



THE BIGGER PICTURE

West Central Women's Resource Centre
Annual Report 2017/2018

The Bigger Picture

A Message from the Executive Director & Board Chair

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2017/18 was quite an adventure at WCWRC! The year started with a major flood in the centre that caused significant damage to the building and displaced us for about 2 months. Thanks to the wonderful support of our generous donors, partners and funders, we were able to make repairs quickly and reopen in our newly renovated space in early April. Throughout the centre's closure, our dedicated and hardworking staff team continued to maintain our excellent quality of service to participants out of a temporary location and they were instrumental in making it a seamless recovery.

This year brought many opportunities for us to engage at the provincial and national levels around priorities most important to the women of our community. This systems-level work is an important commitment for us as an organization because in order to move the needle on women's equality, we need to be engaging with and informing decision-makers about what's happening on the ground in our community.

Our programs have continued to expand and grow, which means we have welcomed many new staff in the last year. Our centre hours have also extended, bringing new faces to our space. In the early part of 2018, we even extended hours to provide an emergency warm space for two months in response to an urgent need for safe, warm spaces for women and LGBT2SQ+ community members who were unable to access shelters, for any number of reasons. We are grateful to all who worked so quickly to provide funding and staffing so that we could provide this vital service.

On behalf of all the staff at the centre, I want to express our tremendous gratitude to our board who work diligently to provide guidance to the organization and to the funders and donors that make our work possible through your generous support. We look forward to an exciting 2018/19!

Lorie English
Executive Director

Over the last year the Board has been very active in strengthening their governance policies such that the Executive Director and Staff maintain more clear control over all of the exciting and important operational work being done. Furthermore, the board has done reflections on their responsibility with the TRC recommendations and is excited to report the plan to amend the by-laws to better facilitate Indigenous engagement at the Board level.

The Board is pleased to be supporting such engaged and motivated staff who make the day to day impacts in the lives of the women in the West Central community. We wish to thank all staff, mentors and volunteers who work so hard to make the Centre a community hub. Thank you also to all our donors – without you our work would not be possible.

Meredith Mitchell
Board Chair

2017/2018 WCWRC Staff & Board

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Staff

Candace Abdilla
Lorie English
Rachel Bergen
Kirsten Bernas
Lisa Spring
Bridget Ayotte
Isabel Jerez

Gloria Knott
Andrea Kirkwood
Laura Canfield
Diana Jarzab-Perchak
Kelsey Dandenault
Rena Shorting
Sonia Cashman

Merrill Grant
Erika Frey
Molly Dunbar
Melissa McGregor
Wendy Kissick
Erica Charron
Chelsea King

Megan Carrothers
Eden Friesen
Helena Kelly
Leona Meawasige
Katherine Turner
Jolene Wilson
Denise MacDonald

Halima Jelloul
Dale Pike
Natalia Gallego
Emilie Derkson-Poirier

Warming Centre Staff

Melissa Ray
Liesel Collins
Hilary Mason

Brittany Mazur
Catheryn Nykvist
Taylor Byrnes

Board of Directors

Meredith Mitchell – Chair
Kerri Irvin-Ross – Vice Chair
Lioubov Gavrilova-Crozier – Treasurer
Nan Collage – Secretary
Michelle Johnson - Secretary
Lauren Konrad – Past Chair
Kerry Fraser
Suzanne McPherson
Erin Anderson
Jolene Bergen
Cate Friesen
Heather Mitchell



WCWRC Programs and Services

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Drop In

- Shower / Laundry / Hygiene Supplies
- Phone and Internet Access
- Workshops, Activities, and Information Sessions
- Access to Menstrual Items
- Information and Referrals to Other Services and Organizations
- Community Events and Field trips
- Family Night on Tuesdays
- Community building

Food Security

- Meal Program
- Cooking classes and other workshops
- Food Handler Training
- Community garden

Mentorship Program

- WE WIL: Women Empowering Women into Leadership program
- Honourarium-based Employment Training
- Volunteer Placements
- Student Practicum Placements

Housing

- HOMES – housing and income security support
- More Than 4 Walls Housing First Program
- Intake to Housing First programs through Doorways

