will join us in our journey to advocate for and work with west central women and their families.

Thank you to all of the staff, volunteers, board members and community members who are a part of this organization. Your commitment, energy and enthusiasm are what makes this place so great.

Heidi Wurmman, Co-Chair
West Central Women's Resource Centre

Drop-In Program

The drop-in centre is a vital resource within the community. It's where women come together, and healing takes place. It is a place of empowerment. The safe, friendly, welcoming environment is held with respect.

The Drop-in is a place to come and relax; to have coffee, snacks, and great conversation in a friendly environment.

When women were asked what they liked best about the drop-in program, some responses were: It's welcoming, safe, warm, friendly and inviting. It's like a home; a place where they were able to relax and, if needed, to have a rest away from their partners, as we have a policy of no men allowed on the premises.

The ladies love the new space; there's room to move around freely, and the large windows in our new facility let in so much natural light.

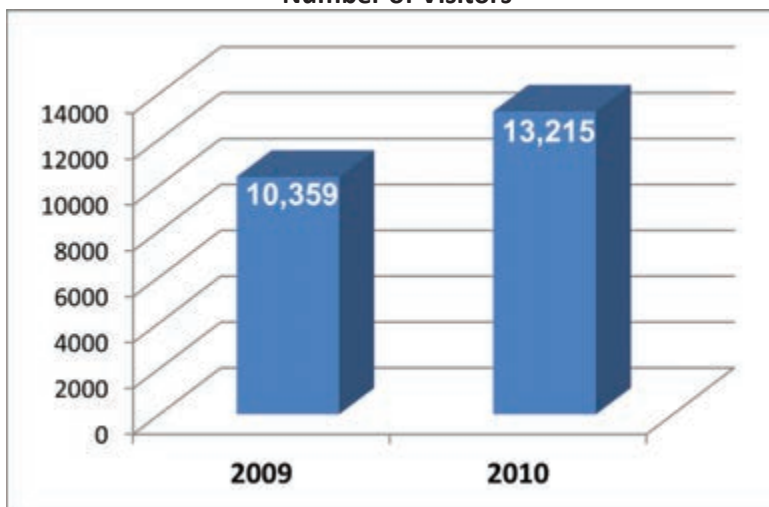
There are two telephones available for use. Plus, we now have a washer and dryer as well as a shower available for the ladies. This was one of the top requests, made possible by our generous funders. These amenities are truly appreciated.

In 2010, there were 60 to 80 resource referrals made each month, to places such as Centre Flavie-Laurent Inc., Snowbird Lodge, Spence Neighborhood Association and St. Matthews Neighborhood, to name a few.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who donated to the centre. Your generosity allowed us to acquire this beautiful new space and to have enough room for all the women who come here.

The statistics tell the story. There was a huge increase in the number of visits this year compared to last year, as seen in the chart below. This increase truly shows how much our centre is needed.

Number of Visitors



Respectfully Submitted
Nana-gale Fagnan
Drop-In Coordinator

Childminding Program

2010 marks the fourth year of successful training and services for the Childminding Program. Over the past year the program has been successful in recruiting participants, developing and enhancing the training, promoting the program, and seeking funding. We tracked statistics, scheduled childminding work and follow-up, evaluated childminders and networked with hiring agencies. The Childminding Program was also promoted at various forums and Community Development conferences. We are researching the possibility of developing a Child Care Assistant course in the neighbourhood, so that more local women can pursue further education and training in the child care field.

Highlights for 2010 include:

"She showed a great deal of interest in child development and attachment parenting even though she did not get the attachment and closeness she needed as a child."

More training opportunities

- ✓ A total of 45 childminders were trained
- ✓ Great workshops were held including Supporting Each Other with the Seven Teachings, Orientation to Start Your Home Daycare, United by the Drum (drumming from different cultures) and Services and Supports for Newcomers and their Families. About 15-40 people attended each workshop.
- ✓ Childminder hours increased from 3018 hours in 2009 to 3372 hours in 2010.