Indigenous Programming

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

Community Building

- Celebrations & Events
- Community Gardening

Newcomer Programs

- Settlement Services
- Conversation Circles
- Sewing Program
- Francophone Info Sessions for permanent residents
- Share Our World Seniors Program to share traditions and build relationships between groups
- Partnership with Rainbow Resource Centre to provide support to LGBT2SQ+ newcomers

Employment & Education

- Job Readiness Support
- Employment and Skills Training
- Taking Root Childminding Training
- Happy Sprouts Childminding Services

Policy & Research

- Strategy to End Gender-Based Homelessness
- Project Manitouwabi Pilot Project
- Public Policy Advocacy Groups
- Contributing to policy reports and responses

Emergency Warming Space

In partnership with approximately 30 community agencies and representatives from the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba, we launched a short-term community response plan to the cold weather after lives were lost due to cold exposure in 2017. As part of the Short Term Cold Weather Strategy for Winnipeg, we were proud to open our space to all women and the LGBT2SQ+ community from 10pm-7am every night in February and March, 2018 for a snack and a warm space to sleep. We would like to thank the Winnipeg Foundation and the Mayor's Office for their generous funding of this important initiative.

"There are simply too few resources available after 9pm, and when our temperatures can drop to minus 40 degrees, this is no longer a mere gap in services – it is a life-threatening situation. The reality is that our shelter system and most of our housing programs have been created around a man's experience of homelessness. As a result, women are falling through the cracks."
– Lorie English, Executive Director

It is important to note that this was short term solution to the much more complicated issues of homelessness and poverty. Winnipeg needs a robust and ongoing Extreme Weather Strategy and that work is being led by End Homelessness Winnipeg.

Our Program Stats

DROP IN CENTRE

21,900

visits to our drop in



19,616

meals & snacks served

890

loads of laundry



MENTORSHIP & VOLUNTEERING

12



WEWIL Graduates

83%

Positive outcomes

Defined as the percentage of WEWIL participants who entered into a Mentor contract, or found employment or further education after the program

37

Volunteers



4

Practicum Students

NEWCOMER IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT WORKERS (NISW)



292

Individual participants and their families supported by NISW with

123 home visits,

accompanied participants to

over 80 offsite visits

and over 300 contacts

via phone or e-mail support



NSIW supported

26

Newcomer Women

and their families dealing with family conflict, intimate partner violence or post-conflict state and sexual violence

HOUSING



206

HOMES Program participants

35



More Than Four Walls Program

participants assisted with developing Housing First case management plans that helped them achieve personal goals and access housing, income, health and other social services

99

Developed case management plans for participants that helped them achieve goals and access housing, income, health and other social services

HOMES & More than Four Walls Programs housed/rehoused

40

participants from unstable or unsafe housing to more secure housing

Connecting the Circle:

A collaborative initiative to end homelessness

At the centre, we offer many supports and services that help women and families get through the day with health, dignity and safety. This role is essential and important, but we know it isn't the path to long-term change with wide-ranging impact for all. That's why West Central Women's Resource Centre is also working hard to be at the forefront of policy research and action.

"Poverty and homelessness isn't one size fits all."

We understand there are systemic issues that prevent women and families from achieving their goals. Our vision is for a healthy, sustainable, equitable, just and peaceful community where women's knowledge and experience is valued and respected. This includes women having hope and strength while living out equal social, economic and political rights.

To this end, WCWRC is leading the

creation of a strategy to end gender-based homelessness called Connecting the Circle: A Gender-Based Strategy to End Homelessness in Winnipeg. Led by a First Voice Advisory Committee of individuals with lived experience of gendered homelessness along with a Steering Committee of over 30 agencies, Connecting the Circle will be

implemented alongside Winnipeg's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.

Women, trans, two-spirit and gender non-conforming individuals experience unique paths to homelessness due to gender-based experiences in communities and social systems. Therefore, plans to address



Some of the members of the First Voice Advisory Committee

homelessness must include a gender-based lens. As Jolene Wilson, chair of the First Voice Advisory Committee, says, “poverty and homelessness isn’t one size fits all.” This means that solutions can’t be one size fits all either.