More employment opportunities

- ✓ Over 54 agencies hire our childminders including "new" agencies such as L'entre Temps and the New Directions Parenting Centre.
- ✓ Out of 165 childminders trained in the last 4 years, 25 (15%) have found more permanent jobs and 33 (20%) have returned to school or further training. 60 childminders (40%) are still active childminders.
- ✓ About 60 active childminders are gaining support, income and job skills through the program and many agencies appreciate the special service we provide. One childminder said, "I'm finally able to live my dream of working with children."

Higher incomes

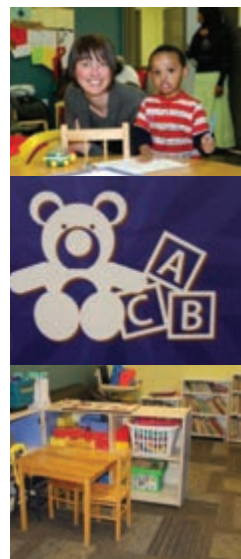
- ✓ Over \$3,300.00 in administration fees were generated for the childminding program and childminders increased their income from \$27,161.50 in 2009 to \$33,720.00 in 2010.
- ✓ Individual salaries for childminders have increased from about \$75/month in 2009 to about \$90/month in 2010.

More community involvement

- ✓ Parents are able to attend more activities in the neighbourhood because of child minding services. One parent said "because of this program I can get the training I'm really interested in."
- ✓ About 6,400 children were cared for at 54 agencies, allowing more parents to attend community workshops and support services. Our centre offered 685 hours of childcare allowing parents/caregivers to attend workshops or get counseling and referral support.
- ✓ Childminders are also getting very involved in other aspects of the centre such as promoting the childminding program, learning about advocacy, HOMES training, participating in the Empowerment group, volunteering in the centre and getting to know more about services we offer. We are excited to see so much learning and growth between staff, women at our centre, childminders, children and community agencies.

"She has now been a childminder for 1 ½ years and has really grown and excelled... I can see a big difference... her voice is definitely powerful and inspiring to all."

Respectfully Submitted,
Fiona Muldrew
Childminding Coordinator



Community Support Program

Volunteers contribute in countless ways to the daily workings of WCWRC. They prepare meals, serve on the board, provide mentorship, pick up donations, clean, plan fundraisers, provide reception services, work in the clothing room, wash dishes, teach yoga classes, perform administrative duties, plan and implement workshops, prepare the newsletter, run the Sewing Circle, and much more. Through these contributions, women express that they gain skills, increase their self-esteem, realize their strengths, improve communication and conflict resolution skills, and build supportive relationships with other women at WCWRC.

Volunteer Program highlights from 2010:

- 80+ volunteers contributed over 5000 hours to WCWRC
- 27 women received honorariums for their volunteer work
- 8 students were hosted to complete their practicums, including students from U of M's Faculty of Social Work, Opportunities for Employment, Red River College's Community Development Program, and Pro Bono Students Canada through U of M's Faculty of Law
- Training events were organized for the volunteers such as two Food Handler Trainings, a workshop by SEED on their Asset Building Programs, and a workshop providing women with voting information to prepare for Winnipeg's civic election
- Celebration and volunteer appreciation events were organized for the volunteer such as going bowling, going out for bubble tea, visiting the zoo, going strawberry picking, beach day at Bird's Hill Park, playing bingo, going to the Winnipeg Folk Festival, and a Winter Holiday Party
- Volunteer Appreciation Week in April was celebrated staff serving volunteers a pancake breakfast and presenting them with a volunteer certificate and a "West Central Women Rock" tote bag

Respectfully submitted by:
Jess Klassen
Community Support Coordinator



The Story of Sheryl

While one focus of the volunteer program is skill building, another equally important aspect is healing and growth. This proved true for Sheryl. Sheryl's first introduction to WCWRC was through her involvement with Restorative Resolutions, a probation office. She needed to complete her community service hours and chose WCWRC as the place to do it. Sheryl began by attending and preparing food for the Women's Empowerment Group and the Peace Begins at Home sharing circle, as well as volunteering in the clothing room.

After Sheryl's first experience in the Women's Empowerment Group, she came into my office and said that she felt like crying because everything was so positive at WCWRC. She felt "overwhelmed", in a good way, by the positivity. Sheryl continued to volunteer, sometimes for 8 hours a day. Months went by and a volunteer position was posted for the Clothing Room Coordinator, a role in which the volunteer receives an honorarium. Sheryl's application was successful, and she is now WCWRC's very capable Clothing Room Coordinator. Sheryl's journey as a volunteer speaks to her strength and determination, as well as to the significant role that the volunteer program can play in women's healing journeys.

Respect Program

Hundreds of women of all ages have participated in our programs. Together we are strengthening our parenting skills and enhancing life skills for our youth.

It is true that peace begins at home, so offering support tools to mothers and other female caregivers is a huge part of our Respect Program. The Peace Circle, co-facilitated by Freda Whiteway, is a weekly parenting support group offered to those who are caring for gang involved and at-risk children and youth. Fifty circles were held in 2010, with an average of 12 participants per circle.

"Coming to the circle, I learned that I'm not alone"

Some of the topics addressed were: how to keep your kids safe, positive coping, and healthier communication skills, such as active listening. Through the peace circles, caregivers gain skills to help manage the many challenges faced by parents.

"I learned that I am stronger than I thought"

In this fast moving world where it sometimes feels like nobody really cares or has time to listen, I am constantly reminded of what is good when I experience the amazing resilience, empathetic listening skills, and desire to help each other in the women who make up our Peace Circles.

We also co-ordinate monthly workshops to address safety and parenting. Some of these workshops included Family Violence by Clinic, Community and Personal Safety: Perspectives on the Sex Trade and Sexually Exploited Youth, and Know Your Rights. Between 10 - 20 women attend these workshops.

In addition to group sessions, we also provide one-to-one support for hundreds of women. This past year, we met with 496 women in the form of counselling, advocacy, and referral.

Creating a safe space for our youth is another important component of our Respect Program. Run in partnership with the Spence Neighbourhood Association, our Girls Group meets weekly at the Magnus Eliason Recreation Centre. Here, we create a safe space for girls ages 12 to 18 to hang out together in a community setting. We have between 8 to 10 youth show up every Thursday evening to participate in artistic and life-skill enhancing activities.

Submitted by Jen Porter
Safety and Parenting Coordinator

*"If the program wasn't here, I don't know what I would do" -
Girls group participant*





Sewing Program

There is one room that is always humming with activity throughout the year: the sewing room.

Our Sewing Program provides a weekly opportunity for women to gather together to create practical items for themselves and their families. This year, we saw 579 women sew a variety of items; slippers, toques, mittens, aprons and headbands as well as reusable bags, pillow cases, curtains, purses, tea towels, and placemats. They also created items for WCWRC, such as sewing machine covers and wall hangings.

One of the goals of the program is to welcome newcomers to the Centre. This goal was met, with 65% of the Sewing Program attendees being newcomers to Canada. Sahra Dayib was first introduced to WCWRC through the Sewing Program. She regularly attended the Sewing Program and wanted to get more involved in other ways at the Centre. She is now a trained childminder as well as a regular volunteer in the clothing room.

WCWRC continues to partner with the Neighbourhood Immigrant Settlement Worker Warda Ahmed to deliver the Sewing Program. Thank you to Warda for working with the Centre to make this program happen!

Last, but definitely not least, a huge thank you to our committed volunteers who run the Sewing Program: Simone Bissecck, Sandra MacKinnon, and Shelley Burnell. Thank you for giving your time and expertise!

Respectfully submitted by:
Jess Klassen
Community Support Coordinator

HOMES Program

A suitable acronym, HOMES stands for Housing Options, Mentorship and Economic Security. Our program offers one-to-one coaching and women's empowerment group while also engaging in networking and community development work.

One-to-one peer mentoring

The HOMES Program met with 178 women in 2010. 63% indicated that housing is their primary concern, and 27% have issues with employment and income assistance. More and more women we assist were absolutely homeless in 2010; either in shelters, couch surfing or on the street. Many others are moving due to change in family size, abusive relationships, or difficulties with rental increases or unsafe housing. We assisted with other issues such as beginning addiction treatment, finding child care, getting a Community Mental Health Worker or other mental health support. We supported women leaving abusive relationships and through the apprehension of their children by CFS. We helped women looking for work, applying for education and training.

...continued on page 9

HOMES continued...