The Strategy will include targets and timelines for closing gendered systemic gaps, including at minimum targeted recommendations to improved gender-based supports for those exiting violence-against-women shelters and correctional institutions. We will also have a clear plan on how the community of agencies serving women, trans, two-spirit and gender non-conforming individuals will hold, implement and evaluate outcomes. Further, the Strategy will be used to close systems gaps that create gendered paths to homelessness and barriers to exiting homelessness.

The strategy is community-based and informed directly by individuals with lived experience. It is guided by the First Voice Advisory Committee, a group of diverse women, trans, two-spirit and gender non-conforming individuals who have lived

experience of homelessness or housing insecurity. “Unless you have been there, you don’t know,” says Jolene. “If you’re not listening to stories from people with lived experience, you’re not listening to the truth.”

Data for our research also comes directly from those with lived experience of homelessness. The strategy will be based on focus groups with women, trans, two-spirit and gender non-conforming individuals who have first-hand knowledge of the system and program gaps.

“If you’re not listening to stories from people with lived experience, you’re not listening to the truth.”

We know from our research to date that:

- Homelessness can happen to anybody, but people are more at risk and their experience of homelessness is less visible if they have multiple marginalized identities (e.g., Indigenous, LGBT2SQ+, experiencing

gender-based violence, CFS-involved).

- The more systems that a person experiencing homelessness is involved with, the harder it is to get by.
- People tend to fall through the cracks during transitions out of systems and life transitions.
- We need to better support women exiting Violence Against Women shelters and correctional institutions.
- Women experiencing homelessness become targets for overwhelming experiences of gender-based violence.
- Closing system gaps that create gendered paths to homelessness will prevent homelessness for women, trans, two-spirit and gender non-conforming individuals. And if we design systems that close these gaps, everybody benefits.
- Everyone has a role to play in ending gender-based homelessness.

The final report for Connecting the Circle will be released in January 2019.

We would like to thank Status of Women Canada for their generous funding of this important initiative.

We encourage our staff to be involved in policy and advocacy at a provincial and national level and are immensely proud of this work. Here is a snapshot of some of the ways we were engaged over the past year:

Through her involvement on the Steering Committee of **Make Poverty History Manitoba** (MPHM), our Director of Housing Kirsten Bernas participated in provincial poverty reduction plan consultations. Kirsten also led the development of MPHM's community-based poverty reduction plan for Winnipeg which can be found at winnipegwithoutpoverty.ca. Kirsten coordinates MPHM's City Working Group and is the chair of the Provincial Working Group of the **Right to Housing Coalition** and the **EIA Advocates Network**.

Director of Community Engagement Lisa Spring attended a **national Homelessness Partnership Strategy housing consultation** last year as part of the Federal Government's process to create the National Housing Strategy.

Lisa, Kirsten and Community Connector Jolene Wilson participated in the **Gender Equality Network of Canada**, which advocates for policy changes, builds inclusive intersectional

leadership, and takes collective action to advance gender equality in Canada.

Executive Director Lorie English joined Lisa and Kirsten to lead a workshop at the **Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness** Conference in Winnipeg on Housing First for Women, Trans & Families. Lisa and Jolene also planned and supported the presentation at this national

conference of "Can You See Me Now?," a theatre piece developed by our First Voice Advisory Committee and Sarasvati Productions.

Every year the centre closes to allow for staff and participants to attend the provincial **Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet) Manitoba Chapter Gathering**. Last year our staff led two workshops:



Megan, Kirsten, Lorie, Erika, Melissa, Merrill and Jolene. Not pictured: Lisa Spring.

Lisa and Kirsten presented “Poverty Is Sexist: Advocate with a Gendered Lens” and Drop-In Coordinator Merrill Grant presented “Trans and Two-Spirit peoples: Fighting for economic justice.”

Melissa McGregor, our Director of Social Enterprise, is involved with the **Manitoba Child Care Coalition** who is working for fully accessible, publicly-funded, non-profit childcare system. She is involved with the provincial group **Working in Social Enterprise** led by the CCEDNet Manitoba Chapter which identifies issues and gaps in policy around social enterprise in Manitoba. Melissa also participated in Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada’s Employment Learning Event in Calgary for the settlement sector in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Megan Carrothers, our Food Security Coordinator, attended the **Community Food Centres of Canada’s** annual Food Summit in Toronto, a conference attended by Community Food Centres and Good Food Organizations like WCWRC from across Canada and the U.S. that examines food security issues in marginalized communities. Megan was a panel

member in the session “Stepping Off the Scale and Into a More Measured Approach to Health” about measuring health outcomes in community programs.