Women's Empowerment Group

The HOMES program has a goal of assisting 45 women get out of poverty. We use a Sustainable Livelihoods model: 2 groups of 10 weeks, setting personal goals as well as a group goal. This year, one group goal was for ten women to get their driver's license. There were many individual goals set and achieved, including finding a job, attaining financial security, and getting a child back from CFS.

Workshops

110 women attended 9 monthly workshops on a range of topics from Abuse and Housing, to orientation to the Winnipeg Library. 5 workshop topics included budgeting or economic security. In addition, 25 women completed the 18 hour mentor training in October.

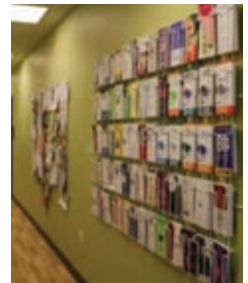
Networking and Social Change

Our staff also networks with various groups to share information and ideas that will assist our clients. The West Central Women's Resource Centre was one of twelve organizations signing a letter of complaint to the Ombudsman in 2008 about problems and inconsistencies with EIA. The report on the investigation was released in August of 2010 and the WCWRC continued to offer leadership to organize for the implementation of the 68 recommendations. In September of 2010 the HOMES program and the UM created a partnership on UM Connecting Our Kids; a project focused on mustering the resources of the UM in support of community efforts to ensure all kids in Winnipeg reach their full potential.

Staff and Volunteers

There were three assistant mentors funded in partnership with the Manitoba Works Program that we need to thank: Deirdra Murdock, Alana Farrel and Gloria Knott.

There were 6 women who gained experience as community mentors this year and must be congratulated on their compassion and dedication to helping community women: Louise Petrin, Phyllis Anderson, Eartha Crate, Kendra Charles, Sonia Cashman, and Cynthia Huggins.



Making an Impact

One of the most satisfying things about 2010 was returning to WCWRC and seeing so many women that we had worked with move forward, particularly in dealing with their addictions. There were some women who never talked about their drinking and drug use and these women were now openly talking about it and making attempts at treatment. One woman in particular who had lived very hard on the street for years, who we successfully assisted to get on EIA, (a great partnership with the EIA worker) had re-established contact with her family, and in 2010 began volunteering at the centre. Every time I see her it is a treat.



Traditional Teachings Program

2010 offered exciting new opportunities for women at the centre. One of the new programs introduced is the Traditional Teachings Program. This program seeks to provide opportunities to Aboriginal women in our community to reconnect with their cultural identity, reduce social isolation and foster pride in themselves as strong Aboriginal women.

Activities in this program include providing a cultural advisor and Elder to women who would like to access these resources. Also ceremonies, sharing circles and drumming circles are provided to participants who attend the centre. On March 29, 2010, the first West Central Women's Resource Centre's Full Moon Ceremony was held. Women told us that they felt stronger and better about themselves after participating.



In the month of May, 13 hand drums were created by community women in a two day drummaking workshop held by the Traditional Teachings Program. This workshop led to the creation of a weekly drumming circle, in which women come together to learn and share traditional songs with each other. The participants in the drumming circle have expressed that they feel a sense of community and are proud to be able to share the songs they have learned with their children and grandchildren. They also share that they come away from the circle feeling refreshed and relaxed.

As the coordinator of this program I am deeply impacted by the self-confidence these women are developing. One particular story was shared with me about the drumming circle. I was told that the women used to just sit and listen to the instructor and wait for her to lead songs. Now, after just a few short months these women are singing with pride and taking turns leading the circle in singing. As they discover that they can sound their voices together, they make important steps towards healing and growing into the beautiful and strong women they were created to be.

A community Elder, Jesse Howell, began attending the centre on a weekly basis to provide mentoring for a few hours in the drop-in. Since that time a weekly sharing circle was formed that is led by the Elder. This aspect of the Traditional Teachings Program continues to grow. The women who participate in this circle have expressed a reduced sense of isolation and find an increased sense of community and caring as a result of the sharing circle.

Many of the women who access the Traditional Teachings Program return and also participate in all activities that are provided.