Erika Frey, our Director of Settlement Services is active in **Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO)**, an umbrella organization for settlement service providers in Manitoba that provides leadership, support and a unified voice for settlement and integration organizations. She also participates actively in discussions with **Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)** regarding challenges around settlement and immigration in Manitoba. Erika Co-Presented on Best Practices of Working with Syrian Families and the Manitoba Model at a Conference organized by the **IRCC Prairie and Northern Territories Region Settlement Services in Schools and Communities**. She also participated in many provincial and national conferences including **Building Bridges Between Canada’s Indigenous and Newcomer Groups** in Winnipeg, the **Immigration and Integration Summit** organized by MANSO and IRCC, and attended the **National Metropolis Conference** “Immigration Futures” in Calgary and the

National LGBT2SQ+ Newcomer Settlement Conference “Welcoming the Rainbow” in Calgary alongside Lorie.

Lorie sits on the **Make Poverty History Steering Committee** and chairs the Winnipeg Without Poverty Working Group that led to the creation of the poverty reduction plan for Winnipeg. She attended Tamarack’s national conference **Cities Reducing Poverty** in Hamilton in order further develop this plan. She participated in a national roundtable on Violence Against Women hosted by **Women’s Shelters Canada** in Ottawa. She attended the first ever **Women’s Symposium on Homelessness** in Toronto. Lorie also participated in a **Regional Settlement Conference on Supporting LGBT2SQ+ Newcomers** hosted by IRCC in Calgary. She was appointed to the **Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness Women’s Homelessness Advisory Committee** and is working with them on this year’s CAEH National Conference.

We couldn’t do this work without the support of our community, funders and donors. Thank you to all who stand with us in our work to better the policies that impact the lives of women and families.

WCWRC was built and is sustained by remarkable women. As a way to honour their contributions, every year we present the Women of Distinction awards, which recognize women who have gone above and beyond expectations in their contributions and commitment to the wellbeing of our Centre, our values, and our community.

Our theme this year – The Bigger Picture – is rooted in advocacy, systems change and long-term vision. The two women we are honouring this year exemplify these values at staff and community levels. The positive impacts of their contributions are felt throughout the centre, and have rippled out to support and inspire the entire community and generations to follow in their footsteps. Thank you!



Shannon Buck
Former Staff Member

Shannon Buck is strong a leader in the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba. She is respected widely as an Indigenous knowledge keeper, pipe carrier, lodge keeper and to many, Elder. Shannon joined the staff

Rhonda is a long time community member at WCWRC. She has spent many years



Rhonda Starr
Community Member

volunteering and also worked as a Mentor in our Drop In. In 2013, WCWRC began a new project in partnership with organizations in Toronto, ON and Saint John, NB, to look at women's empowerment programs and to identify best practices and common characteristics in programs across the

country. Rhonda joined the steering committee of the project as one of three community members. She travelled to Saint John with the team and was with us in the early stages of developing the Women Empowering Women Into Leadership (WE-WIL) program. Rhonda's contributions of her knowledge and experience to the project were invaluable in grounding our curriculum in the needs and wants of women. WE-WIL is now a federally recognized best practice in Women's Empowerment by the Status of Women Canada and Rhonda played a key role in making that a reality. She has continued to be a smiling face around the centre for many years, and we love having her as part of our community.

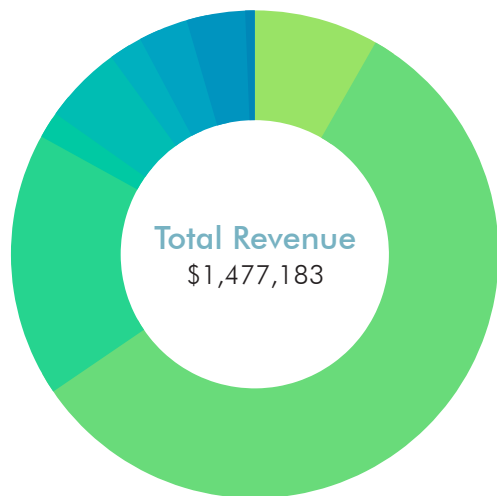


team at WCWRC in 2010 as the Red Road to Healing Coordinator. The Red Road to Healing program was developed by Shannon and the objective was to provide culturally appropriate programming for women dealing with the effects of family violence. The goals of the program are to help women become strong on their healing journey, reducing their vulnerability to violence and abuse; to develop awareness of their rightful place in their culture; and to pass their learning on to their children and families. The program has been widely spread throughout the province

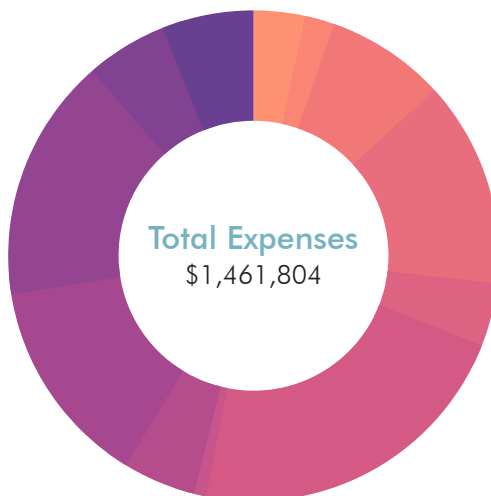
of Manitoba through a series of train the trainer workshops that still continue today. Red Road was also nationally recognized as a promising practice to reduce violence and increase safety of Indigenous women in Canada by the federal Department of Justice. While Shannon left the team in 2015 (and returned for a brief stint in 2016), she continues to be a well loved and respected member of our WCWRC community and people still line up for the remarkable program she created.

Summary of Revenue & Expenses for 2017-2018

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- Province of Manitoba - \$121,892
- Federal Government - \$845,410
- United Way- \$259,035
- City of Winnipeg - \$26,000
- Winnipeg Foundation - \$76,925
- Happy Sprouts Childminding - \$32,851
- Donations - \$48,364
- Amortization - \$57,343
- Other - \$9,363



- Warming Space - \$49,470
- Happy Sprouts Childminding - \$28,404
- Community Engagement - \$114,953
- Drop In - \$199,148
- Social Enterprise - \$60,638
- Housing - \$323,757
- Traditional Programs - \$11,699
- Mentorship - \$70,125
- Settlement - \$201,038
- Administration - \$235,366
- Operations - \$78,980
- Capital - \$88,226

Our Funders

Assiniboine Credit Union
Manitoba Housing
Daniel McIntyre /
St. Matthews Revitalization Inc.
Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
City of Winnipeg
LITE
Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada
Neighbourhoods Alive!
Spence Neighbourhood Association
Status of Women Canada
United Way
Winnipeg Committee for Safety
Manitoba Green Team
City of Winnipeg
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg Foundation
Homelessness Partnering Strategy
Youth in Philanthropy
Service Canada

DONATE TODAY

We need your help to support women and families in our community.

It costs \$80/hour to:

- **Meet basic needs** by providing nutritious food, hygiene products, laundry, computer access, and other services in the community.
- **Grow confidence** by supporting women to believe in themselves, gain skills, and have a voice.
- **Connect women and families** with the services, information, and programs they need to succeed.
- **Provide a safer space** to build community where women can connect and support one another.

You can be a part of this!
Help us keep our doors open and our services accessible.

Sign up to give a monthly or one-time donation at www.wcwrc.ca or send a cheque to:
WCWRC, 640 Ellice Ave, Wpg. MB, R3G 0A7.

Gifts of \$20 or higher will receive a charitable tax receipt.



West Central
Women's Resource Centre

"[WCWRC] is like a place to call home... It makes my life more livable."

~ Participant

"The WCWRC was heaven sent when I found myself homeless... It was a saving grace for me in my hour of need."

~ Participant

"I don't feel quite so alone."

~ Participant

"This is my family."

~ Participant