Participation rates:

- Full moon ceremony: average of 8 women per month
- Drumming circle: average of 9 women per week
- Sharing circle: average of 8 women per week
- Cultural advisor: total of 9 women on drop-in basis

Submitted by Shannon Buck
Traditional Teachings Program Coordinator

Red Road to Healing

Red Road to Healing is an exciting and unique new program being offered at WCWRC. It's the efforts of a community partnership between the Red Road to Freedom Ad Hoc Committee (RRF) and WCWRC. RRF is made up of aboriginal women who live and work in the West Central area who saw a need to address family violence using culturally appropriate programming. For many years WCWRC has strived to have programming specifically support women in their experience with family violence so this was a fabulous partnership.



In the fall of 2010, I joined the staff at WCWRC as the coordinator of an exciting new program. Drawing upon my life experiences, my education and my connection with traditional Aboriginal teachings and culture, I designed and implemented the Red Road to Healing Program. This program came into being after discussions were held with community women to address the issue of family violence so prevalent in the community. To help educate and facilitate the first steps towards healing, we offer an interweaving of western knowledge and traditional teachings and ceremonies. The Red Road to Healing also provides opportunities for women to receive 1-to-1 counseling, protection planning and assistance in completing Protection Order applications.



During 2010 Red Road to Healing focused on hiring and orienting me as the new staff person, researching the area of family violence programming, designing the group curriculum, and hiring a co-facilitator. I also provide one-to-one support and cultural programming.



Respectfully Submitted
Shannon Buck

In our research we found that there was little to no culturally based family violence programming in our city. This is a new program where traditional teachings are weaved in with western teachings to support women in healing from family violence. We are excited to be developing such a unique program.

Our Year in Numbers



Centre Stats 2010	
Services	Total
Drop In	13,876
Programs	
No. of Programs, Workshops & Events	198
No. of Participants	2,941
Volunteer Program	
No. of Volunteers	287
No. of Volunteer Hours	4,887

Our Partners

We are grateful for the opportunity to work with many partners during 2010:

- Abinotci-Ayawin
- Aboriginal Headstart Program
- Addictions Foundation of Manitoba
- Amnesty International
- ANCRR
- Art City
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Canadian Diabetes Association
- Canadian Mental Health Association Winnipeg
- Child and Family Services
- CCPA
- CEDNET
- Child Guidance Clinic
- City of Winnipeg (MERC)
- CKUW
- Community Financial Counseling Services
- Community Legal Education Association
- Community Ministries
- Daniel McIntyre/St. Matthew's Community Association
- Elizabeth Fry
- Food Fare
- Food Matters Manitoba
- GA Community Council of Winnipeg
- Gordon Bell High School
- Healthy Child
- Health Sciences Centre
- Ikwe
- Income Advocacy Network
- Independent Living Resource Centre
- John M. King School
- Kendrick's Printing
- Klinik Community Health
- Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata
- Make Poverty History
- Manitoba Family Services and Housing
- Mary Jane's Cooking School
- Martha Street Studio
- Mediation services
- Mother of Red Nation
- Mount Carmel Clinic
- North End Women's Resource Centre
- Opportunities for Employment
- Osborne House
- Pregnancy and Family Support Services
- Pritchard House
- Pro Bono Law Students
- RAY (Resource Assistance for Youth)
- Red River Community College
- Rental Housing Registry Advisory Group
- Right to Housing Coalition
- Rossbrook House
- Sage House
- Sexually Exploited Youth Coalition
- Siloam Mission
- Skills Bank
- Snowbird Lodge
- Social Planning Council
- Spark
- Spence Neighbourhood Association
- SNA Research Hub
- St. Matthew's Maryland Community Ministry
- Take Back the Night
- Tec Voc High School
- Thomas Sill Foundation
- Thunderbird House
- UMFM
- Union Gospel Mission
- University of Manitoba
- University of Winnipeg
- UNPAC
- Victim Services
- Welcome Place
- WENDO
- West Central Neighbourhood Immigrant
- Settlement Project
- SEED
- Wellington School
- West End Biz
- West End Cultural Centre
- Wi Chiwaakanack
- William White Residents Association
- Winnipeg Copwatch
- Winnipeg Harvest
- Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
- Winnipeg Rental Network
- Winnipeg School Division
- Women's Health Clinic
- Wolseley Family Ministry



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